



CHOPTANK ELECTRIC
Cooperative *Living*

**LOCAL
RELIABILITY**

PAGE 15 Mike Malandro recounts recent energy tours with Secretary of Housing and Community Development Jake Day and other state officials.





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

As we begin another year, I want to pause and express gratitude for you, the members of Choptank Electric Cooperative, and for your continued trust and support. Our cooperative was built on the promise of people coming together to improve the quality of life in their communities, and that promise still guides everything we do today.

Each decision, whether it's about delivering reliable electricity, innovating for the future or advocating for smart energy policies that impact our local community, comes back to one simple question: How will this benefit the members we serve?

Choptank Electric Cooperative works closely with Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, to plan for upcoming energy demand and seasonal weather changes to ensure you have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to make certain electricity is available whenever you need it. I encourage you to read the article on the next page to learn why **where your power is produced matters**.

This past year has been marked by meaningful progress in strengthening our local system and working at the state and national levels to influence energy policies that directly affect reliability, affordability and resilience. While the details of regulations can feel distant, they shape our daily operations here at home.

As part of our effort to educate policymakers on energy reliability and affordability in Maryland, we hosted many state leaders at ODEC's Wildcat Point generation facility in Cecil County in the fall. Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones, Secretary Jake Day of the Department of Housing & Community Development and staff from the Maryland Department of the Environment and DNR's Power Plant Research Program joined us for tours and presentations.

You can be assured that during the legislative session this year, we will be laser focused on the needs of our cooperative members as energy policy is debated. I'm confident that with the dedication of Choptank Electric's employees and the continued support of our members, we are well positioned to adapt and meet challenges head-on. Through it all, our promise to you remains steadfast: **reliable power for today and tomorrow**.

Happy New Year,



*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: 1-866-999-4574
Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790
Use SmartHub to manage account,
track usage and report outages —>

CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP





RELIABLE POWER: WHERE YOUR POWER IS PRODUCED MATTERS

When you flip a switch, you may not think about where your electricity comes from, only that it's there when you need it.

But behind the scenes, the location of power plants plays a critical role in keeping the lights on at an affordable cost.

Let's explain, starting in our own backyard. Together with 10 other regional electric cooperatives, Choptank Electric Cooperative owns ODEC, a not-for-profit wholesale electric generation and transmission provider created to support electric distribution cooperatives like ours. ODEC generates power for us and its other 10 member-cooperatives across Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

Now let's look at the regional grid. All ODEC owners, including Choptank, are part of a vast regional grid called the PJM Interconnection, which manages electricity for more than 65 million people across 13 states and the District of Columbia. PJM is like an air traffic controller for power, balancing supply and demand every minute of every day. Unlike airplanes that travel freely across the sky, electricity moves through a network of transmission lines. Those lines can become congested — like rush hour traffic.

This is where location matters.

PJM divides its footprint into zones that reflect how electricity flows and where demand is concentrated. Prices rise and fall depending on how easy or difficult it is to move power from the supply source to the demand.

Transporting electricity from one zone to another over a long distance almost always makes it more expensive. Every extra mile that power travels adds cost and risk. To keep electricity as affordable as possible, generation, or the source, would ideally be located in the same zone, or in close proximity, to the demand or usage it serves.

Additionally, PJM's reserve margins, the cushion of extra power generation that protects against shortages, are shrinking as older plants retire faster than new ones come online. This makes local generation even more critical.

When reserves are thin and a line is congested, the system can't always move enough power across zones to fill the gap. That means areas with too little local generation are most vulnerable to shortages and outages.



DHCD Sec. Jake Day with Choptank's CEO Mike Malandro and VP of Technical Services Timothy McGaha.

Investing Where it Counts

ODEC has long taken a “belt and suspenders” approach to reliability, balancing its portfolio across different fuels, technologies and locations.

