



CHOPTANK ELECTRIC

CooperativeLiving

Youth Tour 2026

Page 16



FROM THE DESK TO THE POWER LINES A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Understanding Your Electric Bill

August is typically one of the warmest months of the year. During periods of extreme heat, many members may see an increase in their electric bill and wonder what factors contribute to the cost of electricity. While the total amount due may seem like a single number, it reflects several different costs associated with delivering reliable electricity to your home or business.

The largest factor is often the amount of energy you use. Electricity is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh), and the more energy your household consumes, the higher your bill will be. During the summer, air conditioning is typically the largest driver of increased energy use. When temperatures climb into the 90s or higher, cooling systems run longer and more frequently.

Another major factor is the cost of purchasing electricity. Like many cooperatives, Choptank purchases power from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative. The cost of generating electricity fluctuates based on fuel prices, including natural gas, coal and other energy resources. Changes in wholesale power costs influence the price of electricity delivered to members.

Transmission costs also play a role. Before electricity reaches your home, it must travel across a network of high-voltage transmission lines that

connect power plants to our local distribution systems. Transmission equipment requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades to ensure reliability, especially as electricity demand continues to grow.

Closer to home, Choptank Electric maintains the local electric distribution system – utility poles, power lines, transformers, substations and other equipment that safely delivers power to you. This is covered by the monthly distribution and service charges on your bill to operate your Cooperative on the Eastern Shore.

We understand every dollar matters, and we are committed to making smart investments that keep the lights on and support the communities we serve. If you have questions about your electric bill or co-op programs designed to help you save, please reach out. Visit choptankelectric.coop/rates to see our bill explainer for more details.



*Mike Malandro,
President & CEO
Choptank Electric Co-op*

Write to us: P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629

Member Service Center: 1-877-892-0001

Automated Member Service: 844-975-2746 **Outage Reporting:** 1-800-410-4790

CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP

Enroll in Choptank's Thermostat Program

Earn bill credits and save this summer

Choptank Electric Cooperative launched a Thermostat Program for eligible members with a Wi-Fi-enabled smart thermostat. This free, voluntary program allows you to earn rewards for using less energy during the summer.

Participants help manage higher energy demand by allowing Choptank to make short-term adjustments to your HVAC system via a Wi-Fi thermostat. In most cases, you won't notice the small increase in temperature (maximum 3 degrees F) or comfort. Residents will be notified before each peak-

demand event of the scheduled timeframe and may override the thermostat setting if desired.

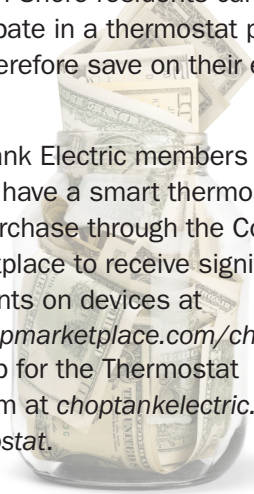
Choptank Electric members will receive a one-time \$25 bill credit for enrolling and a \$5 bill credit for each full month of participation in the summer. Compatible thermostat brands include Amazon Smart Thermostat, Ecobee, Honeywell, Nest and Sensi.

"This program wouldn't be possible without high-speed internet connecting smart thermostats in our members' homes," says Mike Malandro, President and CEO of

Choptank Electric Cooperative.

"With Choptank Fiber serving the rural communities, most Eastern Shore residents can now participate in a thermostat program and therefore save on their electric bills."

Choptank Electric members who do not have a smart thermostat can purchase through the Co-op Marketplace to receive significant discounts on devices at myco-opmarketplace.com/choptank. Sign up for the Thermostat Program at choptankelectric.coop/thermostat.



MARYLAND EXTENSION



Employee Charity Raffle Supports Wicomico 4-H

By Logan Bilbrough, Graphic Communications Specialist

This year's Employee Charity Raffle raised funds for Wicomico County 4-H, a program dedicated to helping young people develop leadership skills, explore career interests and gain valuable life experiences through hands-on learning opportunities.

