

LINEMEN TO THE  
RESCUE PAGE 2

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RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC  
**Cooperative Living**



LEADING WITH  
**POWER**

PAGE 10

Q&A with Gov. Abigail Spanberger, Virginia's  
first female governor.

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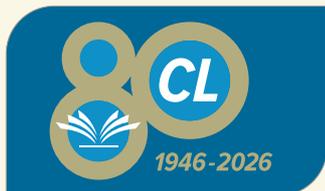
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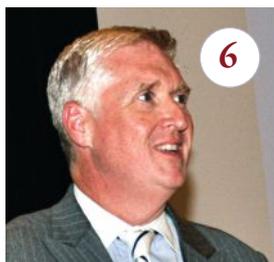
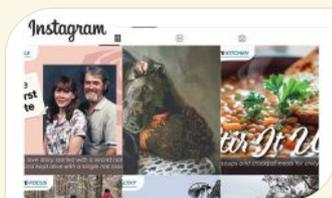
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VIEWPOINT

# Marking Milestones

**A**s we celebrate *Cooperative Living's* 80th anniversary, we're reflecting on the milestones that have shaped our story. From the beginnings of the electric cooperative movement in the 1940s to today, these moments highlight a legacy of service, resilience and community. In this issue, we're reminded of the strength of that history — and the people who continue to build it.

We are celebrating Women's History Month with our Cooperative Focus article on Virginia's first female governor, Abigail Spanberger. We were honored to speak with the governor, who has made energy policy a top priority. She recognizes electric cooperatives and the members we serve as vital to our economy and as key partners in addressing today's energy challenges.

This issue also includes another installment of our Grid



Watch series focused on energy issues — this time examining how rising expenses affect your bill and the steps cooperatives are taking to manage those increases responsibly.

The strength of cooperatives comes from our people, something we saw during recent winter storms. Co-op teams worked around the clock to restore power — outages that were thankfully fewer than expected — and to share emergency resources with cooperatives as far away as Minnesota and New England.

That spirit of selfless service is why we also honor the life of Jim Guy, who devoted his career to advancing the cooperative model and shaping many of the laws that support it.

We have many stories to tell and milestones to reflect upon. Thank you for reading and for learning how cooperative thinking continues to make a difference. ●

*Brian S. Mosier*

Brian S. Mosier, President & CEO  
Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives

# Cooperative Living

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## OUR MISSION

To inform you about your cooperative and its efforts to serve your energy needs; how to use electricity safely and efficiently; and the people who define and enhance the quality of life in communities served by electric co-ops.

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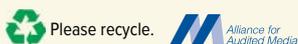


PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON/NNEC

## Heroes On the Clock and Off

*Northern Neck lineworkers rescue driver from car crash*

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

**D**aylight was fading as three Northern Neck Electric Cooperative lineworkers headed home in their vehicles after a long shift.

The workday had ended, but the responsibility to serve had not. Craig Loving, Mark Evans and Martin Pinon found themselves putting one of the founding cooperative principles, Concern for Community, into action. The principle reflects a cooperative responsibility that goes beyond delivering reliable power — it is a commitment to people and to the places they call home.

That day, in Warsaw, Va., a car lay in a ditch and, inside, a woman's life hung in the balance. Loving witnessed the vehicle veer off the road and land in the ditch after the driver suffered a medical incident. "We just saw someone who needed help, and we did what any one of us would do," Loving said in an interview with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Without hesitation, the men pulled over to assess the scene. They called 911, administered CPR (NNEC lineworkers maintain CPR certification) and helped emergency medical services personnel remove the driver from the vehicle.

Lineworkers are often referred to as heroes during storms, restoring power to homes and businesses with vigilance and fortitude. But on that evening in early November, they became Judy Laxague's heroes.

"I am alive because of you," Laxague wrote in a heartfelt note to the lineworkers that came to her rescue. "[The] world needs more people like you."

Loving, Evans and Pinon were later commended at a Richmond County Board of Supervisors meeting, where they received the Good Citizens Award and a letter of recognition from the board.

In the letter, Chairman F. Lee Sanders wrote: "Their quick response and ability to begin CPR prior to the arrival of emergency medical services exemplify courage, compassion and preparedness in the face of crisis. The Board of Supervisors is deeply thankful to have NNEC as a part of our community."

"We're more than just a provider of electricity here in the Northern Neck, we have a strong commitment to the welfare of our community," says NNEC President and CEO Richard McLendon. "Our employees show sincere compassion for their neighbors, and I am fortunate to witness it every day."

The lifesaving actions of the three NNEC lineworkers reflect the values that guide electric cooperatives and the people who power them. When needed, they answered — not because it was required, but because it was the right thing to do. ●



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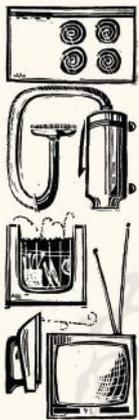
# The Evolution

*Celebrating the second decade of Cooperative Living*

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

In celebration of *Cooperative Living* magazine's 80th anniversary, each issue this year will spotlight one of the eight decades since this publication — first introduced in October 1946 — began inspiring, informing and connecting electric cooperative members.

The second decade of *Cooperative Living* (then called *Rural Virginia*), spanning 1956 to 1966, reflected a noticeable shift from its early years. While the publication continued to educate and inform electric cooperative members, familiar reader-driven features began to fade. There



were no more letters to the editor or poems, and the beloved “Pa and Ma” and “Lonesome Corner” columns were discontinued.

The publication had multiple editors during its second decade: Alexander Hudgins, Bevin Alexander and Fletcher Cox Jr.

Under the direction of these editors, *Rural Virginia* focused heavily on household efficiency, electrical safety, industry news and the expanding role of electricity in daily life.

The pages of *Rural Virginia* reflected domestic life in the 1950s with 35-cent sewing patterns available for doilies, dust ruffles, whirly dresses, and bedspread and curtain ensembles.

Advice columns on household matters offered guidance ranging from practical to particular. A February 1956 article encouraged homemakers to keep tidy homes by emptying and washing ash trays, arranging books according to their size and/or color,



and remembering to “pat up” the sofa cushions to keep them looking nice.

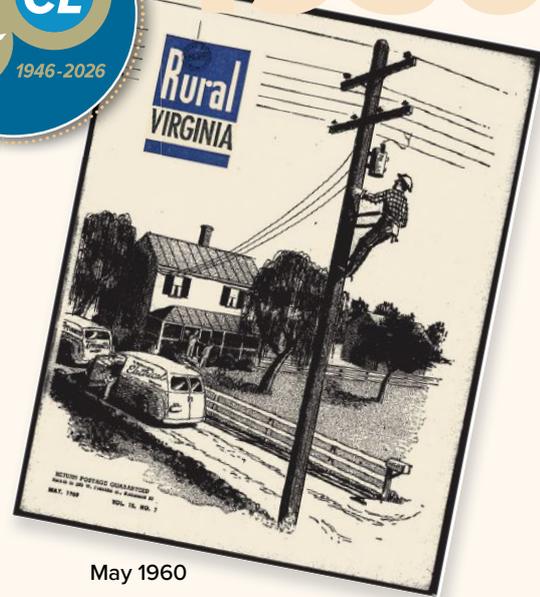
“Household Hints” remained a staple in the publication, with handy tips and tricks — like putting broken bits of peppermint inside of apples before baking in order to enhance the flavor, or adding a tablespoon of butter to boiling water to prevent pasta from sticking and boiling over. Recipes from the era ranged from spiced milk, golden broccoli and orange scones to berry cakes, cheese rings and mustard wax beans.

In the late 1950s, *Rural Virginia* introduced “The Power of Electricity,” a sobering column recounting real-life electrical accidents. The column underscored the dangers of electricity and the importance of safe use. One of the columns noted that all the tragedies shared one common denominator: “The people involved looked with careless disregard upon electricity, which — like flame and water, man’s other allies of power and force — must always be treated with respect.”

Readers were also introduced to three-prong plugs to help prevent electric shock, a concept still unfamiliar to many households at the time.

Social change also made its way into the publication’s pages. In February 1956, an advertisement urged women to stop viewing marriage and careers as mutually exclusive, citing statistics revealing that two-thirds of working women at the time were also married.

Fashion trends were covered. In February 1958, a column announced that shorter pleated skirts would be in style. Embroidery took center stage,



May 1960

with small prints dominating women’s clothing design. Necklines were also moving further away from the neck, introducing a softer, more relaxed silhouette for women.

## IN THE NEWS

*Rural Virginia* chronicled noteworthy events across rural communities. In April 1956, a fashion show was held on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. It blended style with technology, showing spring fashions in clothing — and electric cooking. The show, sponsored by Accomack-Northampton Electric Cooperative (now A&N Electric Cooperative), consisted of local models flaunting fashionable clothing while doing cooking demonstrations. General

Electric Company, as GE was known then, wowed the crowd featuring turquoise and pink electric ranges with push-button convenience.

In 1957, Prince William Electric Cooperative (now Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative) in Manassas, Va., was enjoying record-breaking member participation. In June that year, more than 2,300 people flocked to its 16th annual meeting. That same year, the cooperative hosted international power leaders from Yugoslavia and Russia —



## -1966

drawing widespread attention and highlighting global interest in the success of the rural electrification model.

In June 1957, the publication reported a record-breaking catch on the Eastern Shore. Fisherman James Lee Johnson, a member of Accomack-Northampton Electric Cooperative (now A&N Electric Cooperative), landed a world-record black drum off Smith Island that weighed just over 94 pounds.

In March 1958, *Rural Virginia* profiled a 19-year-old beauty pageant star. After entering a Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative beauty contest, Jayne Garman was launched into the pageantry world and went on to win six beauty contests and appear on the cover of Home Builders Association magazine.

In October 1958, an all-electric home in Pendleton, Va., was featured. Served

by Virginia Electric Cooperative (now Rappahannock Electric Cooperative) in Bowling Green, Va., it was considered “one of the most spectacular all-electric homes in Virginia.”

In January 1959, *Rural Virginia* featured C.T. Park, a Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative member determined to keep the “almost unheard-of” occupation of molasses making alive. While the world embraced modern conveniences made possible with

electricity, Park stood over boiling vats of cane juice, stirring, skimming and coaxing it to thicken into a dark, rich syrup. He produced 150 gallons of molasses from each acre of cane he hand planted.

In 1959, a Northern Neck Electric Cooperative member, John Courtney, became known as “The Northern Neck Egg Man” after his egg business became successful. His laying house in Northumberland County accommodated 1,080 cages.

### COOPERATION SAVES THE DAY

Rooted in its founding principles, cooperation remained central to the electric cooperative movement. In April 1958, after a massive snowstorm crippled many electric co-ops, the publication highlighted the coordinated response, praising neighbor co-ops for working together to restore service and support affected communities.