ODEC has strategically invested in generation near its member cooperatives. ODEC’s Wildcat Point Generation Facility in Cecil County, Md, ODEC’s Marsh Run plant in Northern Virginia and its Louisa plant in central Virginia are good examples. Normally, these plants are designed to run during peak demand windows, when the grid is under the most strain. But because transmission in Northern Virginia is so often congested, PJM sometimes dispatches these plants to push electricity north to ensure the energy gets where it’s needed most, regardless of demand location.

One of ODEC’s newest power commitments is the Wolf Summit Generation Facility. Wolf Summit will bring 600 MW of natural gas generation into PJM’s APS zone, where ODEC currently serves its member cooperatives BARC, Rappahannock and Shenandoah Valley. Adding generation in the same zone as load, or demand from these member-cooperatives helps insulate them from the extra costs and growing reliability risks of importing power.

ODEC is also a joint owner of the North Anna Nuclear Station in central Virginia and the Clover Power Station in south-central Virginia. North Anna provides always-on, carbon-free power that’s a cornerstone of Virginia’s energy mix. Clover, while coal-fired, continues to play a role in providing dependable baseload generation at times when renewable energy and natural gas supply is tight. These investments ensure ODEC’s power supply isn’t tied to any single source or location.

Navigating Today’s Challenges

PJM’s system is facing challenges. Transmission projects can take a decade or more to plan and build, yet demand is rising at a breakneck pace. At the same time, environmental policies are phasing out traditional sources of power faster than new ones can be built. That creates uncertainty in the marketplace and puts more pressure on existing resources. As reserve margins shrink, the difference between a stable grid and a rolling blackout could come down to whether reliable generation is available in the right place at the right time.



Speaker of the House of Delegates Adrienne Jones talks with ODEC’s VP of Operations Brian Heinbaugh.

ODEC has been vocal in raising concerns about these challenges, while actively planning for the future. By diversifying resources, managing fuel and capacity costs, and making forward-looking investments like Wolf Summit, ODEC works every day to shield Choptank and all of its member cooperatives, from the volatility of the broader energy market.

Our job is simple: to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity for our member-owners — a mission shared by ODEC and all of its member cooperatives. Choptank and our power supplier, ODEC, take seriously the responsibility to plan for tomorrow while delivering value today. We make long-term decisions with one goal in mind: ensuring that when you flip the switch, affordable, reliable and resilient power is there. Because it turns out that — as in real estate — in electricity location really is everything.



Scan this QR code to watch a video and learn how ODEC maintains reliability through balance.



Shaping the Future of Energy

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

Choptank Electric Cooperative hosted the second annual Girl Power™ Camp on Oct. 2, 2025, at our Regional Service Center in Salisbury, Md.

This year's event welcomed approximately 53 students and 60 volunteers and chaperones from three cooperatives — Choptank Electric Cooperative, Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) and A&N Electric Cooperative. The camp highlighted the critical role women play in shaping the future of energy.

From climbing utility poles to using power tools, participants had the opportunity to step into the shoes of energy professionals for the day. Students rotated through hands-on stations featuring drilling, pole climbing, drone demonstrations, wire cutting and even a truck driving simulator. In addition, workshops on interview skills and career planning provided valuable tools for life after graduation.

Madeline Hines, Choptank member, past Girl Power participant and speaker at this year's event, shared: "Girl Power opened my eyes to career opportunities I never knew existed. It gave me the confidence to pursue linework and truly changed my life."



PHOTO BY ANEC



By engaging directly with students and offering hands-on experiences, Choptank and its sister co-ops aim to build a strong pipeline of future energy leaders. The Girl Power Camp is part of the Cooperative's ongoing mission to invest in education and community outreach.



For more details about Girl Power Camp, visit: www.vmdaec.com/girl-power-camp.

Scholarship Offered by Trust Board

The Choptank Electric Trust Board is pleased to announce that applications for the annual Choptank Electric Trust Scholarship will open on Jan. 2, 2026. High school and homeschool seniors whose parent or guardian is a member or employee of Choptank Electric Cooperative are eligible to apply. Applicants must be entering a post-high school educational institution or technical/trade school as a freshman in the fall of 2026.

