

THE FOURTH
DECADE PAGE 4

FEMALE FARMERS
EMERGE PAGE 6

EYES ON THE
POWER GRID PAGE 28

CHECK OUT YOUR
REC NEWS
PAGE 15

MAY 2026

RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC

Cooperative Living



POWERING THEIR FUTURE

PAGE 10



Students develop new skills during Southside Virginia Community College's Power Line Worker Program, in April 2022, just before the school awarded its 400th linework diploma.

LAURA EMERY PHOTO



BUILD YOUR CAREER IN CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

Build, connect, power, and maintain the infrastructure behind the cloud by learning how data centers are constructed, cabled, operated, and supported. This hands-on training prepares you for essential roles involving server installation, maintenance, and the physical systems that keep critical technology running.

UPCOMING INFO SESSION EVENTS

Trades Job Fair
May 7, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Fauquier Campus

Tech Careers
June 11, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Middletown Campus or Online



GAIN IN-DEMAND SKILLS

Get workforce-ready with hands-on cloud infrastructure training and careers averaging \$68,000 per year.

- FIBER OPTIC INSTALLER & TECHNICIAN
- DATA CENTER TECHNICIAN
- CERTIFIED MISSION CRITICAL OPERATOR
- POWER LINE WORKER
- HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR
- CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Scan to Learn More



MIDDLETOWN, VA
LURAY, VA, AND WARRENTON, VA



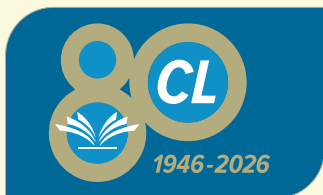
(540) 868-7021



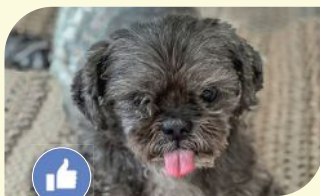
laurelridgeworkforce.com

CL ONLINE / SOCIAL MEDIA

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS!
CO-OPLIVING.COM



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK
FACEBOOK.COM/COOPERATIVELIVING



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM
INSTAGRAM.COM/COOPERATIVELIVINGMAGAZINE



DEPARTMENTS

- 10 Cooperative Focus
- 14 Smart Connect
- 24 Kids Korner
- 26 Cooperative Kitchen
- 28 Energy Insight
- 31 Grid Watch
- 32 Rural Living
- 33 Happenings
- 35 Marketplace
- 36 Say Cheese

FEATURES

- 2 OUR COMMUNITIES**
Two co-ops celebrate 90-year legacy of service.
- 4 80TH ANNIVERSARY**
Revisiting *Cooperative Living's* fourth decade.
- 6 FARM LIFE**
Number of farms worked by women on the rise.
- 9 BRANCHING OUT**
Spring's fringe tree meets an uncertain future.

VIEWPOINT

New Horizons and A Familiar Past



I hope you have enjoyed reading about the early history of *Cooperative Living* and the featured stories of the past. While we feel like we are traveling through uncharted territory — much like the Artemis II astronauts who recently journeyed farther into space than any humans before them — this month's stories from the turbulent late 1970s and early 1980s remind us about the many challenges we've faced and overcome.

Our cover story, which explores how electric cooperatives are training the professional lineworkers needed to keep the lights on for decades to come, is a reminder that planning for the future has always been part of the cooperative mission.

That is exactly what our electric cooperative founders were doing when they first came together to bring electricity to rural communities. They were working to ensure that all

residents could share in the safety, security, convenience and economic opportunity that electrification made possible.

It is also what your electric cooperative is doing today. Your elected co-op leaders and the professionals they hire are working to address the engineering, legislative, staffing and affordability challenges we face now — and those we know are coming. They are also working to save you money, improve efficiency and maintain the energy reliability our homes, farms and businesses depend on.

You'll find stories throughout this issue that reflect those efforts along with celebrating the 90th anniversaries of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative.

I can't help but wonder what readers will think of this decade when we are celebrating our 100th anniversary. One thing will remain constant: Your electric cooperative will be there to keep the lights on and take care of its members. ●

Brian S. Mosier

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

Cooperative Living

VOL. 81, NO. 5 • ISSN 1529-4579

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.