The article read, “The greatest plaudits go to the unsung heroes of the service crews who endured the hardships of raw, wet weather and long, tiring hours without sleep to bring electric power to those who were plunged into darkness and cold when power wires were downed by the storm.”

In 1958, the earliest version of the *Cooperative Living Fairs & Festivals Guide* appeared, with over 31 fairs and festivals listed for readers. Letters to the editor returned to the pages of *Rural*



*Virginia*, back by popular demand. A book review column was also introduced in 1958. In 1960, *Rural Virginia* switched to a magazine format.

### A SIGN OF THE TIMES

The evolving attitude toward the role of women in society was evident within the pages of *Rural Virginia*. Its early content reflected traditional views of women as caretakers of the home. By the end of its second decade, those portrayals began to shift. Women were increasingly visible in public life, assuming political and leadership roles.

In September 1963, *Rural Virginia* addressed the “momentous political phenomenon” of women taking political office. “Women have all but captured control of Bath County,” an article noted, reporting that women were serving as court clerk, welfare superintendent, commissioner of revenue, health officer and justices of the peace for the rural county. The article concluded with some humor: “The moral here is inescapable: A shrewd politician will never anger a woman. She may take his job.”

As *Rural Virginia* closed out its second decade, it revealed a state increasingly shaped by electricity — safer, more connected, more efficient and modern — as the publication itself evolved into a more structured and informative voice for electric cooperative members. ●



The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 enabled construction of 41,000 miles of highway over the next 20 years.



Elvis Presley appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show for the first time in 1956.



In 1959, Alaska and Hawaii became the 49th and 50th U.S. states.



The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed, outlawing legalized discrimination.

# A Cooperative Legacy

*James “Jim” Guy’s legal career was defined by tireless advocacy for electric cooperatives and the members they serve*

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

James Patrick “Jim” Guy II, of Saxe, Va., spent his career making sure electric cooperative members were never an afterthought.

A tireless advocate and trusted legal voice in the cooperative world, he helped shape energy policy discussions with balance, foresight and a deep respect for cooperative values.

He passed away on Jan. 21, leaving behind a lasting legacy.

During his tenure at LeClairRyan from 1994 to 2019, Guy served as energy practice leader. While the firm served as general counsel to Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, Guy’s work played a central role in the legal transformation of ODEC into an asset-owning, operational G&T. His work also included contracts and legal transactions related to the development and construction of ODEC’s Marsh Run, Louisa and Rock Springs power plants.

Guy provided extensive legal counsel to member cooperatives of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, including work on the agreed withdrawal of NOVEC from ODEC, the acquisition of Delmarva Power’s service territory by A&N Electric Cooperative and the acquisition of Allegheny Power’s distribution territory by Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.



His work extended to drafting and revising Virginia law governing electric cooperatives, including a major rewrite of the Cooperatives Act — the Virginia law that governs the incorporation and governance of electric cooperatives and the cooperative business model — as well as significant portions of the commonwealth’s utility law. His work shaped Virginia’s experiment with electric deregulation in the late 1990s as it applied to cooperatives and the subsequent re-regulation in 2007. Much of the legal framework from which Virginia’s electric cooperatives benefit today is built on that foundation.

“Jim was more than a brilliant lawyer — he was a friend and a mentor to all who knew him,” says Andrew Vehorn, senior vice president of member engagement at ODEC. “He shaped not just institutions and laws, but people. His generosity with his time, wisdom and encouragement left a mark on every one of us.”

After being diagnosed with esophageal cancer in October 2004, Guy began writing a blog chronicling his experience. His first post, titled “Everything is Different Now,” marked the start of a long and difficult journey. Through candid reflections on his daily health struggles and challenges, he offered encouragement, comfort and inspiration to others facing serious



illness. Guy would eventually overcome the cancer with remarkable resilience.

In March 2020, Guy joined



Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative as general counsel, leading the legal team for MEC and its affiliates. Guy championed fair and forward-thinking policies on behalf of MEC’s members. Says MEC President and CEO Casey Logan, “We would not be where we are today at MEC or EMPOWER without Jim’s unwavering dedication, wise counsel and steady guidance.”

Throughout his career, Guy has served on the board of the Energy Bar Association and as president of the EBA’s Southern Chapter covering 10 states, including Virginia. He served on the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the HARPS Foundation boards of directors. He also served as president of the Virginia Bar Association in 2016 and chaired the Air Pollution Control Board starting in 2022.

Outside of his professional life, Guy was loved by many. He was devoted to his family and enjoyed spending time with his wife of 35 years, Judith; his children Callaghan, Seamus and Mairead; and grandchildren Imogen and Aoife. He also had a deep love of music and a strong faith in God.

Guy’s influence endures in the policies he helped shape on behalf of the electric cooperatives of Virginia, and in the many lives he touched along the way. Says CEO of VMDAEC Brian Mosier, “Jim Guy’s distinguished legacy is one of service, integrity and steadfast advocacy for Virginia’s electric cooperatives. For his commitment and many years of dedicated service, he will be remembered with profound admiration and respect.” ●



# THE NUT You Didn't Notice

*American hazelnut proves ecological importance doesn't always come with flash*

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

**T**ree watchers eager for spring's arrival often anticipate the blooms of redbuds, dogwoods and magnolias. Fair enough — these trees offer a dramatic and welcome display. But those willing to lower their gaze may be surprised by one of the season's earliest, and most easily overlooked, blooms: the American hazelnut. Hazelnut, a midsize shrub native to much of the eastern U.S., produces separate male and female flowers on the same tree. Male flowers develop in 1- to 3-inch catkins that hang near the tips of branches. Female flowers are smaller, but if you look closely, you will see their distinctive red styles and stigmas, where wind-blown pollen from male flowers collects.

American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*), also called American filbert, is a member of the birch family. In our region, this small plant family includes about a dozen species, including birches, alders, ironwood and hophornbeam. American hazelnut grows in USDA cold hardiness zones 4-8. It prefers moist to dry upland forests, well-drained floodplains and old fields, but it does not tolerate standing water. In our region it is common in the mountains, Piedmont and inner coastal plain and uncommon along the outer coast.

The hazelnut shrub typically reaches 12 to 18 feet tall, with multiple stems growing from its roots and underground rhizomes. It tolerates shade, but flowering and fruit production increase in sunnier locations. Leaves emerge after the flowers and are simple (only a single blade per leaf), measuring 3 to 5 inches long and 2 to 3 inches wide. They have double-toothed edges. Autumn leaf color ranges from pale yellow to yellow-green to red or purple, but the color is unpredictable and not particularly showy. Those seeking showy fall color may want to look elsewhere.

The nuts, if fertilization is successful, form within a leaflike



Leaves and developing hazelnut fruits

PHOTO COURTESY SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST VIA FLICKR

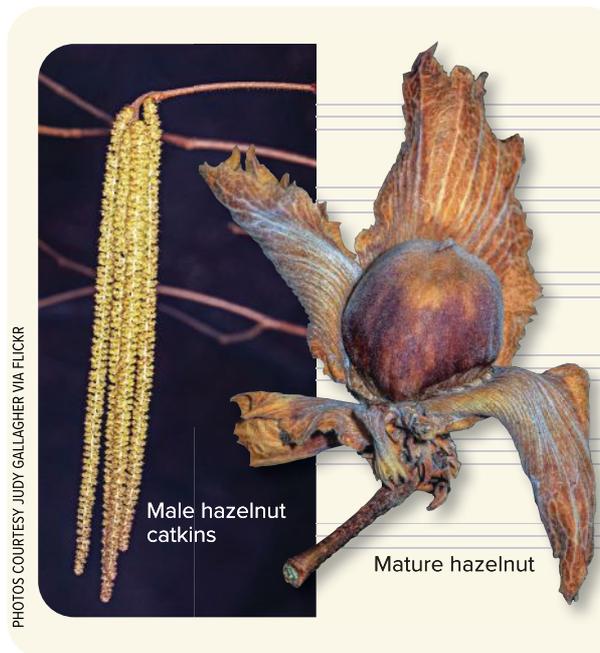
husk with ragged edges. In fact, *Corylus*, the generic name, comes from the Greek word for "helmet" — a nod to the shape of the husk. Hazelnuts are an important food source for wildlife. Caterpillars of more than 125 moth and butterfly species feed on the leaves; deer, rabbits and other mammals eat the leaves and twigs; and the nuts are feasted on by grouse, quail, turkey, songbirds, squirrels and other small mammals. Truth is, if you grow hazelnuts hoping to harvest them for yourself ... good luck!

Growers fortunate enough to harvest hazelnuts can eat them raw, roasted or ground into flour. They can be used in baking, added to salads, paired with seafood and chicken, and prepared in countless other ways. Even those who don't go out of their way to eat these nuts may still have tasted them in hazelnut pralines or in the distinctive flavor of Nutella. If you do spot hazelnuts in a product on your grocer's shelf or as an ingredient on a restaurant's menu, ask about their source. Commercial

nurseries in the U.S. grow American hazelnuts, but most hazelnuts used in food products come from closely related European and Asian species.

Hazelnut is not among the giants of our forest, nor is it a showy tree or shrub. However, as a large shrub with year-round interest that provides critical food, cover and nesting sites for a long list of birds and mammals, it is a vital component of our nation's eastern deciduous forest. ●

*Steve Carroll is a botanist and ecologist who writes about trees, gardening and the world of plants. He is the co-author of "Ecology for Gardeners," published by Timber Press.*



Male hazelnut catkins

Mature hazelnut

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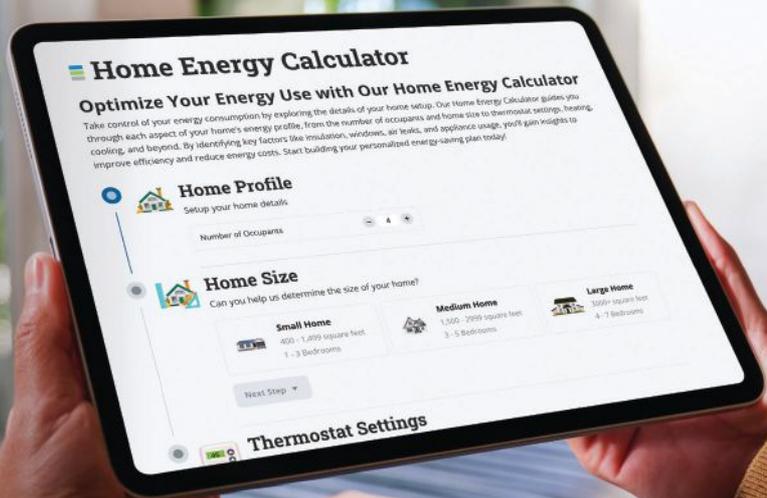
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# Leading the Charge

*Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger on making history and prioritizing energy policy*

by Jeff Caldwell, Staff Writer

**G**ov. Abigail Spanberger has made affordability and grid reliability top priorities — advancing new legislation, creating a chief energy officer position and supporting renewable energy goals while recognizing that on-demand resources like natural gas remain essential to Virginia’s economy.

