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JULY 2026

CHOPTANK ELECTRIC

Cooperative *Living*

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**Choptank Electric
Cooperative**

**Choptank
Fiber**

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

Celebrating 250 Years of America

This Independence Day marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. A historic milestone for the United States and the freedom we know and love.

As we reflect on the progress our country has made over the past 250 years, I can't help but think about the technological advances that have transformed our lives. Today, we live in a connected world where information, communication and innovation are available almost instantly. It's hard to picture a life without constant power and connectivity. But less than a century ago, rural America didn't even have electricity.

2026 marks another historic milestone for America; 90 years since the Rural Electrification Act (REA) was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Private utility companies were not running power lines to sparsely populated farmland in 1936 because it was too expensive and unprofitable.

To address that challenge, the federal government provided low-interest, long-term loans to help farmers form electric cooperatives. These locally owned, not-for-profit entities built electric systems, generated power and delivered service.

By empowering local nonprofit cooperatives, the program transformed rural life and agricultural productivity.

Choptank Electric Cooperative was formed in 1938 in Denton, Md., and is now proud to provide electricity to more than 57,000 meters across the Eastern Shore. We also formed a broadband subsidiary, Choptank Fiber, in 2020 to provide high-speed internet to our unserved rural members, like in 1938 with electricity.

This Independence Day, take a moment to reflect on our nation's past and look forward to its future. Thank you for being a valued member of our Cooperative and taking pride in the communities we call home — both on the Eastern Shore and across America.



*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



Choptank Electric Wins Multiple Awards at Gaff-n-Go Rodeo

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

Choptank Electric Cooperative brought home multiple awards at the 22nd Annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo including the Jimmy Gardner Top Cooperative Journeyman Team Award. Choptank also brought home 2nd Place Overall Journeyman Team, 2nd Place Apprentice Written Test and 3rd Place Double Dead-End Insulator Change-Out.

"Our linemen represented the Eastern Shore and electric cooperatives across the country with true determination

and skill," says Mike Malandro, President & CEO of Choptank Electric. "They demonstrated the power of teamwork as they went up against the top lineworkers in the region. We are humbled to have such skilled linemen on our Cooperative's lines."

The Gaff-n-Go Rodeo was held May 15-16, 2026, in Doswell, Va. The annual event attracts the best lineworkers from the East Coast to compete in traditional lineworker tasks. More than 350

lineworkers representing 12 states from cooperatives, investor-owned utilities, municipals and contractors competed in more than a dozen events during the rodeo. Apprentices competed individually while Journeymen competed in teams of three. Lineworkers are judged on speed, accuracy and safety during all competitive events.

The winning Cooperative Journeyman Team consisted of





Choptank Electric linemen Cody Biddle, Jeff Thomas and Brandon Thompson. This team also placed second in the Overall Journeyman Team category and second in the Over-Voltage Arrestor. Apprentice Lineman Linnie Vann placed third in the Double Dead-End Insulator Change-Out and Lineman Hunter Rodgers placed second in the Apprentice Written Test.

“I’m proud of this team and the hard work and preparation they put in leading up to the rodeo,” says Matt Breeding, Director of Operations. “Their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence are evident not only in competition, but in the work they do every day to serve our members and communities. We strive for excellence and these crews train to perform each task safely and proficiently. During the rodeo and in the preparations leading up to it, all of our guys demonstrated professionalism, teamwork and a strong work ethic.”

Choptank Electric also competed in the Gaff-n-Grill and Equipment Operator competitions during the rodeo. The Grill team, Macked Out BBQ, prepared chicken quarters, ribs, pork butt and apple pies in the “Anything Butt” category. The Equipment Operator team showcased their skills on the mini-excavator, digger derrick and bucket truck in obstacle courses, pole-top cutout changes and rescues. To learn more about the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, visit gaff-n-go.com.



Choptank Electric's 2026 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo T-shirt design celebrates America's 250th anniversary with an Eastern Shore Independence Day scene. As fireworks light up the sky over the Choptank River, boats gather on the water while two linemen perform a three-phase pole change-out, reflecting the cooperative's commitment to reliable service.

Spotlighting Our Scholars

\$37,500 in scholarships awarded to local students

We are committed to providing opportunities for our young members across the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Choptank Electric Cooperative, along with the Choptank Electric Trust Board and the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, awarded 24 scholarships totaling \$37,500 to students attending college, university or trade school in the fall of 2026.



2026 LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Choptank Electric's Luck of the Draw Scholarship awarded ten \$1,000 scholarships to students drawn from those who applied and attended the Annual Meeting on April 23:

- **Andrew Watson**, Caroline County
- **Camryn Faulkner**, Caroline County
- **Elizabeth Gell**, Worcester County
- **Ethan McCoy**, Wicomico County
- **Juliana Stepp**, Talbot County
- **Olivia Owens**, Wicomico County
- **Owen Walstrum**, Caroline County
- **Reagan Reed**, Worcester County
- **Aiden Gorsuch**, Dorchester County
- **Christian Gorsuch**, Dorchester County

VMDAEC SCHOLARSHIPS were awarded to four Choptank Electric Cooperative students this year:



- **Tyler Murphy**, Talbot County
- **Ethan Royer**, Talbot County
- **Isabella McHenry**, Somerset County
- **Adelaide Dawkins**, Worcester County

For information about scholarships available to members, visit choptankelectric.coop/scholarships or call 1-877-892-0001.