JEFF CALDWELL • Vice President of Communications
 JACK COOKSEY • Managing Editor
 LAURA EMERY • Deputy Editor
 JOHN GROTT • Director of Creative Services
 JASON KENNEY • Director of Strategic Communications
 SONJA KINNEY • Advertising Account Representative
 TOMMY CAMPBELL • Digital Producer

Published by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives

FRANK W. BACON • Chair
 TODD VAN HORN • Vice Chair
 SCOTT WHITE • Secretary/Treasurer
 BRIAN S. MOSIER • President & CEO

Board of Directors: Christopher D. Bott, Belvin Williamson Jr., A&N; C. Michael Sandridge, Bill Buchanan, BARC; George N. Goin, Gary E. Wood, Central Virginia; Robert B. Thompson, Micheal E. Malandro, Choptank; Jeannette S. Everett, Steven A. Harmon, Community; James E. Huffman, Jeff M. Ahearn, Craig-Botetourt; Patricia S. Dorey, Rob A. Book, Delaware; Fletcher B. Jones, Casey J. Logan, Mecklenburg; Richard E. McLendon, Holly Wargo, Northern Neck; Wade C. House, Kristen R. Senechal, Northern Virginia; Ricky West, M. Brad Coppock, Powell Valley; Herbert R. Patrick, Sarat K. Yellepeddi, Prince George; Sanford Reaves Jr., John D. Hewa, Rappahannock; G. Todd Van Horn, Greg S. Rogers, Shenandoah Valley; Frank W. Bacon, Jason C. Loehr, Southside; Sonja Cox, Scott White, SMECO.

To advertise in *Cooperative Living*, contact: advertising@co-opliving.com or 804-297-3429.

National Advertising Representative: AMP, 611 South Congress Ave., Suite 504, Austin, Texas 78704 • 800-626-1181



Member of AMP network of publications, reaching more than 9 million homes and businesses.

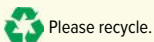
To change your subscription, contact your electric cooperative.

For editorial inquiries, contact editor@co-opliving.com.

COOPERATIVE LIVING MAGAZINE (USPS 473-300) is published 10 times a year, monthly except for combined January-February and November-December issues, by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. POSTMASTER, address changes should be sent to: *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Ste. 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060, 804-346-3344. Periodicals postage is paid at Glen Allen, VA, and additional mailing offices. Subscription: \$6.49 per year for members of subscribing co-ops; \$10 per year for all others.

ADVERTISING PUBLISHED is accepted on the premise that the merchandise and services offered are accurately described and willingly sold to customers at the advertised price. Neither this magazine nor the electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland or Delaware endorse any products or services advertised herein. If any readers encounter noncompliance with these standards, they are asked to inform the Association.

Cooperative Living is a registered trademark of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Please recycle.



PHOTO COURTESY SVEC

SVEC substation



PHOTO COURTESY CBEC

CBEC office, late 1950s

Ninety Years Strong

Two electric cooperatives celebrate a shared legacy of service

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

Ninety years ago, bringing electricity to rural areas required more than wires and poles. It took determination, cooperation and a shared commitment to improving life in rural communities.

In 1936, that shared vision led to the creation of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative to deliver reliable, affordable electric service to rural residents who had long gone without it.



Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative



CRAIG-BOTETOURT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

SVEC, headquartered in Rockingham, holds the distinction of being Virginia's first electric cooperative, chartered June 26, 1936. CBEC, headquartered in Newcastle, followed soon after with its incorporation on Aug. 12, 1936. Their beginnings reflect a chapter in the broader story of rural electrification across America following the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration in May 1935.

Electricity didn't just illuminate farms, homes and businesses. It changed how people lived and worked, expanding opportunities for generations to come. What began with hand-set poles and single wires stretched across remote, rugged terrain has grown into a resilient regional electric system.

Today, CBEC maintains more than 1,300 miles of line across Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia. "Over the past nine decades, CBEC has grown and evolved with a changing world, while staying true to our roots and our commitment to the families, farmers and communities we serve," says Jeff Ahearn, CEO of CBEC.

SVEC serves more than 104,000 meters across the Shenandoah Valley region and maintains more than 8,000 miles of electric lines. "We're carrying on a tradition of great service while looking forward to many more decades of powering people's lives," says SVEC President and CEO Greg Rogers.

