SEPTEMBER 2026

DON'T SHOOT THE LINES PAGE 16

GIRL POWER EVENT PAGE 18

2027 ANNUAL MEETING DATE PAGE 19

TRUST FEATURE: DELMARVA DISCOVERY MUSEUM PAGE 22

CHOPTANK ELECTRIC

Cooperative Living



Choptank Electric installs an Osprey Nesting Box on Taylors Island Page 20

Choptank Electric Cooperative

Choptank Fiber

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO
National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, and I encourage you to take a moment to make sure that you and your family are prepared for late summer storms and hurricane season.

From tornadoes and floods to lightning and extreme heat, severe weather can cause destruction and power outages. Many people end up in dangerous situations because they think they can outrun or outsmart a storm or other hazardous conditions. Being prepared with supplies, a plan and safety knowledge can help protect you and your family.

To stay safe, start by installing a weather app with severe weather alerts enabled and have an evacuation plan in place. Keep emergency kits stocked with a first-aid kit, flashlights, batteries, a portable phone charger, food, water and enough supplies to last at least three days. If you use a generator, always follow the manufacturer's instructions, operate it outdoors in an open area only and keep it at least 20 feet from any doors, windows or vents. Never run a generator in a garage, carport or enclosed space.

Stay alert during storm cleanup because hazards may not always be visible. If the power is out, remain indoors unless your safety requires you to leave. Watch carefully for downed power lines that could be concealed by standing water or debris, and if you spot one, call 911 immediately and keep others away.

Storms can be unpredictable and can damage the power grid. Severe weather may also make utility equipment harder to access. During and after major weather events, line crews may be out restoring power and making repairs.

We ask you to do your part to help keep our lineworkers and utility crews safe. When driving through work zones, slow down and move over, and avoid distracting crews on the job. And never plug a generator into a wall outlet; doing so creates back feed, sending electricity from your home back onto power lines and putting crews at serious risk.

Check out our Storm Preparation page online at *choptankelectric.coop/prepare* to learn more about making outages as safe and comfortable as possible for you and your family. And remember, if you experience an outage, call or text "OUT" to 800-410-4790 or report it on SmartHub.



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



Don't Shoot the Lines

Enjoy the outdoors and respect power lines

By Katie Luckett, Director of Marketing, Communications and Education

Choptank Electric Cooperative is made up of more than 57,000 members who all rely on the safety and upkeep of our power grid and fiber connection. Our power lines and utility poles are the foundation of how we all enjoy the comforts and convenience of reliable electricity and quality internet.

FIBER EFFECTS

With thousands of miles of recently constructed overhead fiber-optic cables on the Eastern Shore, hunters will need to practice extra caution when aiming at flying waterfowl this fall. The glass tubes in the broadband fiber line are fragile and will break if hit by shotgun shot, requiring all 144 individual strands to need time-consuming splicing repair.

"Customers who lose internet due to a shot fiber cable will most likely not even hear the shot because broadband service can come from up to almost 25 miles away," says Evan Roe, Supervisor of Fiber Services at Choptank Fiber. "Unlike electric service, where you hear a fuse blow on your transformer at your house or know there is a storm in the area and lose electric, the cause of a fiber outage is usually unknown to both the customer and the utility before the damage is located. One shot cable can take down hundreds of connections for miles."

Not only are homes at risk, but several emergency services lease our fiber for communications. "Shot fiber can also mean your local 911 dispatch service, fire, EMS and police radio systems, Choptank's radio system,





cellphone towers, and county and state networks can also lose vital connectivity," explains Tyler Thompson, Senior Fiber Administrator at Choptank Fiber.

The average cost to repair a shot fiber cable ranges from $10,000 to $20,000. By law, the cost of the repair is borne by the landowner or the hunter who damaged the line. We want to protect you from that expense and protect everyone who needs the electricity and internet service on our lines.