She is walking a high wire across Virginia’s power lines — balancing the commonwealth’s role as the nation’s largest energy importer, home to the country’s largest concentration of data centers and leader in ambitious clean-energy goals, while keeping the lights on amid unprecedented demand.

Spanberger says that electric cooperatives are essential partners in navigating energy uncertainty and ensuring rural communities are not left behind. She recognizes both the tradition of the cooperative model and the need for innovation and a continued commitment to service in order to address Virginia’s energy future.

**You have made history as the first female governor elected in Virginia. As a mother of daughters, what does that achievement mean to you?**

While it’s certainly exciting to be the first woman to serve as governor of Virginia, it’s even more exciting knowing there will be many more women in the years to come who will also serve

the commonwealth in this position. By breaking one barrier, I believe we can give kids across Virginia the confidence to pursue their own dreams. As governor, I want to make sure that every young person in Virginia has the opportunities and support they need to achieve their goals, no matter what those goals might be or whether someone has achieved them before.

*Cooperative Living celebrates Women’s History Month by sitting down with Gov. Abigail Spanberger, Virginia’s 75th governor and the first woman elected to the commonwealth’s top office.*

**Virginia’s 13 electric cooperatives serve more than 1 million Virginians — one in seven Virginians are co-op member-owners. What is your perception of how cooperatives differ from other utilities, and how can we protect the not-for-profit business model that has made cooperatives successful for the past 80-plus years?**

Electric cooperatives play a critical role in Virginia’s energy landscape. Nonprofit cooperatives are owned by the very people they serve — and that structure helps create a set of priorities driven by community needs, long-term reliability and access, and affordability for the member-owners. My administration is committed to protecting the nonprofit model and making sure that the one in seven Virginians served by an electric cooperative continue to have access to reliable, affordable

**“My administration is working with legislators to expand energy storage, improve energy efficiency and make other common sense reforms to prevent higher costs from being passed on to consumers.”**

— Abigail Spanberger, Governor of Virginia

and community-focused energy for generations to come.

**What conversations or experiences have you had with electric cooperative customers that were influential in the development of your policy positions?**

Cooperatives have a long history of stepping up where others would not. More than 80 years ago, they brought electricity to farms and rural communities that other utilities were unable to serve. Today, they continue that tradition by expanding broadband access, strengthening grid resilience and investing in new technologies that benefit citizens and communities across our commonwealth. On the campaign trail, I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with some of the men and women who work to keep electric cooperatives strong and hear about the challenges they face. As governor, I look forward to supporting their efforts as we focus on setting up Virginia to meet the energy needs of the future.

**Energy demand is reaching unprecedented levels, and Virginia is at the epicenter of the data center boom. How can the commonwealth balance our economic development efforts against the impact of data centers on our electric supply and other infrastructure?**

Virginia’s investments in data centers have had a cumulative economic development impact. Data centers are an important source of local tax revenue for many rural communities, but I firmly believe that they should be paying their fair share for energy they use and not raising rates for everyone else. We also need to account for other resources needed to support them,

including water use and the cost of new electricity transmission built for them. As governor, I look forward to working with local leaders, legislators and community members to lower energy costs for Virginians and make sure we have electricity generation to support future economic growth in every region of our commonwealth.

**During your campaign, energy policy and affordability took center stage. What early steps will you take to implement your energy policy priorities for the benefit of electric ratepayers?**

No matter where I traveled across Virginia, the high cost of energy was one of the top issues I heard about from families and small businesses on the campaign trail. That’s why before I even took office, I announced a joint Affordable Virginia Agenda, together with General Assembly leaders, which includes legislation focused on lowering energy costs. As part of this effort, my administration is working with legislators to expand energy storage, improve energy efficiency and make other common sense reforms to prevent higher costs from being passed on to consumers. I also announced the creation of a new chief energy officer

position within my administration — a first for any Virginia governor — specifically focused on meeting electricity demand and keeping prices low. As governor, I will continue to advance these efforts, and I look forward to considering proposals from anyone — no matter their party — focused on driving down utility bills for Virginians.

**Virginia is the largest importer of electricity in the country, and we now rely on PJM and other states’ power generation to maintain our lifestyle and economy. How can Virginia produce more of its own electricity, and what steps will you take during your administration to secure reliability of our electric supply in the decades to come?**

Increasing energy generation and putting Virginia on a path toward greater energy independence are top goals of my administration. We must prioritize investing in technologies that can provide sustainable, low-cost power — like nuclear, solar, battery storage and Virginia’s nation-leading offshore wind industry. I also understand that Virginia must meet its immediate energy needs with affordable, reliable energy sources, and natural gas will continue to be part of our energy mix in the coming years. Finally, we must continue to invest in the next generation of energy technologies — including small modular

*(continued on page 12)*



Spanberger is inspiring a new generation of future female leaders by becoming Virginia’s first female governor.

## Leading the Charge

*(continued from page 11)*

nuclear reactors, fusion, geothermal and hydrogen. My administration looks forward to encouraging further development of these sources to meet our long-term energy needs.

### How do you see electric cooperatives fitting into meeting Virginia's energy needs?

I know that electric cooperatives will be natural partners as my administration works to meet Virginia's short- and long-term energy needs. Cooperatives know the communities they serve best, have invested in cross-cutting technologies to drive performance and can help make sure our commonwealth implements the types of sustainable, low-cost energy sources that make the most sense. Above all else, my focus will be on addressing the high energy costs that are impacting so many Virginia families — and I believe we can lower bills and boost resilience by working together to deploy distributed generation, increased energy storage, demand-response and efficiency programs.

### How will your administration balance the goals outlined in the Virginia Clean Economy Act while ensuring traditional on-demand energy sources like nuclear and natural gas can operate to meet the immediate and future demand of our data centers and online economy? What new technologies do you see playing a role in that balance?

I believe we can both adhere to the long-term goals outlined in the Virginia Clean Economy Act and increase the supply of affordable energy to lower costs for families in the short term. Above all else, we need to invest in a wide range of generation sources to make sure Virginia is prepared for the future. That includes investing in sources that offer sustainable, low-cost power —



Gov. Spanberger and her husband, Adam, will raise their three daughters — Claire, Charlotte and Catherine — in the Governor's Mansion as she balances the titles of governor and mother.

and continuing to develop advanced energy technologies. I also know that biomass — particularly biomass managed in such a way as to reduce local pollution and encourage sustainable forest management — should continue to be considered as Virginia works to meet increasing electricity demand.

### What role can cooperatives play in attracting new industries or broadband expansion in rural communities?

Electric cooperatives play a vital role in rural economic development by expanding broadband and building off of the infrastructure investments that businesses and agribusinesses need to be successful. We see countless examples across rural Virginia where electric cooperatives are utilizing their existing utility poles and rights-of-way to support broadband expansion, significantly expediting deployment timelines. These rural connectivity expansions foster economic development, give rural Virginians access to educational and telemedicine opportunities, and help level the playing field for rural business owners. As a member of Congress, I was proud to help negotiate and ultimately

vote to pass landmark legislation to secure more than \$1 billion for broadband internet projects in Virginia. And as governor, I remain committed to helping our commonwealth reach its goal of universal broadband internet access for every Virginia family, business and senior.

### Do you have any closing comments for the people working at our 13 Virginia electric cooperatives — from the back office to the frontline maintenance crews — who have dedicated their careers to keeping the lights on for Virginia communities?

Thank you for your relentless commitment to making sure every Virginian can count on reliable energy — no matter where they live. As you know, rising energy demand is one of the top challenges facing our commonwealth, and I strongly believe we must listen to the voices of the men and women who tackle these issues everyday if we are going to find a path forward. As governor, I look forward to hearing directly from you about how my administration can best support your work and the rural communities you serve. ●



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## SEE WHAT'S BREWING IN HOPEWELL

Just a short drive from downtown Richmond, Hopewell is brewing something special. Begin your visit at **Good Ship Brewing & Eatery**, located steps from the historic **Beacon Theatre**—the perfect spot to enjoy a craft beer or a bite before the show and return for another round afterward. Then sip your way through downtown favorites like **Brew and Blossom Coffee Co.**, **Manna Bakery**, and **What the Cup Coffee**, each offering artisan flavors and welcoming local charm. Beyond the brews, explore Hopewell's scenic Riverwalk, historic sites, and vibrant dining and arts scene. From morning lattes to evening pints, Hopewell invites you to slow down, savor the moment, and see what's brewing. [www.visithpg.com](http://www.visithpg.com), [www.hopewelldowntown.com](http://www.hopewelldowntown.com), [www.hopewellva.gov](http://www.hopewellva.gov)



HOPEWELL DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

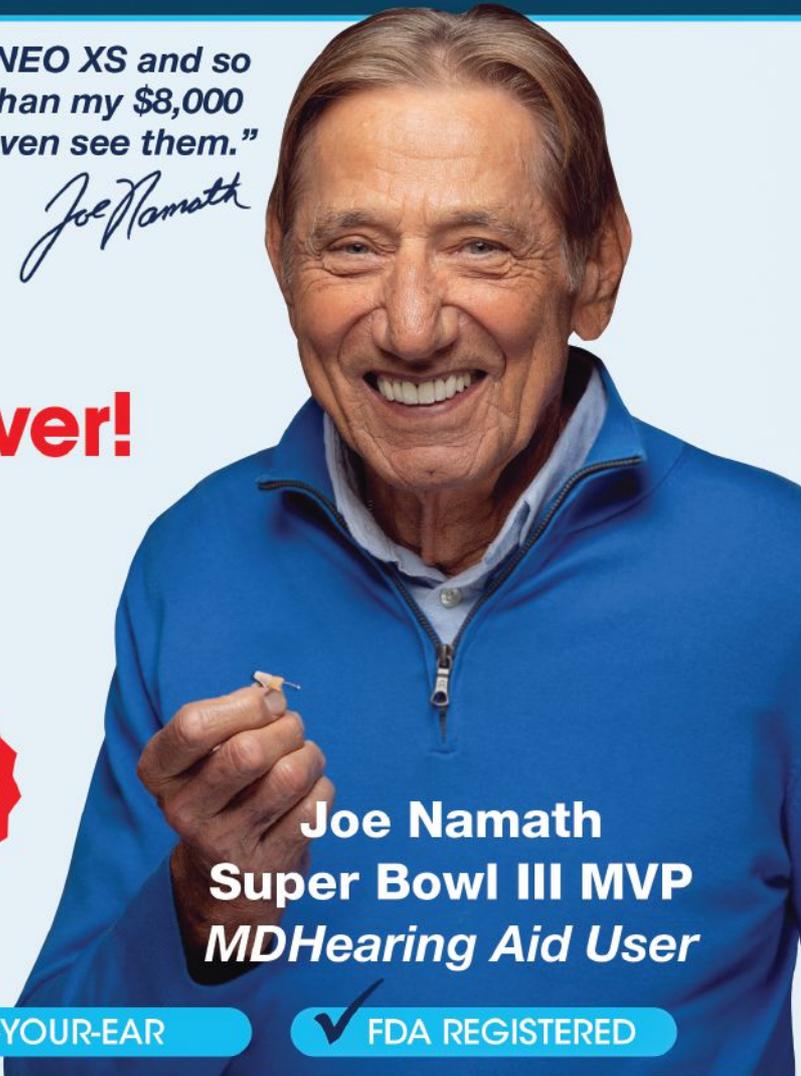
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# 2026