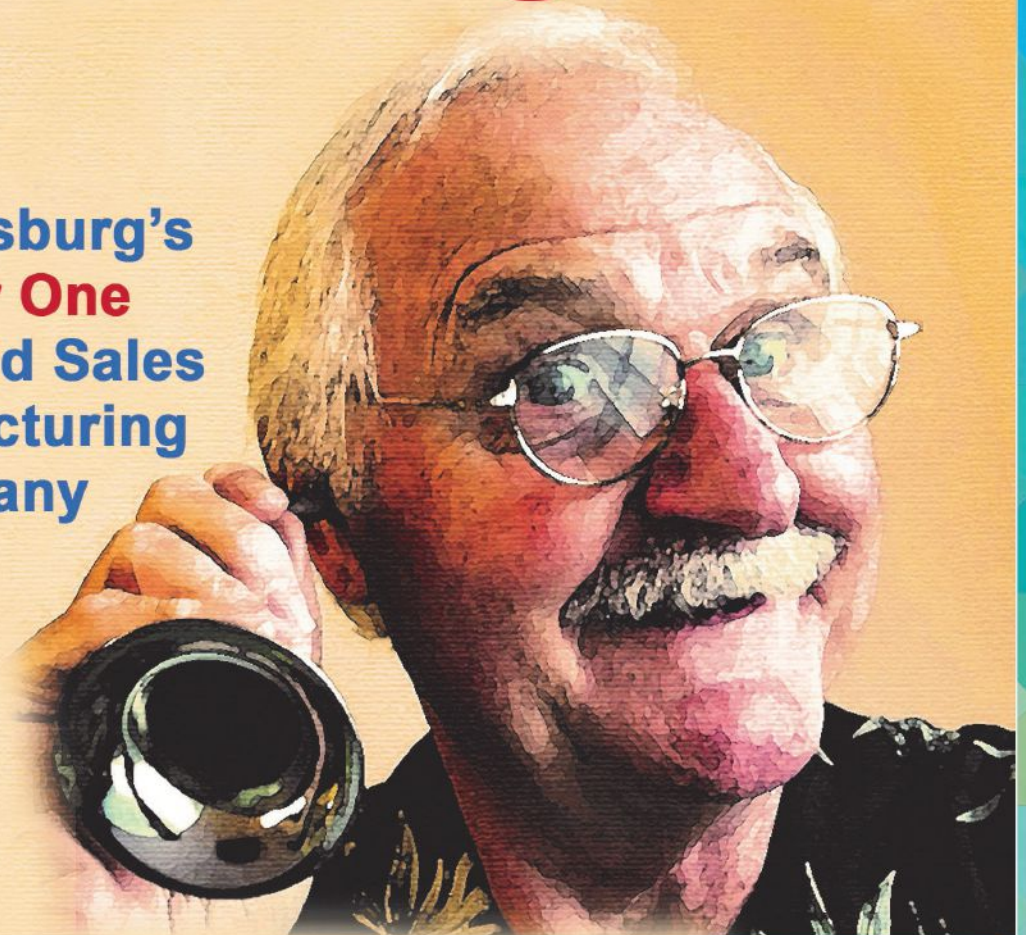
Although their service territories differ in size and geography, both cooperatives are built on local ownership, community focus and a commitment to serving members, not shareholders. For nine decades, the cooperative difference has shaped how the two organizations operate — from mutual aid and infrastructure investment to supporting communities and investing in local youth.

SVEC and CBEC remain guided by the same principles that first brought electricity to rural communities. Those principles continue to shape long-term decisions, ensuring reliable, affordable electric service. The legacy the original co-op members began is carried forward in every mile of line built, every new member served and every generation still benefitting from the foundation established nine decades ago. ●


▶ To view additional historical photos, visit co-opliving.com.

Maybe, It's Time For New **Hearing Aids!**

Fredericksburg's
Number One
Hearing Aid Sales
& Manufacturing
Company



*Providing FREE In-Home Testing
& Consultations For Over 30 Years!*

Lane "Custom"
Hearing 

3516 Plank Rd., Suite 101-A
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

540-785-0999



1976-

Powering Forward

Celebrating the fourth 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 published in October 1946 — began inspiring, informing and connecting electric cooperative members.

The magazine's fourth decade, from 1976 to 1986, was defined by challenge and change as rural communities faced rising energy costs, fuel shortages and extreme weather. In the pages of what was then known as *Rural Living*, readers followed the challenges shaping rural electrification — and the cooperative response to them.