Each May, the Choptank Electric Trust Board, a 501(c)(3) organization, awards nine \$2,000 scholarships, including three scholarships designated for students pursuing education at a technical or trade school.

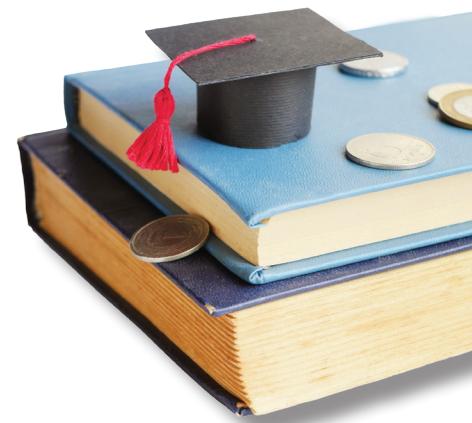
Selection criteria include:

- Financial need
- Academic achievement
- Extracurricular and community activities
- References
- Personal essay

The required essay should be limited to two typed, double-spaced pages on the topic:

“Why have I chosen to continue my education, and how will this scholarship assist me?”

Applicants must submit up to three letters of reference from school administrators, teachers, civic leaders, clergy or neighbors (no relatives, please).



The Academic Information section of the application must be completed by the student's guidance counselor or other appropriate school official.

Applications postmarked after February 28 will not be considered.

For additional information and to download the application, please visit: choptankelectric.coop/scholarships.

How Will You Make Your Mark? Apply for Youth Tour 2026!

- Develop leadership skills
- Strengthen your resume
- Connect with peers from 44 states
- Meet with elected officials
- Experience history up close
- Learn about cooperatives

Interested high school juniors and seniors can learn more and apply online at

> choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour

Applications are due
Jan. 30, 2026



Delegates from Maryland will join more than 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., June 15-19.

All expenses — travel, lodging, meals and program costs — are covered by Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Participants must be members of Choptank Electric Cooperative.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF SHAWN SPARKS



SHAWN SPARKS

Manager of Operations

After 35 years of dedicated service, Shawn Sparks is retiring from Choptank Electric Cooperative. Shawn leaves behind a legacy built on hard work, leadership and genuine care for both coworkers and members.

Shawn began his journey with Choptank Electric on June 4, 1990, as a Storeroom Attendant Helper. Just a few months later, he became an Apprentice Lineman in the Berlin District, eventually earning his Journeyman Lineman status. In January 1994, he transitioned into the office as a Member Services Advisor, where he worked closely with members to address their needs and questions.

His strong understanding of cooperative operations and commitment to service led him into leadership roles over the years. Shawn served as Supervisor of

Technical Services (Supervisor of System Control), then as Operating Services Supervisor beginning in April 2005. From there, he moved into the role of Manager of Operating Services, and ultimately became Manager of Operations in August 2021, a position he held until his retirement.

Throughout his career, Shawn's favorite part of working at Choptank Electric has been "meeting and getting to know so many employees and friends along the way." Reflecting on his 35 years, he shared, "I've seen a lot of coworkers come and go, but I'll always remember the great people I've worked with."

When asked what he'll take away from his career, Shawn said what will stick with him most is how much employees truly care about the members. "Whether it's helping someone with a question about their bill or doing everything possible to get an outage restored, the slogan 'Members First Every Day' really is true."