**REC DIRECTOR ELECTIONS**

## **Board of Director seats for Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) are open for election in Regions IV, V and IX.**

Individuals seeking to run for the REC Board of Directors must meet the eligibility requirements established in the Cooperative's Bylaws. As outlined in Article I, candidates must reside within the region they seek to represent and submit a nomination petition signed by at least 25 REC member-owners from any of the Cooperative's nine regions. Director qualifications and nomination procedures are further detailed in Article IV of the Bylaws, which are available in the Governance and Document Center within the My Cooperative section of [myrec.coop](https://myrec.coop).



# Board of Directors: Call for Nominations

Three (3) positions on the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) Board of Directors will be elected at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting on Aug. 5, 2026. To obtain the candidate nomination packet, visit [myrec.coop/directorelections](https://myrec.coop/directorelections), email [directorelections@myrec.coop](mailto:directorelections@myrec.coop) or call 540-891-5889. Interested member-owners should complete the nomination packet by the deadline of April 24 at 5 p.m.

REC's Bylaws require that any member-owner who seeks election to the Board of Directors submit a nomination petition signed by at least 25 REC member-owners.

Nomination petitions will be distributed by Director - Governance and Executive Administration, Whitney Watts, electronically or by scheduling an appointment to pick up the petition in person. To request the nomination petition, email [directorelections@myrec.coop](mailto:directorelections@myrec.coop) or call 540-891-5889.

Nominations will not be accepted at the Annual Meeting in August.

**The completed nomination materials and petition must be returned to the office of REC's president by 5 p.m. on April 24, 2026.**



All member-owners will have the option to participate in the proxy designation process beginning July 1 or vote during the Annual Meeting on Aug. 5 to elect one director from each of the following three regions:

## REGION IV

The counties of Culpeper and Orange  
*Currently represented by Sanford Reaves, Jr.*

## REGION V

Spotsylvania County  
*Currently represented by Randy Thomas.*

## REGION IX

The counties of Essex, King and Queen, and King William  
*Currently represented by Eugene L. Campbell, Jr.*

## To Become a Candidate

You must be an REC member-owner as defined under Article I of the REC Bylaws. You must also reside in the region that you wish to represent as provided under Article IV of the REC Bylaws. Member-owners signing the nomination petition can be from any of REC's nine regions. For further details on director qualifications and the nomination procedures, please review Article IV of REC's Bylaws.

**The Bylaws are available in the Governance & Document Center of the My Cooperative section of [myrec.coop](https://myrec.coop).**



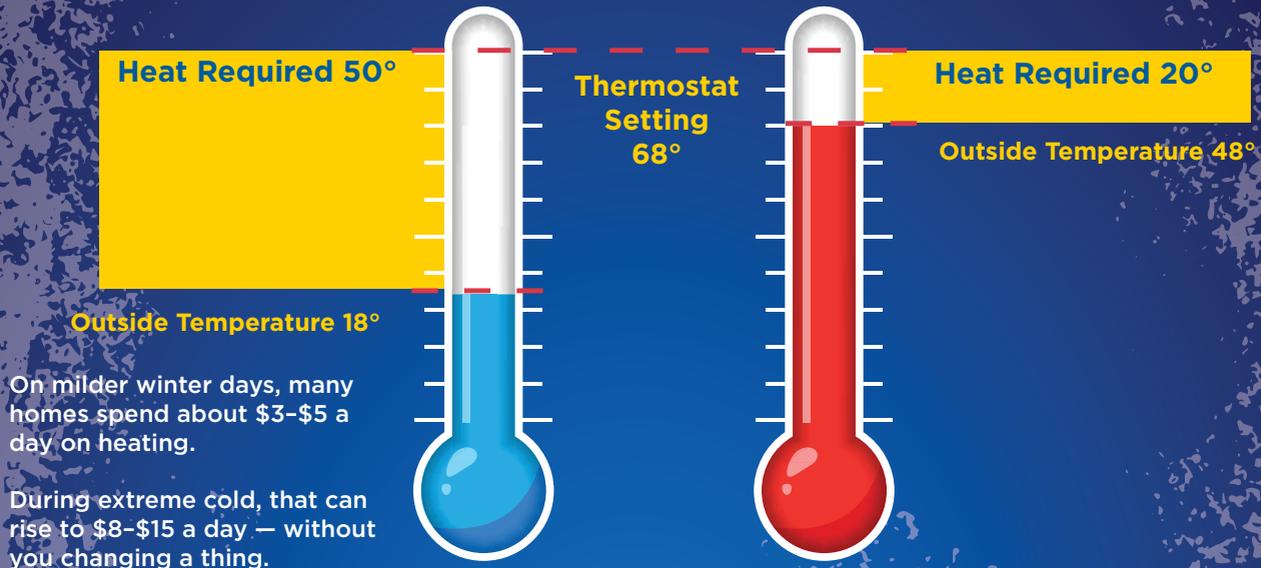
# WHY is my winter electric bill higher?

## A FRIGID FACT

Even when your thermostat stays the same, extreme cold makes your heating system work much harder.

## WHY?

The bigger the gap between your indoor temperature and the temperature outside, the more heat your home loses. When temperatures are extremely cold, your heating system has to replace that lost heat over and over, running longer just to hold the same setting. Cold outside = longer run times = higher energy use.



On milder winter days, many homes spend about \$3-\$5 a day on heating.

During extreme cold, that can rise to \$8-\$15 a day — without you changing a thing.

Learn how your energy use impacts your electric bill by taking advantage of tools available through **MyREC SmartHub**.

In MyREC SmartHub, click **Build Your Home Profile** for personalized energy-efficiency tips and advice.

**Log in Today. | MyREC.Smarthub.coop**

## Behind the Scenes

### Technology and Tools Speed Up Outage Recovery



REC teams use many tools to ensure reliability for member-owners, from the very visible, like the Cooperative's yellow trucks and online outage map (**outagemap.myrec.coop**), to tools that are truly behind the scenes. The Operations Mobile Application (OMA) is one of the latter.

"OMA bridges the gap between the field and the operations center, delivering real-time outage data directly to our crews so they can make safer, faster and more informed restoration decisions," said Arthur Wholey, senior director – operations & construction. "It keeps our information aligned, our teams connected and our service dependable when members need us most."

REC crews use the application to view outage data as they are responding from the field. It's an important link between the field and the operations center that keeps information consistent and timely and provides crews with the needed details for restoration efforts.

**Here are three top ways this application helps REC crews improve reliability and restore outages:**

1. Ensures field crews and system operations centers are viewing the same maps.
2. Passes along any notes, comments and safety information that is relevant to the specific outage event.
3. Captures real-time actions that ensure reliable power for members.



## Why Your Electric Bill May Look Different During Extreme Cold

If your electric bill looks different this month, you're not alone. It doesn't mean you did anything wrong, and it doesn't reflect any changes to your REC electric rates. Extreme cold, like we've had this winter, changes how both homes and the electric system operate, even when daily routines stay the same.

### Extreme Cold Raises the Baseline for Energy Use

In severe cold, your home shifts into a different operating mode. The gap between indoor and outdoor temperatures becomes extreme, and systems that keep your home safe and livable must work more often. Heating rooms, warming water and even everyday routines like laundry require more energy in winter.

Even if your habits don't change, winter raises the baseline. The environment itself increases how much work your home must do, which means it needs more electricity simply to function.

### How Heat Loss and Longer Run Times Add Up

Homes constantly lose heat through walls, windows and doors. During extreme cold, that heat escapes faster. To maintain the same indoor temperature, heating systems must run longer, sometimes nearly nonstop, just to keep up.

What might be a few minutes of run time on a mild winter day can become near-constant operation during a cold snap. That extra run time adds up hour by hour, day by day, increasing overall energy use.

### Learn More and Get Support

REC is committed to helping members understand how weather, energy demand and pricing are connected. We also offer tools and resources to help you manage energy use and understand your bill, including:

- Energy-saving tips
- Budget billing options
- Payment assistance programs
- Personalized use insights through your REC account

Learn more at: [myrec.coop/heretohelp](https://myrec.coop/heretohelp)

Winter simply changes how the system works. Our goal is to provide clear, practical information so you can make informed choices throughout the season.

## Understanding Your REC Electric Bill



Your electric bill shows how much electricity your home used and what it cost to deliver that electricity to you. Let's break it down.

### How Electricity is Measured

Electricity is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. A kilowatt-hour is how much electricity you use when something that needs power runs for a certain amount of time. The more electricity your home uses, the higher the kWh number on your bill.

### The Energy Use Chart

At the top of your bill, you'll see a bar graph. This chart shows:

- How much electricity your home used this month
- How that compares to last month
- How it compares to the same time last year

Weather can make a big difference here. Very cold or very hot months usually indicate more energy used.

### What the Charges Mean

Your bill includes different types of charges that pay for different parts of the electric system.

### Distribution Charges

These pay for the local system that brings electricity to your home, such as:

- Power lines and poles
- Transformers and substations
- Equipment to fix outages

### Generation and Transmission Charges

These pay for:

- Making electricity at power plants
- Moving electricity across long-distance power lines

These costs can change when lots of people use electricity at the same time, like during extreme cold.

### Putting It All Together

Your electric bill helps tell the story of how electricity gets from power plants to your home and how weather affects energy use. If your bill is higher during winter, it often means the weather made your home work harder.



Meet the CARE Charity Board

**Carty Yowell**

When Carty Yowell returned to his hometown of Madison, Va., in 2008, one of the first things he did was enroll in Rappahannock Electric Cooperative's The Power of Change. Back then, it was known as REC's Operation Round Up — and for Yowell, signing up was a no-brainer.

"It's such an easy way to give back without really feeling it," he said.