POWER UNDER PRESSURE

The January 1977 issue focused heavily on escalating power and fuel cost adjustments and the impact on members' electric bills. Concerns about energy availability loomed large. "Science teaches us that energy is unlimited," one article noted. "But common sense tells us that we're about to run out of oil and gas as energy sources."

Those concerns reflected national realities. The effects of the 1973 oil embargo still rippled across the nation, as reduced production and restricted exports tightened supply and drove up prices. Then came the brutal winter



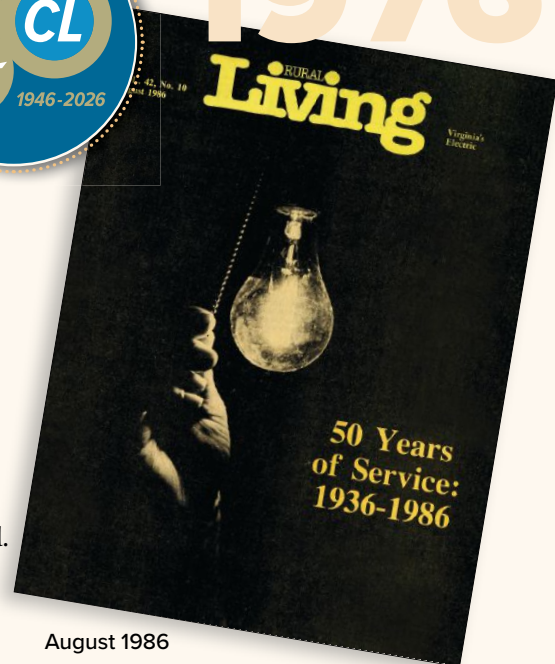
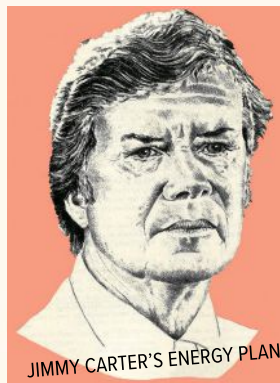
Winter 1976-77

of 1976-77, bringing record-low temperatures and surging demand for electricity.

Electric cooperatives across the region felt the strain. BARC Electric Cooperative reported an all-time high monthly purchase of more than 10 million kilowatt-hours to meet demand. Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative reported fielding a flood of calls from members reacting to soaring winter energy bills. State leaders in Virginia and Maryland responded with urgent measures. In Virginia, Gov. Mills Godwin declared a statewide emergency, limiting heating in commercial buildings to 65 degrees. In Maryland, Gov. Marvin Mandel called for broad energy conservation.

Even as prices climbed — far from the days of nickel sodas and 30-cent gallons of gasoline — the magazine reminded readers that electricity remained a relative value. In January 1977, the average rural household used 964 kilowatt-hours per month, costing about \$34.43, or roughly \$1.15 per day.

The winter of 1977 left a lasting impression across the region. The headlines that followed, such as "Let's Learn From Experience," "Filling the Energy Barrel," "Future Needs," "Counting Our Blessings" and "Baby, It Was Cold Outside," reflected both hardship and resilience as national conversations turned to President Jimmy Carter's energy plan and growing debate over nuclear power.



August 1986

ENDURING, EXPANDING

Coverage throughout the late 1970s continued to address outages, rising costs and the search for long-term energy solutions. Yet even during difficult times, lighter features — including the magazine's fashion and gardening columns — offered readers a welcome escape.

Progress continued alongside the challenges. By 1978, 98% of the nation's farms had electric service. That same year, A&N Electric Cooperative connected Tangier and Smith islands to the mainland power grid, marking a milestone moment for the communities served there.

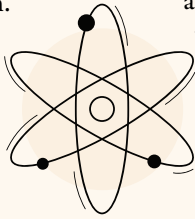
The publication itself also expanded. In August 1978, Delaware Electric Cooperative joined the *Rural Living* family, extending the magazine's reach across three states and expanding its role as the voice of rural electrification in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. With the addition of Delaware, 15 of the association's 18 member cooperatives were sending *Rural Living* to their consumers.

As the decade drew to a close, attention increasingly turned to the



Fashion of 1981

future of power generation. Discussions intensified about nuclear-power generation, with one editorial describing the national debate as nearing “hysteria.”