AIDEN GORSUCH

North Dorchester High School
College: St. Mary's College of Maryland



Each receiving
**\$2,000 to further
their continued
education,**
These are the 2026
**Choptank
Electric Trust
Scholarship
Winners!**



CAROLINE WINTERSTEIN

Queen Anne's County High School
College: University of Maryland



ABIGAIL JONES

North Carolina High School
College: Delaware Valley University



CHRISTIAN GORSUCH

North Dorchester High School
College: University of Maryland



ELIZABETH GELL

Snow Hill High School
College: Salisbury University



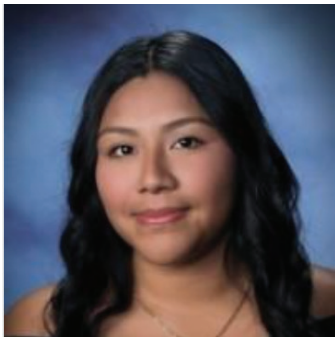
JOHN WILLIAMS

Easton High School
College: Chesapeake College



REED KISH

North Carolina High School
College: Wor-Wic Community College



SHARI MACARIO DELEON

North Carolina High School
College: University of Maryland



TYLER MURPHY

St. Michaels High School
College: Duke University



CAROLINE KIMBALL

Queen Anne's County High School
College: Virginia Tech

CURTIS SHORT RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS OF SERVICE



CURTIS SHORT

Manager of Operations

Curtis Short began his career as an Apprentice Lineman at Choptank on July 11, 1986. After two and a half years, he was promoted to Journeyman, a position he held for six and a half years before becoming a Serviceman for 11 years. He was a Contract Coordinator for one year before being promoted to Manager of District Operations, a position he held for 19 years until his retirement.

As Manager of Operations, Curtis oversaw the district's day-to-day operations, the maintenance

and reliability of the district's infrastructure and safety compliance, and he ensured members received excellent service.

When asked about his favorite part of working at Choptank, Curtis immediately answered, "the people."

"The employees I worked closely with, as well as some of the members and contractors I have interacted with over the years," Curtis says. "I really have enjoyed being a part of restoring members' power during outages; it gives me a real sense of pride and purpose."

One thing he will take away from working at Choptank is the importance of service to our community. "Being there for our members in a time of need has been most rewarding," he adds.

Curtis' advice to new employees: "Take pride in your work and never stop learning. Watch out for the safety of others and yourself."

In retirement, Curtis plans to stay active, travel, volunteer more and enjoy free time after a very rewarding career.

"Working in operations for 40 years has made for an amazing career, but it did not come without sacrifices from my family," Curtis shares. "There were many nights, weekends and storms when I had to leave them at home alone. I truly appreciate their support and understanding throughout the years."

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

"I really have enjoyed being a part of restoring members' power during outages; it gives me a real sense of pride and purpose."

- Curtis Short





Blessing of the Combines

The 26th annual Blessing of the Combines in Snow Hill, Md. is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 1, and is open to the public. The event includes farm equipment, a petting zoo, an antique car show, vendors, crafters and more. But the main

attraction is a parade of combine harvesters driven by local farmers over the Snow Hill bridge and onto Green Street in the center of town for a blessing before the harvest season begins.

As many as 14 combines weighing between 30,000 and 70,000 pounds will participate, followed by tractors and other farm implements. When they “park” on Green Street, they fill the roadway curb to curb.

This hometown tradition of honoring area farmers started when Becky Payne, daughter of the local Western Auto owner and a Choptank Cooperative member, urged the community to honor its farming neighbors for their hard work. “It’s become an agricultural education program,” Payne

explains. “Kids get to see how their food and other farm products get to market.”

This year’s keynote address will be delivered by Parker Welch, Executive Director of the Maryland Farm Bureau. Other dignitaries will also be on hand to celebrate and honor the farmers of Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Learn more at the Blessing of the Combines Facebook page and plan to attend this remarkable event.





Choptank Electric Trust, Inc.



Choptank Electric Cooperative



THANK YOU FOR ROUNDING UP!

Back in March, the Choptank Trust donated \$3,000 to the Denton Little League to update aging equipment.

This season, Denton Little League added Tee-Ball and Junior League divisions to meet increased registration. This growth created added financial need as each team required helmets, catcher's gear, bats, practice equipment and uniforms. Denton Little League's equipment experienced heavy use and needed to be replaced to ensure it remained safe and compliant with safety standards.

"Player safety is our top priority," says league president Kyle Bringman. "The support allowed us to maintain a safe, well-equipped program while keeping registration fees affordable and accessible for all families in our community."

For more information on Denton Little League, scan this QR code:



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

May 2026 Trust Awards

- Chapel District Elementary Grandparents Club. \$3,000
- Delmarva Discovery Museum \$8,000
- Easton High School class of 2026 \$500
- Fruitland Volunteer Fire Company \$1,300
- Galena Volunteer Fire Company \$4,400
- Olivet United Methodist Church \$3,000
- Pleasant Day Medical Adult Day Care \$2,500
- Salisbury Urban Ministries \$5,000

The total of approved applications for May was \$38,338, which included \$10,638 for individual home and medical expenses.

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
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