After nearly three decades in Virginia Beach working as an accountant in defense contracting, Yowell came home ready to serve. He became the Finance Director at Skyline Community Action Program and quickly immersed himself in the local community, joining a wide range of boards and initiatives. Over the years, he's served with the Madison Board of Supervisors, Madison Conservation Fund, Madison Free Clinic, Madison Education Foundation, Support Hoover Ridge and the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation.

That commitment to service eventually led him to the CARE Charity Board. "Being part of The Power of Change since 2008, it's been incredibly meaningful to now help distribute the funds," he shared.

Skyline Community Action Program, where he works, had previously received funding through The Power of Change — so he understands firsthand the impact.

"I've seen what a difference those grants can make," Yowell said. "So, when Darlene Carpenter asked me to serve on the CARE Charity Board, I didn't hesitate to say yes." Carpenter is REC's Region III director who appointed Yowell to represent the region on the CARE Board.

As he prepared for his first round of grant application reviews in 2025, Yowell was eager to make a difference in the very communities REC serves.



## THE POWER OF CHANGE



Join the more than **37,000** REC members who round up their bill to the nearest dollar. In 2025, The Power of Change gave **\$237,000** back through **71** grants across REC's service territory. The grants are awarded twice each year by the Community Awareness of Rappahannock Electric Charity Inc. Board, which is made up of 10 REC members who volunteer to serve and are appointed by the REC Board of Directors.



Learn more and enroll today  
[myrec.coop/donate](https://myrec.coop/donate).

"It's tough," he admitted. "There are so many deserving organizations, and you want to support them all."

For fellow REC members who haven't yet joined The Power of Change, Yowell offers this advice:

"Think of it like a savings account for your community. Just a few cents each month — something you barely notice — can add up to real change when we all pitch in."

Carty Yowell believes in jumping in with both feet — especially when it comes to serving his community.

Now, as a member of the CARE Charity Board, Yowell brings his passion for public service and his firsthand experience with local nonprofits to the table, with a heart for helping organizations that uplift families and strengthen the communities REC powers.



# YOUR ACTION

# YOUR SAVINGS

# YOUR SUMMER



## Earn Summer Savings Plan rebates for your energy savings

Log in to [myrec.coop/smarthub](https://myrec.coop/smarthub) to enroll now.

The amount of electricity our members use helps determine what REC pays for power. Each year, our wholesale power cost is largely set by what happens during just five peak hours in the summer — when demand across the region is at its highest. How much electricity is used during those few hours can affect our rates for the entire year. The Summer Savings Plan is designed to lower energy use during those critical moments, helping keep costs down for everyone.

From June through September, when electricity is expected to be in high demand, REC notifies participants who are already enrolled in the program to use less electricity.

On those days, a rebate is earned for each kilowatt-hour saved between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. (summer peak demand hours). Participant rebates appear as a credit on their next REC electric bill. In 2025, over \$33,500 in rebates were awarded to members participating in the program. That's thanks to members' participation and compliance with the program's goals. The Summer Savings Plan is open to most residential member-owners and some business members. And enrollment is open now.

Log in to MyREC SmartHub to sign up. Your participation can help your Cooperative control future energy costs. **Enroll today!**



**The more energy you save during peak demand hours, the larger your rebate!**

## At Your Service REC Expands Electrician Services

Your Cooperative now offers whole-home generator purchasing, financing and installation through Vividly Brighter, powered by REC. Our master electricians are also ready to professionally complete your residential or light commercial electrician services job, whether large or small.

For added convenience, the amount due for these services can be rolled into your REC electric bill for manageable monthly payments.\*

*\*Eligibility based on REC credit requirements.*



Call 800-552-3904 or request an appointment online at [myrec.coop/electricianservices](https://myrec.coop/electricianservices). You will receive a response within two business days.



Calvin Jackson

Photo by Chad Simon

## Coordinating Cooperation Among Cooperatives to Rebuild and Restore Power in Jamaica

Hurricane Melissa devastated Jamaica's electric infrastructure last autumn. America's electric cooperatives answered the island nation's call for help, in part with a crew of linemen led by REC Director of Safety and Security Officer John Medved.

### Devastation

Hurricane Melissa was the third most intense Atlantic hurricane on record when it slammed into Jamaica on Oct. 28, 2025. About 75% of the island's electric infrastructure was destroyed.

As the catastrophic damage became known, Jamaica Public Service (JPS) requested assistance from NRECA International. This nonprofit organization of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association was formed in 1962 and assists governments and citizens in 54 developing countries with rural electrification and infrastructure construction.

Medved traveled to Jamaica three weeks after Hurricane Melissa. As an NRECA International team leader, he's no stranger to international line work. Since 2015, Medved has joined projects in Haiti, Bolivia, Guatemala and, previously, in Jamaica in 2024 after Hurricane Beryl.

During his November 2025 trip, Medved assessed the conditions Hurricane Melissa

left behind. "There was no vegetation. Broken poles were everywhere. Mountain flooding left six-foot-tall debris piles," Medved said. "When our co-op crew arrived a month later, though, we saw positive differences."

### Restoration begins

For 19 days in December 2025, Medved led 10 lineworker volunteers from electric cooperatives in Arkansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri and Virginia. Lead Lineman Calvin Jackson joined Medved from REC.

"I'm glad and thankful I have the knowledge and years of storm experience to help others get a fresh start," Jackson said.

Safety gear and tools filled the linemen's luggage. "We knew we'd have minimal access to mechanized equipment. It limited the tools we could use," Medved said.

Assigned to St. Ann Parish in north central Jamaica with JPS as their local partner, the linemen rebuilt and re-energized primary and secondary distribution lines, and reconnected electric services in multiple locations.

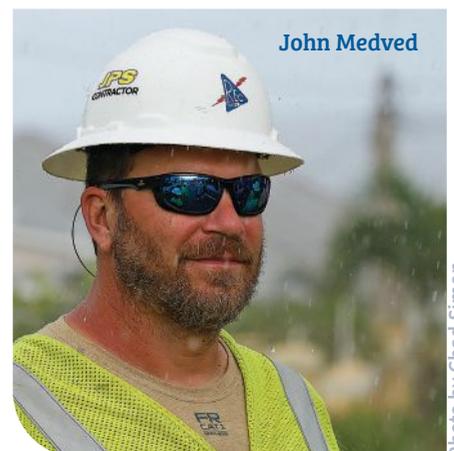
"The areas had smaller pockets of damage. The subdivisions were smaller, with maybe a dozen to 50 homes spread apart from each other," said Medved.

*continued on page 22*



Calvin Jackson (R)

Photo by Chad Simon



John Medved

Photo by Chad Simon



Photo by Chad Simon



John Medved

The cooperative crew restored electricity to 800 to 1,200 homes. They also re-connected power to an elementary school and a few small churches.

“Wherever we went, the residents were so kind,” Medved said. “Whatever we needed, they helped us.”

“We looked out for each other,” Jackson added. “By the end of the trip, we were all family.”

## Power on

Because Jamaicans have endured the destruction of numerous hurricanes, they were extremely patient during the months it took to rebuild. They were equally jubilant when the lights came back on.

“They ran out of their houses, jumping up and down. They shook our hands and fist-bumped us saying, ‘Respect, much respect,’” Jackson said. “Seeing how thankful they were, it just made the whole trip for me.”

RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE PRESENTS

# THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

*Tour*

**MARCH**

**MARCH 14**  
**Maker Energy Faire –**  
**Culpeper County Schools**  
*Culpeper*

**MARCH 21**  
**Greene County Parks & Recreation**  
**Touch a Truck and Easter**  
**Egg-stravaganza**  
*Greene*

**MARCH 27**  
**Annual Twilight Egg-Stravagant**  
**Candy Hunt**  
*Culpeper*

**MARCH 28**  
**Culpeper Con**  
*Culpeper*

## Watch Your Step: Ladder Safety

Contrary to comedic stunts, falling off a ladder is no laughing matter. National statistics report roughly 500,000 ladder-related injuries and 300 deaths from falls occur annually.

From kitchen step stools to outdoor extension ladders, stay safe with these tips:

- Read all safety labels.
- Ensure the ladder is in good working condition.
- Choose the right ladder for the job.
- Place it on firm, level ground.
- Wear clean, slip-resistant shoes.
- Maintain three points of contact by always keeping two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, in contact with the ladder.
- Never stand on the top rung or step.

March is National Ladder Safety Month. Learn more at [laddersafetytraining.org](http://laddersafetytraining.org).



**John D. Hewa**  
President & Chief Executive Officer



Board of Directors  
**Michael W. Lindsay**  
Region I



**Christopher G. Shipe**  
Region II



**Darlene H. Carpenter**  
Region III



**Sanford Reaves, Jr.**  
Region IV



**Randy Thomas**  
Region V



**Linda R. Gray**  
Region VI



**J. Mark Wood**  
Region VII



**Eric Paulson**  
Region VIII



**Eugene L. Campbell, Jr.**  
Region IX

Local Pages Editor – Casey M. Hollins, CCC

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## INVESTING IN OUR STUDENTS. SECURING OUR CO-OP FUTURE.

The Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives welcomes donations for its Education Scholarship Foundation. Its board of directors, comprised of representatives from VMDAEC member co-ops, awards scholarships of \$1,500 and more to youth and future lineworkers in co-op service areas.

Your donation can be a gift, done anonymously, or in honor or memory of someone, and 100% of your donation will be used for scholarships.

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EDUCATION  
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KIDS! CLIP AND KEEP YOUR KIDS KORNER COLUMNS IN A THREE-RING BINDER AND YOU'LL HAVE A NOTEBOOK CHOCK FULL OF FUN IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE FUTURE!

# Wind

## Nature's Invisible Super Power

story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

**M**ost people do not think much about the wind. After all, it is invisible.

But wind touches everything and is impossible to ignore. This unseen force is a vital part of the world and directly affects daily life, comfort and weather.

Wind is most noticeable when it has a real impact on outdoor activities like boating, sports events, or even carrying in groceries or walking the dog.

Warm, gentle breezes are welcome and can make everyday happenings easier and more enjoyable. In contrast, cold, strong winds can be damaging — even dangerous — and often lead to canceled plans, except for the unavoidable trips to bring in groceries or walk the dog!

It is during the month of March that the wind especially makes its presence known.

This is when the battle between the seasons occurs. As winter's lingering cold air clashes with spring's approaching warm air, the atmosphere is in turmoil.

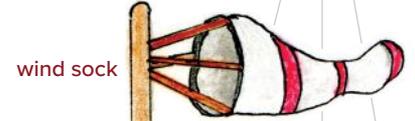
Throughout this blustery time of transition, nature's invisible force **dare**s you to come out and play!