Even in the face of major storms, cooperation remained a defining strength. After a significant snowstorm struck Virginia — which the editor noted coincided with the opening games of the 1979 World Series — more than 60 crews from neighboring cooperatives joined restoration efforts, demonstrating mutual aid in action.

STRENGTH IN CONNECTION

The early 1980s brought important structural changes within the cooperative community. In January 1980, Northern Piedmont Electric Cooperative and Virginia Electric Cooperative merged to form Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, strengthening service capabilities as utilities adapted to rising costs.

At the same time, the magazine continued reflecting the culture of the moment. A 1980 feature highlighting what was “in” (Talking Heads, pigs, squash and Timberland boots) and “out” (caviar, croissants, saddle shoes

and Snoopy) captured changing tastes in fashion, food and lifestyle.

Readers also found practical coverage of home improvement, gardening, safety and energy conservation.

In 1981, *Rural Living* launched its first reader-photo contest — a precursor to today’s popular Say Cheese column. The magazine also highlighted regional events, such as the Oyster Fleet Sailboat Races and the Waterford Fair, and noted the growing popularity of ceiling fans and the musical “Annie.”

The year 1983 marked several milestones. Tri-County Electric Cooperative and Prince William Electric Cooperative merged to become Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative. The Virginia Association of Electric Cooperatives became the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. *Rural Living* also distributed its first 40-page issue, with a press run of 195,358. (The current print edition circulation, by comparison, is roughly double that figure.)

Despite reaching half a million readers, the publication was reevaluated as readers faced rising electric bills and cooperatives navigated increasing power costs. The magazine’s governing board of directors reaffirmed its original mission as a practical working tool for cooperatives and the members they serve. Delivering *Rural Living*

for less than the cost of a first-class postage stamp, the editor noted, remained an accomplishment in which its staff “took great pride.”

In May 1985, the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration was acknowledged. That same month, Richard G. Johnstone Jr. became editor, succeeding Charlie C. Jones. In his debut column, Johnstone noted the total association cost to deliver the magazine was only 21 cents per reader per month.

Later that year, Virginia felt the impact of Hurricane Gloria. Less than six weeks afterward, devastating flooding across western and central Virginia destroyed homes, roads and electric infrastructure and claimed lives.

In the July 1986 issue, *Rural Living* reported on new seatbelt legislation requiring drivers to wear seatbelts while operating a motor vehicle — underscoring the publication’s continued role as a practical guide to the issues facing members’ daily lives.



Through a decade marked by energy uncertainty, cooperative growth, severe weather and organizational change, *Cooperative Living* continued to evolve — balancing challenge with progress while continuing to inform and connect the rural communities served by electric cooperatives. ●

STAR WARS

The science-fiction space opera film, “Star Wars,” debuts in theaters in May 1977.



In March 1979, the Three Mile Island accident occurs, the nation’s worst nuclear incident.



In 1981, MTV launches as the first 24-hour cable network devoted to airing music videos.



In 1986, the Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes after liftoff, grounding the nation’s space program for 2 ½ years.

Changing the Field

From pastures to pines, women in agriculture lead by example

by Nicole Zema, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

Virginia farming is full of female farmers, and they are making an impact on Virginia agriculture and forestry.

The 2022 Census of Agriculture reported farming as a primary occupation for 8,810 women out of Virginia's 25,000-plus female farmers. These full-time farmers and foresters set high standards within Virginia's largest private industries and account for 37% of the commonwealth's farmers.

Since the United Nations General Assembly designated 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer, agriculture groups are highlighting the contributions of rural women and their role in sustaining the economic strength of their families, communities and the nation.



Laura Hudson

PHOTOS COURTESY VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

A natural resources elective in high school was the trailhead on her path. She studied fisheries and wildlife conservation at Virginia Tech, with a minor in forestry. “My goal was to come back and find a job where I could live and work in my hometown,” Hudson recalls. “Thankfully, Halifax County is pretty big in the forest industry with good opportunities.”

Hudson's tenure as an area forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry was a step along the way to her role as the Southern Piedmont regional supervisor for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program.

She now oversees stewardship practices on forestland across 11 counties on natural areas of statewide significance that DCR acquired and manages through the Natural Area Preserve System. Its Natural Heritage Stewardship Section maintains and enhances the value of natural resources through management planning, operations management and research.