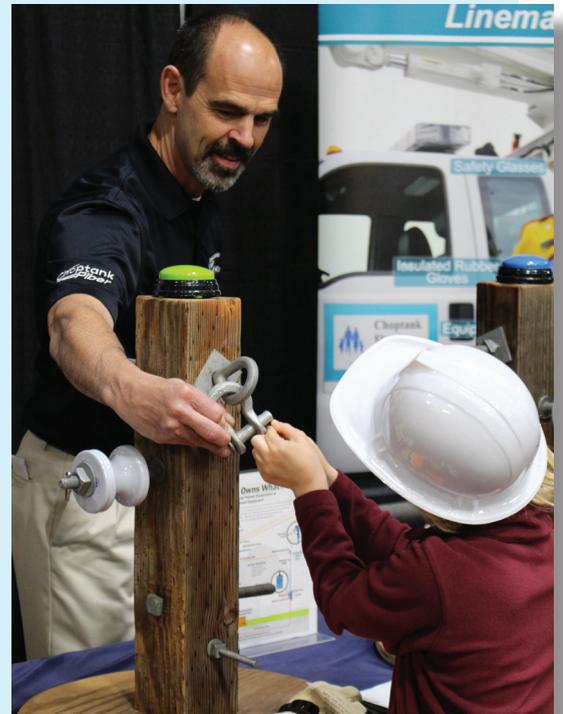
To new employees joining the cooperative, Shawn offers this advice: "Always be ready, willing to learn and keep your eyes and mind open for new opportunities."

As he looks ahead to retirement, Shawn is excited to spend more time on hobbies and projects he's long been waiting to tackle. "I plan to do some woodworking, home improvement projects and finally restore my old car that I've had since high school."

Looking back, Shawn says his 35 years at the Cooperative have changed him in countless ways. "If I had to summarize what it has meant to me to work here for all that time, it has made me very grateful — grateful for the relationships, experiences and opportunities. I came to Choptank just looking for a good job, and I never could have imagined the fortune of having such a wonderful career."

"If I had to summarize what it has meant to me to work here for all that time, it has made me very grateful — grateful for the relationships, experiences and opportunities."

– Shawn Sparks



Please join us in celebrating Shawn Sparks for his decades of service and wishing him the very best in his well-deserved retirement!

Choptank congratulates the following employees on their promotions:

Hunter Rodgers

Apprentice Lineman 3rd Class

Wade Harris

Chief Lineman, Chestertown

Jacob Murphy

Journeyman

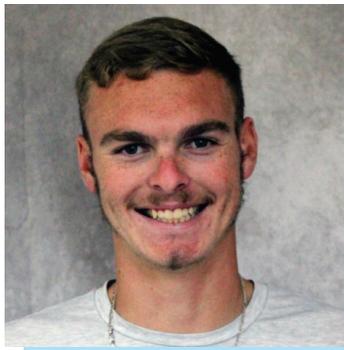
Dylan Perdue

Engineering Fieldman

Derek Brinsfield

Meter & Apparatus Technician

Welcoming New Employees



Matthew Nordhoff
Operations Tech II, Chestertown

Experience: Utilitrain

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, traveling and riding

Looking forward to: Working with and learning from other employees to better myself



Logan Bilbrough
Graphic Communications Specialist, Denton

Experience: University of Maryland, Maryland Sea Grant, Caroline County Rec & Parks