Gusty winds are no fun for spring sports like soccer and baseball, where ball control is essential. Team members know the wind does not play fair, and they **dread** nature's sudden outbursts that test their skills. Still, games are seldom canceled, and gritty players dutifully **dare** to play on.

On the other hand, the kite fliers, pinwheel spinners and bubble blowers gladly **dare** to play with nature's unruly force, embracing the random turbulence that keeps the fun going!

As a young child, you may have thought that the wind was magical because it could be sensed but not really grasped. You could see and often hear wind's effect when leaves rustled, snowflakes swirled or a balloon was quickly snatched out of your small hand. However, you had no understanding of wind simply being invisible, moving air, composed of important gases like oxygen and nitrogen. Now, older and wiser, you are learning that wind's behavior is influenced by differences in

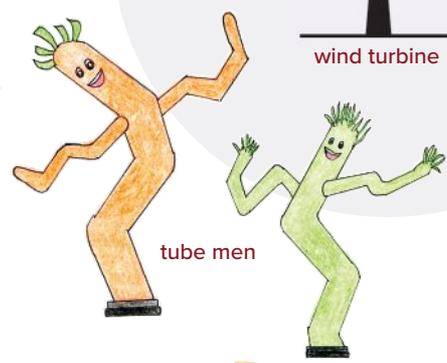
temperature and air pressure, along with Earth's rotation. Even though the wind may no longer feel magical to you, it remains a fascinating force to witness, particularly when it *plays* with these familiar items:



yard spinner



wind turbine



tube men



wind chimes



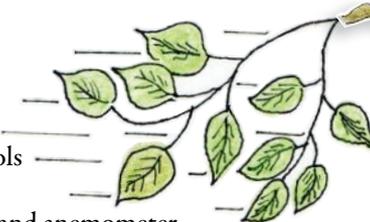


### Zinnia Seeds!

Zinnia seeds are ready for you – and the wind – to scatter in your garden. The pollinators are waiting! Send \$2 and a self-addressed (4x9 or 6x9) envelope with two stamps to:

Anne M. Dellinger, 3328 Red Banks Road, Mt. Jackson, VA 22842

For those who want a more hands-on exploration of the wind, several simple wind tools can be made at home.



The wind sock streamers and anemometer are simple to create and give visual clues about wind direction and speed. Do an online search for these items to find how-to directions, photos and videos to help you create your own.



anemometer

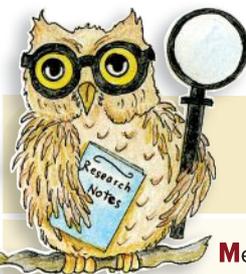
Another interesting and more challenging DIY project is the wind tunnel that measures wind's various forces. If you enjoy developing your engineering design skills, this site may be helpful: [dafstem.us/wind-tunnel/](http://dafstem.us/wind-tunnel/).

Wind has been called the *breath of the planet* and without it, life, as we know it, would be impossible.

Its mighty, invisible force affects everything from climate and agriculture to ocean currents and global energy.

But despite scientific understanding of how wind works, it is still viewed as a mysterious marvel that inspires wonder and respect.

Sometimes it whispers. Sometimes it roars. But it is always there, invisible and stirring everything. Will you dare to go out and enjoy it? •



## Super Sleuth CORNER

Meet Owlbert, the new face of the Super Sleuth Corner while Hay Seed and City Slicker are taking time off. Like the two former sleuths, Owlbert will encourage you to follow directions and answer several questions relating to the main article and then invite you to submit your findings for a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

Let's get started ... Have you ever wondered where the windiest place on earth is located? According to science, Guinness World Records and National Geographic Atlas, there is a location where consistently high winds average 50 mph and can reach 200 mph. This great force of nature happens in an extremely cold place where the heavy, dense air flows down an icy plateau to the coast, creating super-strong winds.

- Find a drawing in this issue of the continent where the windiest place on Earth is located, then give the page number.
- Give the name of the windiest place.
- What are some ways that you have played with the wind, such as flying a kite or participating in outdoor sports like soccer, baseball or track? Was the experience fun or frustrating?

Submit your answers online at [co-opliving.com/super-sleuth](http://co-opliving.com/super-sleuth) or send answers with name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuths  
4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

*Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.*

## NOVEMBER-DECEMBER'S Super Sleuth Winner

The November-December Super Sleuths was about the history of socks. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find the image of a pair of special socks hidden in the magazine and then provide the page number it was hidden on. They were also asked to name the style of the sock, as well as state whether they own a pair of them and whether they like to wear them.

The winning answers are:

- Page 24
- Tube socks
- "Yes, they are comfy in my boots and high-top shoes."

OUR WINNER IS EMMA.

**Congratulations, Emma!**

*Southside Electric Cooperative member*





# Sidekicks

## WITH ST★R POWER

Quick and flavorful side dishes that may just outshine the main course

### Parmesan Potato Wedges

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

**Ingredients:**

- 5 Yukon gold potatoes
- 2 cups grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 cup oil, for drizzling

**Directions:**

Boil whole potatoes for 20 minutes. Remove from water and slice into wedges. Heat oven to 375 degrees. In medium bowl, mix Parmesan cheese, garlic powder and onion powder. Add salt and pepper to taste. Dip wedges in Parmesan mixture, covering potatoes well. Place on cookie sheet drizzled in oil, then drizzle oil on wedges. Bake for 15 minutes, then turn the wedges over and bake for another 15 minutes.

### Loaded Coleslaw

recipe courtesy of Jill Lang



PHOTO COURTESY VEEZEY

**Ingredients:**

- 3-4 slices of bacon
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 16 oz. coleslaw mix
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons green onions, chopped
- celery seed, to taste

**Directions:**

Add bacon to a pan and cook until crispy. Remove from pan, and then chop when cool. Add mayo, mustard, salt, pepper and apple cider vinegar to a small bowl. Stir. Add coleslaw mix, cheddar cheese, bacon and green onion to a large bowl. Stir in dressing and give a good toss. Sprinkle with celery seed and serve right away. If desired, garnish with additional green onions. Refrigerate any leftovers.

### Frozen Veggie Side Dish

recipe courtesy of Family Features/  
Steph Grasso on behalf of Orgain

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 bag (14 oz.) white pearl onions, frozen
- 1 box (8 oz.) artichoke hearts, frozen, quartered
- 1 box (10 oz.) chopped spinach, frozen
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup frozen sweet peas
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream (optional)
- 1/4 cup 2% plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese



**Directions:**

Prepare frozen white pearl onions, artichoke hearts and spinach according to package instructions. In pan over medium heat, sauté onions and artichoke hearts until tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add spinach, frozen sweet peas, heavy whipping cream, Greek yogurt and Parmesan cheese. Mix until cheese is melted and peas are soft. Serve with protein and grain of choice, if desired.

#### GOT A FAVORITE RECIPE?

Email your favorite **Mediterranean recipes** to [cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com](mailto:cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com), or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o Cooperative Living, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Include your email address. You can also submit recipes online at [co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen](http://co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen).

Due to volume, we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. *Cooperative Living* cannot warrant results.

# Seniors get new medical alert device

*Instantly connects to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button with no contracts, no deposits, and no monthly bills*



■ **NO MONTHLY BILLS:** “My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old,” said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. “Now, we both have FastHelp™, the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look ‘cool’ not old,” he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-209-4926 DEPT. FSTH137 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available.



■ **SENIORS SNAP UP NEW MEDICAL ALERT DEVICE:** Instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever. Nothing to hook up. You don't need a land line or cell phone. It's ready to use right out of the box. Comes with new cellular embedded technology that works at home or anywhere you go so you are never alone.

## Seniors born before 1964 get new medical alert device

Nationwide:

Demand for new Medical Alert Device soars

The phone lines are ringing off the hook. That's because for seniors born before 1964, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am today the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

“It's not like old style help buttons that make you talk to a call center, only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere and everywhere cell service is available, whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever,” said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

“We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, today's instant rebate practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever,” Lawrence said.

FastHelp is the sleek new medical alert device with the best of combinations: a quality, high-tech engineered device that's also an extremely great value because there are no monthly bills ever. ■

## ▶ HOW TO GET IT

▶ **BORN BEFORE 1964:** Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-209-4926 EXT. FSTH137

▶ **BORN AFTER 1964:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-209-6405 EXT. FSTH137

## ▶ REBATE COUPON

**VALID FOR USE**



**21 DAYS ONLY**

Amount of Rebate (AOR) **1P**

**\$150.00 OFF**



**2Y** RE: FSTH137 1 OF 1  
DLVY: ML2077R-1

**BOTTOM LINE:** You don't need to shop around. We've done all the leg work, this deal is too good to pass up. With the instant FastHelp rebate, it is a real steal at just \$149 and shipping. There are no monthly bills ever.

**PROS:** It's the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp One-Touch 911 Button that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with no contracts or deposits. It connects you to the vast available network of cellular towers for free and saves seniors a ton of money because there are no monthly bills ever making this deal a must-have. Plus it's the only medical alert device that makes seniors look important, not old.

**CONS:** Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1964 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 21 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.

## — Five Star Customer Reviews —

**Hurricane Help**  
“We had two hurricanes recently. I had no electricity for 6 days. I fell, so I pushed the button, and they came right out and picked me up off the floor. I tell many of my friends they need to get FastHelp!” - Virginia, FL

**LIFESAVER**  
“When I got my FastHelp I never thought I'd have to use it, but when I fell and broke my hip it saved my life.” - Harold, OH

**Very appreciative of having FastHelp**  
“I did have an emergency. Help RESPONDED quickly and came in a few minutes.” - Irving, PA

**WE LOVE THE PRODUCT**  
“We bought it outright with no bills ever.” - Rosemary, NY

**Safe anywhere**  
“This little FastHelp device is my guardian angel. I'm so glad my daughter-in-law got it for me.” - Pete, FL

A+ Rating: These are unsolicited consumer feedback from satisfied customers as reported to Universal Physicians.

PLEASE USE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER WITH NO TRANSACTION FEE. ALL OTHER PAYMENT FORMS HAVE A THREE PERCENT TRANSACTION FEE. FASTHELP IS COVERED BY A 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE LESS SHIPPING AND A 1 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY. FASTHELP IS A 4G CELLULAR DEVICE. FASTHELP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE 911 CALLS WHEN CELLULAR SERVICE IS NOT AVAILABLE SUCH AS IN REMOTE AREAS. FASTHELP USES GPS TRIANGULATIONS TO APPROXIMATE YOUR LOCATION WHEN YOUR DEVICE IS TURNED ON. DR. HOWREN IS A COMPENSATED MEDICAL ADVISOR. OH RESIDENTS ADD 6.5% SALES TAX. UNIVERSAL PHYSICIANS 7747 SUPREME AVE, NORTH CANTON, OH 44720. P748B 0F24300R-1

PJM projects  
4% annual increase  
in electricity  
demand over the  
next decade.