“We're also harvesting timber, controlling invasive species and overseeing prescribed burns,” Hudson explains. “Trying to provide for good management on the ground.”

Though men far outnumber women in forestry, Hudson says, “I felt I was always looked at as a peer. I was the only female area forester working in Halifax County, and I'm still the only woman here in my particular position.” ●



Sarah Wilson stands with her husband, Adam, and their children, Clint and Mady.

In Washington County, Sarah Wilson runs a 300-head cow-calf operation with her father and handles much of the day-to-day work.

She says her children say they're always doing something with hay. “We're fertilizing hay, we're mowing hay, we're raking hay, we're baling hay, we're storing hay,” Wilson says. “Or we're feeding hay.” She needs all that hay to feed 300 cows and their 300 seasonal calves at Leonard Land and Livestock in Russell County.

There are no “typical days,” Wilson says, as farm responsibilities vary by season.

Wilson had a successful career in healthcare sales — but when presented with an opportunity to return to the family farm in 2010, she took it.

“I was born and raised on my family's farm and loved it,” she says. “It's where I developed a passion for agriculture and where I really wanted to be.”

Her family farm's culture was inclusive of women. “I was never told that girls can't do this,” Wilson says.

It took time to reestablish herself in agricultural circles after returning as farm operator. “Sometimes early on, a big decision had to be made, and people would want to call my dad or my husband, Adam,” Wilson says. “But being persistent and showing up is a factor in establishing yourself.”

Wilson's balancing act as a volleyball mom, agricultural leadership fellow, and member of state boards and local committees — while managing employees at a 1,500-acre cow-calf operation — has its rewards and challenges. “I'm thankful — being able to work with my family and kids alongside us on a daily basis is completely satisfying.”

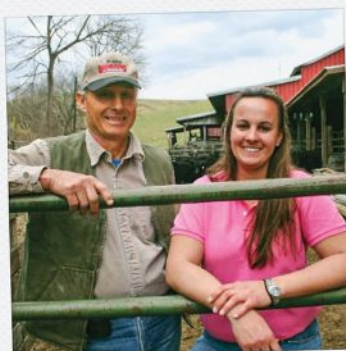
In Halifax County, Laura Hudson enjoys a full-time career in forestry.

Celebrating 100 Years

of Supporting Virginia Farmers & Communities



The Moyer Family
Amelia County



The Smith Family
Rockbridge County



The Shackelford Family
Albemarle County

For the past 100 years, **Virginia Farm Bureau** has been supporting farmers and serving all Virginians. From grassroots advocacy for farmers to tangible financial benefits for nonfarmers, we've been an integral part of Virginia communities for a century.

See how Farm Bureau can support you too!



Scan to find out more



**Lifetime
METAL
ROOFING**

**SUPERIOR DURABILITY
ENERGY EFFICIENT ROOFING
NO MORE STAINED SHINGLES
40 YEAR FINISH WARRANTY**

WE FINANCE!
LOW MONTHLY PAYMENTS*
SENIOR CITIZENS DISCOUNT
*With Approved Credit

FREE QUOTE! **CALL NOW TO SAVE!**
800-767-1591

**MOBILE
HOME
ROOFING**



**METAL
BUILDINGS**



LifetimeBuildingSupply.net



FREE ESTIMATE!
HOUSES & MOBILE HOMES

GET A QUOTE



Avoid the surge for summer savings

Energy is most expensive at peak times when many are using electricity all at once. Help your cooperative manage energy costs, and consider running large appliances late at night when others are using less energy. Many appliances have built in timed delay functions for ease and convenience.

Save energy by timing it right

Did you know that staggering use of large appliances can support grid reliability? Staggering use over time also helps lessen the load on the electric grid.

For more energy savings tips visit odec.com/waystosave.



ODEC Old Dominion Electric Cooperative®



Spectacular Beauty, Hazy Future

A belle of the ball in springtime, the fringe tree faces unwelcome suitors

by Steve Carroll, Contributing Columnist

White fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) is one of our region's most beautiful yet underappreciated small trees. Its fragrant, white flowers open as the leaves emerge, providing an opportunity for it to steal the show from other spring-flowering trees. Nature writer Donald Culross Peattie called it "a raving beauty." Fringe tree flowers also typically open late enough in spring to avoid frost damage. Despite these benefits, you may be wise to avoid planting this tree. It's better to appreciate specimens growing along streets, in nearby parks or in neighbors' yards. But more on that later.