Choptank Electric's Employee Charity Raffle was created around one of the seven Cooperative Principles, Concern for Community. During our annual employee picnic in May, employees purchased raffle tickets for a prize package. The winning employee received the prize package and also had the opportunity to designate all raffle proceeds to a charitable organization within Choptank Electric's service territory.

This year's raffle winner, Daniel Cropper, selected Wicomico County 4-H as the recipient of the donation.

"I chose 4-H for this donation because I think it's a significant organization for our youth," Cropper says. "I love that the 4-H teaches life skills, from building certain things hands on to creating leadership skills, building loyalty, gaining decision-making skills and learning how to think critically. Also, teaching the youth about agriculture and animal husbandry, which is a huge part of the history of the Eastern Shore. I believe this donation will help accelerate the youth involved in 4-H throughout Wicomico County, and that makes me happy to know that I was able to play a part in helping the youth here locally."

According to Wicomico County 4-H Educator Kimber Sarver, the donation will help expand STEM and Healthy Living programs in schools and community centers throughout the county. The funds will also

support scholarships, awards and leadership opportunities that encourage young people to explore their interests and build confidence.

"One of the greatest benefits of 4-H is providing the opportunity for youth to try new things, build confidence and discover what they're passionate about," Sarver said. "We are incredibly grateful for community partners like Choptank Electric whose support helps us expand opportunities for local youth and continue growing the 4-H program across Wicomico County."

Over the years, the Employee Charity Raffle has grown into a tradition, with participation increasing annually. Choptank Electric continues to put cooperative values into action, creating lasting benefits for communities across its service territory.



A Week to Remember: Students Experience Washington, D.C., Through Youth Tour

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

Rising high school seniors from across the Eastern Shore traveled with Choptank Electric to Washington, D.C., in June to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This weeklong program allows students from across the country to tour our nation's capital and understand how advocating for rural communities can make an impact at home.

Choptank was proud to sponsor the following students this year: Katrina Benges and Hunter Durham from North Carolina High



School, Doraneli Tomas-Ortiz from Colonel Richardson High School and Emma Nordstrom from Worcester Preparatory School.

Participants attended several activities focusing on leadership development and electric co-op advocacy, including NRECA Youth Day with more than 1,500 students in a pep rally. The remainder of the week was spent touring with students from other electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware through the regional association. The group

“Our local Youth Tour delegates made their mark on Washington, D.C., this year and expanded their network, all while having fun.”

– Katie Lockett, Director of Marketing,
Communications & Education

visited monuments, Smithsonian museums, Arlington National Cemetery, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, a Nationals baseball game and enjoyed a dinner cruise on the Potomac River.

One meaningful stop for Youth Tour delegates was the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial. Students learned about Roosevelt’s role in establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1935, which helped bring electricity to rural communities that investor-owned utilities had largely overlooked. The REA played a key role in the formation and success of electric cooperatives like Choptank Electric, making the memorial a powerful reminder of the cooperative roots that continue to serve local communities today.

In addition to the activities and tours, the pinnacle of Youth Tour was Hill Day. Choptank Electric students were able to meet with Senator Chris Van Hollen, Congressman Andy Harris and staff from the office of Senator Angela Alsobrooks.

“Our local Youth Tour delegates made their mark on Washington, D.C., this year and expanded their network, all while having fun,” shares Katie Lockett, Director of Marketing, Communications & Education for Choptank Electric and a Youth Tour chaperone. “It’s rewarding to see them light up

after meeting with their state representatives and realizing that their voices can be heard. This is truly the trip of a lifetime for Choptank’s high school members, and we encourage rising juniors to apply for the 2027 program!”

Nearly 100,000 students from rural areas and small towns across the U.S. have participated in this program. Applications for the 2027 Youth Tour will open in October. To learn more and apply to be sponsored by Choptank Electric, visit choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour.



CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF KEVIN COLLIER



KEVIN COLLIER

Serviceman

After 33 years of dedicated service, Choptank Electric Cooperative proudly recognizes the retirement of Kevin Collier, whose career has been defined by hard work, commitment to members and a passion for restoring power when communities need it most.