Randolf Solar Project, from which ODEC purchases energy. Renewable energy, although weather dependent, is an important part of a diversified portfolio.

## Not All Energy Is Equally Reliable

*Understanding the difference between dispatchable and renewable generation*

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

**T**he risks to reliable power are no longer on the horizon; they're in your backyard.

Energy demand continues to climb, even as power plants are retiring faster than new ones can be built. As a result, the gap between rising demand and available supply is growing.

Forecasts from regional power grid operator PJM project electricity demand will grow by more than 4% a year, on average, over the next decade — an astonishing pace for a system that has not seen substantial demand growth in years.

Such risks are something electric cooperatives — with a mission of providing reliable electricity all day, every day — take seriously. Using the right energy resources to meet these risks is essential.

That's why generation partners like Old Dominion Electric Cooperative strategically balance a mix of dispatchable and renewable resources to ensure reliability and affordability for their member cooperatives.

Meeting today's energy needs — and preparing for tomorrow's — means understanding how different energy sources work together. No single type of energy can do it all on its own. As a member-owner of a local electric distribution cooperative, it's important to understand the differences between renewable and dispatchable resources.

### RELIABILITY IS AVAILABILITY

Reliability means power is available when needed — not just when conditions are favorable. Dispatchable resources are the backbone of wholesale electricity

supply in the U.S. These systems can adjust their output in response to demand and help keep the lights on when other sources are limited.

This winter, for example, during Winter Storm Fern, extreme conditions drove high power demand within PJM. As temperatures dropped, members relied more heavily on electricity to stay warm. Dispatchable resources carried most of the load, with natural gas providing more than 40% of PJM's on-peak generation mix. Solar and wind, combined, accounted for less than 10%. When demand is high, renewables can only complement dispatchable energy — they can't replace it.

Dispatchable resources deliver certainty, ensuring that your homes and businesses are warm and well-lit no matter the conditions or demands.

ODEC's Wildcat Point — a combined-cycle, natural gas generation facility — is part of the generation partner's balanced energy portfolio.



Cooperative communities deserve certainty.

**RELIABILITY MATTERS**

When it comes to reliability, not all energy sources are equal. Removing one megawatt of dispatchable energy — such as natural gas, coal or nuclear — from the grid and replacing it with a megawatt of renewable energy, such as wind and solar, is not an even swap. They're not equally reliable, because they're not equally available.

Consider the differences between dispatchable and renewable resources this way: Imagine hosting a big summer picnic, and everyone wants a cold drink. You have two ways to keep drinks cold: a cooler full of ice or a refrigerator.

The ice works well at first, but only as long as it lasts. On very hot days, it melts faster than expected, and someone has to keep running out to buy more. The refrigerator, on the other hand, keeps drinks continuously cold.

Renewable energy sources are a

lot like the ice. They are a valuable component of a balanced generation mix, but they depend on the weather and are not reliable when called upon for long stretches of time. Sunlight fades and winds change. And batteries, while helpful, do not create energy. Instead, they only discharge what has been stored. During extended periods of extreme demand, when these batteries cannot be recharged, they are no longer useful.

If the metric is reliability, then the focus should be on sustaining systems that can deliver dispatchable, affordable power. By strategically balancing state-of-the-art dispatchable power facilities with renewable energy sources, generation partners like ODEC and your local electric cooperative enable a steady flow of power — every time and everywhere it's needed. ●



OUR READERS LOVE EVENTS! MAKE PLANS TO SHARE YOURS IN OUR:



# 2026 **Guide** TO Fairs & Festivals



TWO GUIDES TO CHOOSE FROM, WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND EVENTS!

<p><b>Summer Fairs &amp; Festivals</b></p> <p>Publication: June 1, 2026</p> <p>Space Reservation Deadline: April 24, 2026</p>	<p><b>Fall Fairs &amp; Festivals</b></p> <p>Publication: Sept. 1, 2026</p> <p>Space Reservation Deadline: July 24, 2026</p>	<p>Take advantage of our circulation and make sure your festival or special event is included!</p>
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CooperativeLiving

CONTACT: SONJA KINNEY | [skinney@vmdaec.com](mailto:skinney@vmdaec.com) | 804-297-3429



Not equally available,  
not equally reliable.



When it comes to reliability,  
not all energy sources are equal.

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*Your future self will thank you*

# Signs of a New Season

*Spring brings beauty, chores and a little terror*

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



**W**ell, it's almost here! Yes, spring is just around the corner, and boy, do we ever deserve a big, sunshine-filled, flower-strewn hit of spring.

Soon, the cheerful yellow daffodils will be peeking their happy heads out of the ground, right next to the crocuses. It won't be too long before we can stop paying the plowboy and pay the lawn guy instead. Back when I was working regularly as a reporter, I took a photo every year of daffodils in the snow. It was my signature, if you will.

When we decide to stroll into our local home improvement store — or even into our neighborhood flower shop — we will be pleasantly assaulted by lots and lots of flowers. They come in little pots of soil (don't call it dirt!), and we just take them home and plant them wherever we can. I used to do this — but these days, I am getting too creaky for all that bending and stooping. Not to mention, I have always hated getting dirty.

Then there's the watering. It's a

chore that absolutely must be done. That would mean buying a long hose or two and figuring out how to attach it to the one spigot outside on the wall. I'd also need a hose reel. Hoses are, for me anyway, a recalcitrant thing. They just never cooperate.

The arrival of spring means we can put the heavy, fleecy jackets back in the coat closet and replace them with nothing but T-shirts. The day that we can stop wearing socks might be close at hand, too.

Of course, spring also means that the pesky gnats, hornets and dreaded ticks will wake up and head straight for us as we walk by. Did you know some hornets make their sneaky nests underground? I didn't either, until I mistakenly trod upon one. Out they came, like a squadron of military jets. Ironically, those jets are aptly named Hornets.

I keep my eyes peeled for hornet nests in the roofs, ceilings and eaves. That requires a very scary operation: Get hornet spray. Wait until dark, when they've all crawled back inside, then step into their realm and spray the devil out of those nests. I like to soak them until they collapse, then scurry back inside. On those nights, I can be found outside

in my nightgown, armed with a can of hornet spray in one hand and my phone in the other, just in case I need to call 911.

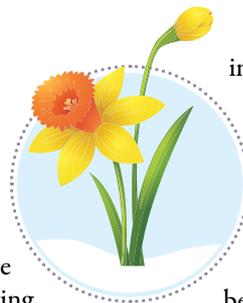
A friend who felt sorry for the state of my yard came by one day and, almost before he began mowing, was stung by a nest of hornets. I felt terrible. He did something I could never imagine doing: He got a can of gas out of his truck, poured it down the hornet hole and lit it on fire. What a frightful spectacle — but it worked! (By the way, that friend hasn't stopped by since!)

Spring also brings the necessity of changing out the closets. Although I live alone, I have four fully packed ones. Switching out seasonal clothes can take the whole day.

My very favorite thing about spring is this: I can open the screened porch, which serves as my study, dining room and reading area. It becomes a whole new room to the house for six or seven months.

I hope you have a favorite thing about the coming season. It's not too far off. But I bet we'll have another bout of snow before March 21 gets here. Then we'll get to see that wonderful sight: bright yellow daffodils peeking through sparkling white snow. ●

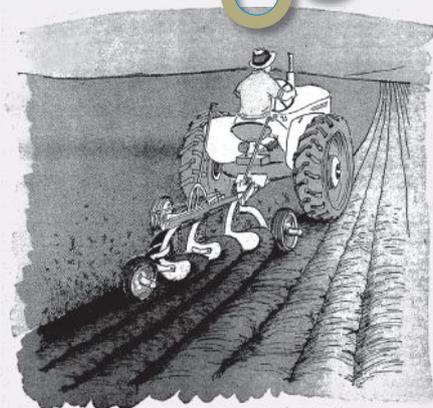
To order a copy of Margo's "A Party of One," call 540-468-2147 Mon.-Wed., 9 a.m.-5 p.m., or email [therecorderoffice@gmail.com](mailto:therecorderoffice@gmail.com).



CELEBRATING

80

Rural Living, March 1961



On the March 1961 cover of *Rural Living*, artist Paul Steucke captured the spirit of the perennial spring ritual of plowing. "In the spring," the caption read, "nearly every farmer's fancy turns to thoughts of well-turned fields."

**Know someone turning 80 this year?**

Nominate them to be featured in *Cooperative Living* by emailing [saycheese@co-opliving.com](mailto:saycheese@co-opliving.com). Please send a photo of the individual being nominated, along with their birthdate and a short description about them.

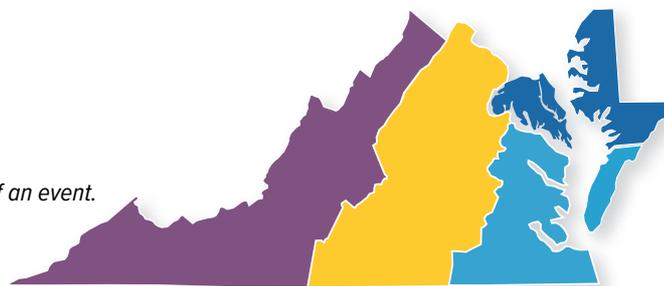


WHEREZ IT?

Look for the CL logo, like the one above, in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **WherezIt**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at [co-opliving.com](http://co-opliving.com) under "Contests." Deadline is **March 20**. The winner will receive a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

# Events Around the Area

*Editor's note: All information is believed to be accurate as of press time. Before attending, please use the contact information to verify the status of an event. Listing an event does not constitute an endorsement.*



## BLUE RIDGE WEST

### MARCH

**14-15 HIGHLAND CO. Highland County Maple Festival.** [Highlandcounty.org](http://Highlandcounty.org)

### APRIL

**10-12 BERRYVILLE. Northern Shenandoah Valley Quilt Show – A Kaleidoscope of Color.** 225 Al Smith Circle. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. [Nsvquiltshow.com](http://Nsvquiltshow.com)

**10-12 BRIDGEWATER. When Music Sounds.** Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. Times vary. [Singshenandoah.com](http://Singshenandoah.com)

**13 HUDDLESTON. Bingo.** 12253 Smith Mountain Lake Parkway. 6:30 p.m.

## PIEDMONT

### MARCH

**7 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's The Princess and The Pea.** 9419 Battle St. Times vary. [Info@virginiaartfactory.org](mailto:Info@virginiaartfactory.org). [Virginiaartfactory.org](http://Virginiaartfactory.org)

**13-15 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's In The Burning Darkness.** 9419 Battle St. Times vary. [Info@virginiaartfactory.org](mailto:Info@virginiaartfactory.org). [Virginiaartfactory.org](http://Virginiaartfactory.org)

**20,27 MINERAL. Fish Fry.** St. Jude Catholic Church. 4:30-7 p.m. [Louisacatholics.org](http://Louisacatholics.org)

### APRIL

**4 SPOTSYLVANIA. Gospel Sing.** 6823 Partlow Rd. 6 p.m.

**10-12, 17-19 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's Nonsense.** 9419 Battle St. Times vary. [Info@virginiaartfactory.org](mailto:Info@virginiaartfactory.org). [Virginiaartfactory.org](http://Virginiaartfactory.org)

**11 MINERAL. 42nd Annual Belmont Ham & Oyster Dinner.** 7124 Belmont Rd. 4-7 p.m. [Cherylmarsbcbow@gmail.com](mailto:Cherylmarsbcbow@gmail.com).