In addition to the cost of the repairs, the damage can take many hours to repair, causing lengthy internet outages for your community. "A fiber splicing repair can take up to 12 hours depending on the fiber count," adds Roe. "That's not counting the time it takes to replace or move the cable to even be able to make repairs, and getting employees mobilized to bring materials and make repairs."

While most of the shot fiber cable comes from dove hunting, Thompson notes that some also comes from recreational trap and skeet shooting.

ELECTRIC EFFECTS

Shooting at transmission facilities — wires, poles and insulators — is dangerous to you, jeopardizes everyone's power and is a federal crime. A gunshot can make electricity arc to the ground or cause the wire to fall, with a high risk of serious injury or death. Never attempt to shoot through the wires or at anything that may be on the wires or poles.

Structures such as tree stands or decoys attached to a transmission tower or pole, or placed underneath a high-voltage line, even temporarily, are prohibited. Contact with these structures can be extremely dangerous due to high-voltage power flowing through the lines.

"It's important for all gun enthusiasts to keep an eye out for what's in the background while shooting," concludes Thompson. "A basic safety measure that can save lives and protect our infrastructure."

We know most hunters practice safe hunting and they understand the potential hazards when discharging a firearm. We encourage these experienced hunters who are familiar with the area to help identify locations of electrical equipment to younger, less experienced hunters and gun enthusiasts.

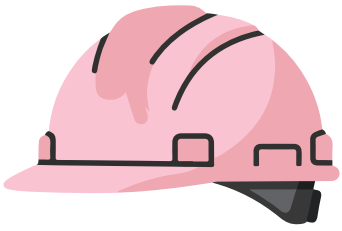
Visit ***choptankelectric.coop/DSTL*** to review basic hunter electrical and powerline safety rules to follow. Thank you for helping to keep the lines safe during this hunting season.





Girl Power on Maryland's Eastern Shore

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist



Building a stronger workforce in the energy industry means encouraging more women to explore careers in the utility field. Although the number of women in linework and other technical positions continues to grow, there is still a need to introduce more young women to these rewarding career opportunities.

To help spark that interest, the electric cooperatives of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware host **Girl Power®** , a free, one-day career exploration event for high school girls. The program welcomes students who are interested in learning about careers as lineworkers, substation technicians, advanced metering specialists, fiber broadband technicians and many other roles that keep communities connected and powered. These hands-on careers also provide opportunities for professional growth and future leadership within the utility industry.



The 2026 Girl Power Eastern Shore event will take place on **Nov. 5** at Choptank Electric Cooperative's Training Center in Salisbury, Md. Throughout the day, participants will rotate through interactive demonstrations, outdoor activities, classroom sessions and presentations led by utility professionals. Safety is a key focus of the program, with students learning about utility pole climbing techniques, bucket truck operations and safe work practices.



In addition to the hands-on experiences, attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with human resources professionals for resume reviews and interview tips. Representatives from local community colleges will also be available to discuss educational pathways, training programs and career options within the energy industry.

Choptank Electric is excited to welcome the next generation of women interested in the utility profession and provide an opportunity to discover exciting careers that make a difference every day. To learn more or register for Girl Power, visit ***vmdaec.com/girl-power-camp***. Registration for the Salisbury event closes **Oct. 29**.

Choptank Electric Cooperative BUZZ

Choptank congratulates the following employees on their promotions:

Jimmy Creighton
Apprentice Lineman 4th Class

Morgan Chandler
Member Service Specialist 3rd Class

Annette Parks
Financial & Accounting Specialist

Kristi Smith
Financial & Accounting Specialist

Cathy Conover
Financial & Accounting Specialist



Mike Malandro (left) and Chris Cosby, CEO of ODEC (right)

Mike Malandro, President & CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative, was elected Chairman of the Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) Board of Directors at their annual meeting held in Cambridge, Md., on July 28, 2026. Choptank Electric is a member-owner of ODEC, our wholesale power provider. We congratulate Mike for this leadership opportunity to represent the Eastern Shore and guide our generation and transmission co-op as it continues providing reliable, affordable and responsible power to more than 1.5 million people in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

Save the Date April 22, 2027

Choptank Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting

Choptank's 2027 Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, April 22. Stay tuned for more information on the time and location.