Kevin began his career at Choptank Electric in 1993 and advanced through a variety of roles, including field assistant, meter reader, apprentice lineman, journeyman and serviceman, the position from which he retired.

As a serviceman, Kevin's responsibilities included restoring power for members in a timely manner, assessing

outages to determine the cause, coordinating repairs and ensuring work was completed as safely and efficiently as possible. He also conducted monthly inspections of substations, vehicles and equipment to ensure they remained in proper working order and that crews were ready to respond when needed.

Reflecting on his career, Kevin says his favorite part of working for Choptank Electric has been helping restore power for members, especially during major storm restoration efforts.

One of the most important lessons Kevin takes away from his career is the value of safety and teamwork.

"We are a brotherhood, and it is imperative to restore power efficiently while ensuring everyone returns home safely to their families at the end of each assignment," Kevin says.

For those beginning their careers at the cooperative, Kevin encourages them to stay committed, be available for power restoration efforts, work safely and embrace every opportunity that comes their way.

As he enters retirement, Kevin looks forward to expanding his lawn maintenance business, traveling with family and friends, and spending more quality time with his children, grandchildren and his beloved chocolate Labrador, Bruno.

Looking back on more than three decades of service, Kevin credits Choptank Electric with teaching him the importance of integrity, dedication to members and coworkers and the personal satisfaction that comes from being part of something larger than himself.

On behalf of Choptank Electric Cooperative, we thank Kevin for his years of dedication and service and wish him all the best in retirement.



"It has been an honor to be an employee of Choptank Electric Cooperative, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunities given to me."

– Kevin Collier

Choptank IN THE OUT THE **FIELD**



Choptank employees volunteered for the Junior Achievement Center Takeover Day in Salisbury and helped bring financial literacy lessons to local students.

Choptank Electric Cooperative **BUZZ**

Choptank congratulates the following employees on their promotions:

Jenna Troyer
Staff Accountant

Tim Hardesty
Apprentice Lineman 3rd Class

Jeff Thomas
Serviceman

Brandon Thompson
Chief Lineman



THANK YOU FOR ROUNDING UP!



**Choptank Electric
Trust, Inc.**

Camp Wright is a summer camp situated on 140 acres of wooded waterfront

property along the Chesapeake Bay. Since 1930, it has served as the center of youth and young adult formation for the Episcopal Diocese of Easton.

Each summer, campers enjoy a wide variety of activities, including sports, field games, archery, swimming in the Junior Olympic-sized pool, arts and crafts, kayaking, sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, dancing, drama and much more. Camp Wright encourages campers to step outside their comfort zones, building independence and self-confidence in a fun, supportive environment.

The Choptank Electric Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation funded by Operation Round Up donations from members of Choptank Electric. Funds from the Trust are distributed throughout Maryland's nine Eastern Shore counties.

To apply or to find out more about this program:

> choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund

June 2026 Trust Awards

- New Beginning Learning Academy \$1,000
- Art League of Ocean City \$3,000
- Berlin Heritage Foundation/Taylor House Museum \$657
- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center \$2,500
- Somerset County Historical Society \$600
- Tides of Grace \$1,664

The total of approved applications for June was \$16,407, which included \$6,985 for individual home and medical expenses.



**Choptank Electric
Cooperative**

**Choptank
Fiber**

Choptank Electric and Choptank Fiber exist to provide reliable and cost-effective services that improve the quality of life for our communities.

President & CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

Board of Directors

John J. Burke Jr.
Chairman, Cecil Co.

Robert B. Thompson
Vice Chairman, Ocean Pines District

Donna Richardson West
Secretary, Worcester Co.

Amy Ireland Brandt
Treasurer, Caroline Co.

Douglas D. Scott
Dorchester Co.

Kristen E. Nickerson
Kent Co.

Robert E. Arnold
Queen Anne's Co.

Craig N. Mathies Sr.
Somerset Co.

Jeffery D. Rathell Sr.
Talbot Co.

Matthew R. Holloway
Wicomico Co.