**14 HAYMARKET. Rhythm in the Garden Flower Show.** 2-5 p.m. 3510 James Madison Highway. [Htcgardenclub.com](http://Htcgardenclub.com)

## TIDEWATER

### APRIL

**3-4 CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND. 45th Annual Easter Decoy & Art Festival.** Chincoteague Combined School. Times vary. [Chincoteaguechamber.com/events](http://Chincoteaguechamber.com/events)

## MARYLAND

### MARCH

**17 EASTON. St. Patrick's Day Parade.** Downtown Easton. 5:30 p.m. [Discovereaston.com](http://Discovereaston.com)

### APRIL

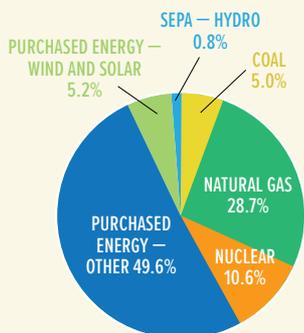
**17 CHESTERTOWN. Chester River Chorale Concert: Where Voices Meet.** Presbyterian Church of Chestertown. 7:30 p.m. [Chesterriverchorale.org](http://Chesterriverchorale.org)

**18 CHESTERTOWN. Chester River Chorale Concert: Where Voices Meet.** Presbyterian Church of Chestertown. 4 p.m. [Chesterriverchorale.org](http://Chesterriverchorale.org)

**18-19 ST. MICHAELS. Sea Glass & Coastal Arts Festival.** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 213 N. Talbot St. [Seaglassfestival.com](http://Seaglassfestival.com)

**PRINT DEADLINES:** April 1 for May 15-June 15  
May 1 for June 15-July 15

**Email:** [happenings@co-opliving.com](mailto:happenings@co-opliving.com)  
**Send to:** Happenings, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060  
**Online:** [co-opliving.com/happenings](http://co-opliving.com/happenings)



\*ODEC may sell renewable energy certificates related to these purchases to its member distribution cooperatives and non-members.

The following Virginia electric cooperatives — A&N, BARC, Community, Mecklenburg, Northern Neck, Prince George, Rappahannock, Shenandoah Valley, and Southside — purchased electricity from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) in 2025. In addition, all of these cooperatives, except A&N, purchased a small amount of hydroelectric power from the Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA). ODEC also provided power to Choptank Electric Cooperative in Maryland and Delaware Electric Cooperative.

In 2025, ODEC generated or purchased approximately 16.2 million megawatt-hours of electricity for resale to its member distribution cooperatives and to non-members. Emissions from all of ODEC's owned (and shares of partially-owned) generating facilities averaged approximately 0.000228 tons per megawatt-hour for nitrogen oxide, and approximately 0.000035 tons per megawatt-hour for sulfur dioxide. SEPA supplied approximately 139,158 megawatt-hours of electricity to the eight Virginia cooperatives indicated above. The chart displays the percentages of total energy supplied by ODEC and SEPA to all ODEC members in 2025. The power supply mix of individual ODEC members may vary as a result of purchases or generation of power directly from other resources.

For questions related to this summary data, please call Laura Rose at 804-968-7160.

**AUCTIONS**

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**BUSINESS**

**FIREARM-RIGHTS RESTORATION.** Call for free consultation: Attorney John Janson at 434-953-8794 (Virginia Bar #91236).

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**WANTED**

**ACTIVE PASTURELAND.** Fenced, cross fenced. NO GOVERNMENT WELLS or DEED RESTRICTIONS. Cash and close. John 434-953-8794.

**ARROWHEADS.** Buying all types of Native American artifacts. Any size collection. 757-373-3502.

**AMERICAN WHISKEY AND BOURBON.** Entire collections or single items, bottles or decanters. Sealed and unopened. The older, the better. Cash. Call 540-845-6107 or email majiddk@comcast.net.

**VINTAGE SPORTS CARDS.** Pre-1980. Baseball, football, basketball, hockey and non-sports. Sports memorabilia/autographs. Vintage toys, G.I. Joe and diecast cars (Hot Wheels, Matchbox, Corgi, etc.). The older, the better. Fair cash offers. Call or text Loni at 434-760-5060.

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**SUBMIT:** We accept classifieds by email (classifieds@co-opliving.com), telephone (804-297-3429) or mail to: Classifieds, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Please type or print your ad as you would like it to appear and how many months it should run. Include your name, street, email address and pre-payment. Checks should be made to *Cooperative Living*. Ads with incomplete information will be returned to the sender.

**RATES:** Non-business: \$80 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25; OR "Mini" ad – \$5 per word (max. 10 words). Business, agent and broker ads: \$150 per 25-word block, plus \$5 per word over 25. Display Real Estate: \$299 per block.

**DEADLINE:** March 5 for April issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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# The Price of Power

What higher power costs mean for you —  
and for your local electric cooperative

by Jeff Caldwell, Staff Writer



**R**ising prices affect everyone, but for electric cooperative member-owners, the impact is both personal and business. Your household budget is squeezed, and so is your cooperative's. That is why co-ops work hard to manage costs carefully and to be transparent about the factors that influence your bill.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations that have limited resources to absorb higher costs. As a result, co-ops are often forced to pass through the cost of the electricity they provide to homes, farms and businesses, along with the expense of keeping power reliable.

That includes maintaining and building power lines, replacing transformers, upgrading equipment, operating substations, purchasing bucket trucks and employing line crews.

## WHAT'S BEHIND RISING PRICES?

Your power bill has two major components: delivery costs (maintaining the grid, equipment and infrastructure) and energy costs (the electricity itself). Both are rising.

Costs for the goods needed to build, maintain and repair the electric lines powering your home are shared across everyone served by the cooperative. This charge can go by different names depending upon your cooperative, but it is essentially a delivery charge that covers the cost of maintaining the electric infrastructure needed to deliver power and manage the system, including meter reading, equipment, maintenance and billing.

Commodity costs have surged over the past five years. Utility poles are up 25% to 40%, copper wire cost is up 50% and transformers are up 70% to 100%. These increases directly impact delivery charges. Complicating matters further, co-ops must also pay transmission costs

to get electricity from the source to a location where it can be distributed.

The cost of electricity flowing through your co-op's grid is also rising, appearing on your bill as a per-kilowatt-hour charge.

Demand for electricity is increasing at unprecedented levels. Large industrial and commercial projects require more energy, while population growth is driving higher residential use. In parts of Northern Virginia — known as “data center alley” — an estimated 70% of worldwide internet traffic is processed daily, significantly increasing energy demand.

Virginia is one of the nation's top electricity importers. As national demand grows and more utilities buy power on the open market, supply-and-demand pressures are driving prices higher.

## MANAGING COST AND DEMAND

Electric co-ops are working to control costs, reduce power use and plan expansion carefully to meet demand while avoiding unnecessary overbuilding. As member-owners, you are part of decisions that maximize efficiency while minimizing costs. With costs rising, electric co-ops try to work with member-owners who may be struggling to afford their electric bills.

Future columns will examine cooperative efforts to control costs and improve energy efficiency, the impact of data centers on the electric grid, and how co-ops are planning for the future while maintaining traditional business practices that form the foundation of the cooperative model. ●

▶ *To learn more about the charges that appear on your electric bill and how your individual power costs are accounted for, visit your co-op's website for more information.*

# THANKS FUR READING!

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

### A-MEW-SED READER ▶

Sweetie has great taste in reading material.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JEREMIAH HOWDYSELL



### WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS!

Submit a photo for a chance to win a \$20 Amazon gift card!

If your photo is published in this column, we will send you a \$20 Amazon gift card credit via email. Send your high-resolution images to saycheese@co-opliving.com. Please include your first and last name, along with a description of the photo. You may also mail your photo(s) to: Say Cheese, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Do not send originals; photos cannot be returned.



### ▶ PAWS WITH A CLAUSE

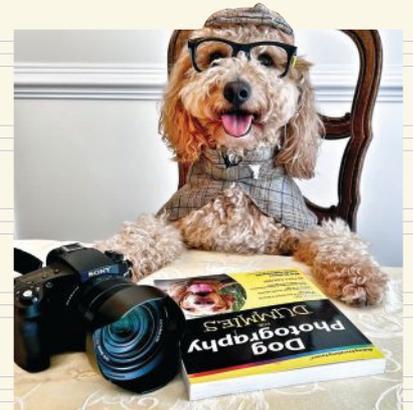
Gromit Sims found the snack loophole.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SHEILA BOWES

### DOGGONE SMART ▶

Clover is both stylish and studious.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LYNN PETERS



### BOOKED SOLID ▼

When it comes to book club matters, Jax is on top of things.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TIM FITZWATER



### ▲ SMARTY PAWS

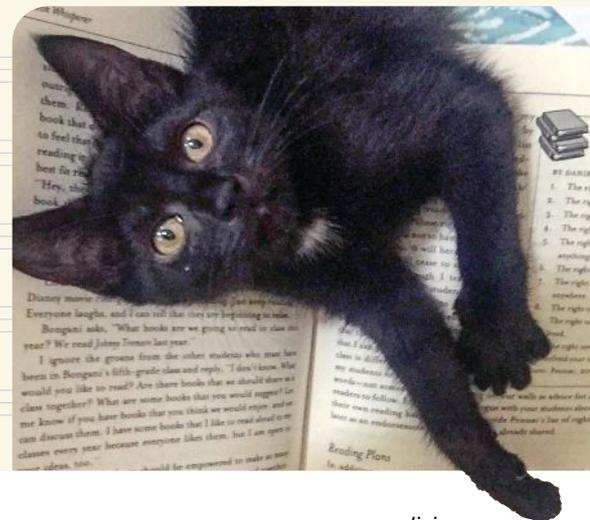
The glasses add an air of distinction, even if treats and napping remain the top priority. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARGIE RIDLEY



### FELINE BOOKISH ▼

Purr-fectly cozy between the pages.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DAWN BEAHR



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