Our offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7.

Choptank OUT IN THE FIELD







Our crew worked with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Taylors Island Volunteer Fire Company to build and install a nesting box on a utility pole in Taylors Island. Choptank's nesting boxes are designed to attract large birds, such as ospreys, eagles, hawks and owls, to build a nest on this safe platform rather than on the crossarms of our power lines.

We install these at the top of old utility poles across our service territory to help protect the Eastern Shore's treasured wildlife. The wider wingspan of large birds can create dangerous potential for electrocution if nests are on or near our electrical infrastructure.



Business-Ready Internet Built for Success

By **McKayla Kiernan**, Communications Specialist

Whether you're running a small retail shop, managing a busy office or operating a growing agricultural business, reliable internet is essential to keeping your business connected. Choptank Fiber's commercial internet service delivers speed, reliability and local support that businesses need to stay productive every day.

Unlike traditional internet providers, Choptank Fiber offers 100% fiber-optic internet with symmetrical upload and download speeds, allowing businesses to efficiently transfer large files, host video calls, operate cloud-based applications and support multiple connected devices without sacrificing performance.

Businesses also benefit from SmartBiz, Choptank Fiber's managed Wi-Fi solution that is included with commercial internet service. Designed specifically for small and medium-sized businesses, SmartBiz helps keep business operations running smoothly with secure, dedicated networks for employees, point-of-sale systems and guests. Built-in cybersecurity, automatic security updates and internet backup capabilities help reduce downtime and provide added peace of mind. Business owners can also monitor and manage their network from anywhere using the intuitive CommandWorx mobile app, making it easy to oversee their network without the need for dedicated IT staff. With SmartBiz included, businesses receive enterprise-level network management at no additional cost.

From local storefronts to busy agribusinesses, Choptank Fiber provides dependable technology backed by local customer service and the trusted infrastructure of your electric cooperative. We ensure businesses across the Eastern Shore have the tools they need to connect and grow.

choptankfiber.com



THANK YOU FOR ROUNDING UP!

Choptank Electric Trust, Inc.



The Delmarva Discovery Museum is a 16,000-square-foot living museum in Pocomoke City, Md., dedicated to exploring the rich natural history and cultural heritage of the Delmarva Peninsula.

In May, the Choptank Electric Trust donated $8,000 to help replace the museum's flooring, supporting needed facility improvements.

“The floors turned out great, and we can't thank Choptank enough for helping make these necessary repairs,” said Christy Gordon, Executive Director of the Delmarva Discovery Museum.

Tom Terry, Chairman of the Choptank Trust Advisory Committee, is proud to support a community resource that has served Worcester County for generations.

“The Choptank Electric Trust is delighted to join the citizens of the Pocomoke community, along with other granting organizations, in helping the Delmarva Discovery Museum achieve its goal of updating its facility and reopening with a strong future,” Terry said.

With the new flooring in place, the museum is better equipped to welcome visitors and continue sharing the stories and history that make the Delmarva Peninsula unique. For more information, visit: *delmarvadiscoverycenter.org*.

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***

July 2026 Trust Awards

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Harford & Cecil Counties $1,000
- Caroline County Historical Society $2,198
- Deep Roots $2,599
- Mary Mac Foundation $1,500
- Pony Express 4-H Club $3,499
- St. Andrews Foundation of the Eastern Shore $2,000
- Vienna Heritage Society $1,300
- Maryland Business Roundtable for Education $3,000
- One Mission Cambridge $2,500

The total of approved applications for July was $34,565, which included $14,969 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

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