Hobbies: Filmmaking, skateboarding, photography, fishing and working out

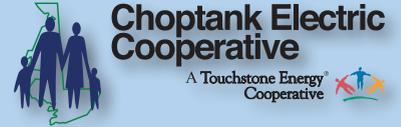
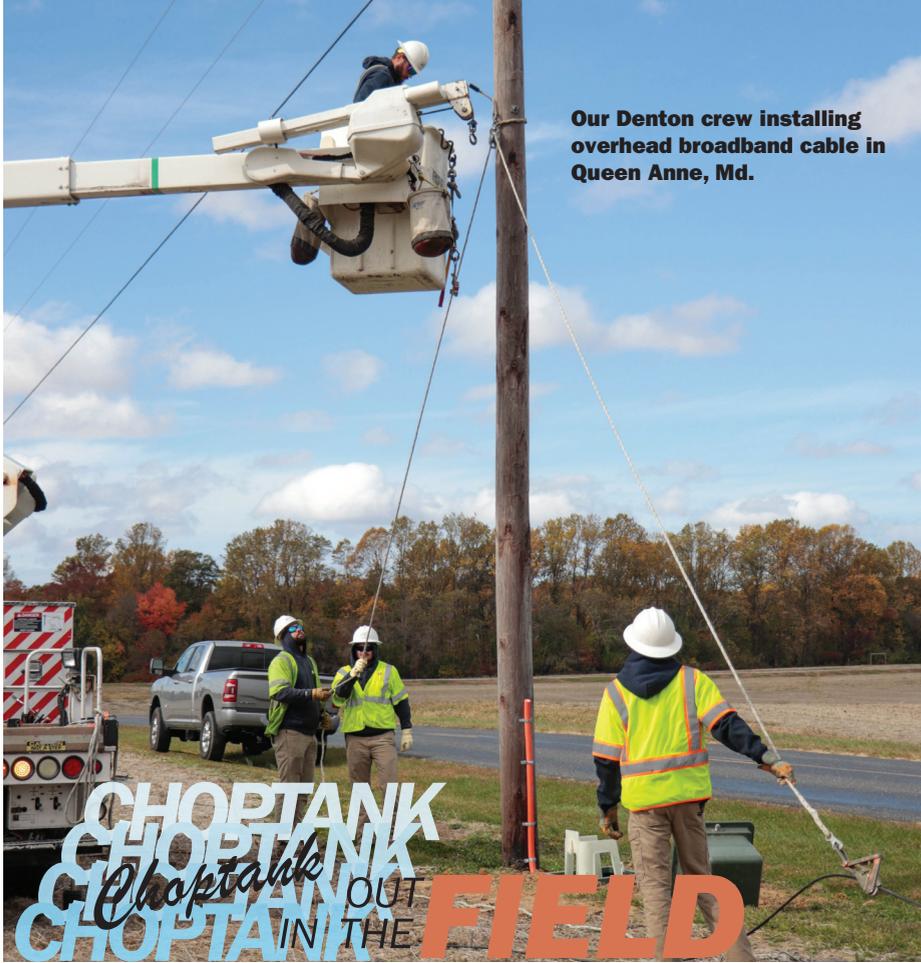
Looking forward to: Meeting coworkers and communicating the work of Choptank



Katie Lockett, Director of Marketing, Communications and Education at Choptank Electric Cooperative, completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA) Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC) Program in the fall. Katie is one of the select few cooperative communication professionals in the country to achieve this honor in 2025. The NRECA CCC Program, now celebrating its 40th year, provides comprehensive training in various aspects of cooperative communication, including strategic planning, public relations, marketing, crisis communication, social media management and more.

To attain the CCC certification, Katie invested over 110 hours in a combination of in-person and online classroom training sessions, culminating in the successful completion of a final project and multiple online exams. "Participating in this program has equipped me with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively communicate the mission, values and benefits of Choptank Electric Cooperative to the community," shared Katie. With this accomplishment, Katie Lockett joins an elite group of only 345 active CCC professionals within the cooperative network.

Our Denton crew installing overhead broadband cable in Queen Anne, Md.



**Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Choptank Fiber, LLC**

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

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Choptank Electric Trust Awards



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 in all nine counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

To apply, or to find out more about this program:

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

October 2025 Trust Awards

- Caroline County Humane Society \$3,000
- Cub Scout Pack 155 \$875
- Friends of the Grape \$2,366
- His Hope Ministries \$1,700
- Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company \$3,140
- Salisbury Jaycees Foundation Inc \$300
- Talbot Interfaith Shelter \$5,000
- Queen Anne's County Make A Difference Day \$2,000

November 2025 Trust Awards

- Benedictine School for Exceptional Children \$2,000
- Community Civic League of Federalsburg \$1,500
- For all Seasons \$1,436
- Holly Grove Christian School. \$1,500

The total of approved applications for October and November was \$64,964, which included \$40,146 for individual home and medical expenses.