Fringe tree can grow as a large shrub or a small tree (12 to 20 feet tall and wide, or more) and does best in full sun to partial shade. It is a native species from New Jersey to northern Florida, and from eastern Oklahoma westward into Texas, but

it is often planted successfully outside this range.

The creamy-white flowers have four straplike petals and hang in clusters. Plants are typically either male or female, with male flowers slightly larger than female flowers. If female flowers are successfully fertilized, small, blue, olive-shaped fruits develop. And speaking of olives, fringe tree — such as ash and a few other species — are among the few North American native trees in the olive family.

Leaves emerge and expand in late spring. They grow in pairs along the stem; have smooth, untoothed margins; and are 4 to 8 inches long and 2 to 3 inches wide. In the fall, leaves may turn yellow-green to golden yellow, although this tree does not reliably display spectacular fall color.

Fringe tree plays a number of important roles in the functioning of natural ecosystems. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds visit flowers to feed on nectar and gather pollen. Deer, turkey, quail and many songbirds eat the fruits, and the leaves are eaten by a variety of caterpillars. Native

PHOTO COURTESY MELISSA MCMASTERS VIA FLICKR



Fringe tree flowers

Americans have traditionally used fringe tree as medicine by drying the roots and bark to treat skin inflammations, and by crushing the bark to treat sores and wounds.

In nature, fringe tree grows in many different habitats, including stream edges, floodplains, dry upland woods and rocky outcrops.



PHOTO COURTESY ARTHUR T. LABAR VIA FLICKR

So, here we have a tree with lovely, aromatic flowers; one that opens its flowers late enough in the season to dodge most spring frosts; a species that can be pruned to grow either as a multi-trunk shrub or a single-trunk tree; and one that tolerates a wide variety of soil and site conditions. Why, then, should we not plant this tree more often? Three words: emerald ash borer.

Emerald ash borer is an introduced wood-boring

beetle that feeds on the bark of susceptible trees, forming galleries (interconnected tunnel systems) underneath the outer layer. In the U.S., they were first detected in Michigan in 2002, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

I wrote of emerald ash borer's devastating impact on our ash trees — killing tens of millions of trees — in the June 2022 issue of this magazine. More recently, scientists have found that fringe tree is also susceptible to emerald ash borers, a discovery that may not bode well for this beautiful tree's future.

So, what to do? For now, it may be best not to plant fringe trees on our properties or in our public spaces. Instead, seek them out in the wild, or where they have been previously planted, especially in late spring, and soak in their rich fragrance and remarkable beauty. ●

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.

Future ON THE Line

Southside Virginia Community College marks 10 years of training prospective lineworkers

by Jack Cooksey, Staff Writer

When Southside Virginia Community College launched its Power Line Worker Training School in 2016, it didn't just create a new workforce pipeline. It changed the direction of Kevin Dalton's life.

Just a year earlier, the Nottoway High School graduate had planned on enrolling at the Southeast Lineman Training Center in Dade County, Ga. Dalton had his sights set on a linework career after hearing the experiences of friends already in the trade.

But the path toward apprenticeship was pricey, so the Blackstone, Va., resident took a job at ArborTech Forest Products to save up the \$20,000 needed for SLTC tuition.

Then, in March 2016, Dalton encountered a lucky twist of fate. "This school opened up right around the same time I was looking to go to lineman school, and it was like perfect timing," he says. The tuition at SVCC was a bit more than half the cost of the Georgia program. And he lived close enough to the school that he could walk to class.

"So, I signed up and went there," he says, "and I think [there were] 11 kids in my class."

Dalton graduated in that first cohort of SVCC's Power Line Worker Training School, an immersion in the basic skills and knowledge needed to begin work around a power grid.

"Once I graduated from there," he says, "I got a job ... at C.W. Wright [based in Chesterfield County, Va.], and I got to travel the [country] and work storms and hurricanes in Florida."

Five years later, he earned his journeyman card and came back to Crewe, Va., where he was hired by Southside Electric Cooperative. In November, he'll mark five years with the co-op.

CAREER CONNECTION

Despite its fortunate turns, however, Dalton's story is not uncommon to the administrators and instructors at SVCC, which is celebrating the Power Line Worker Training School's 10th anniversary throughout 2026.

In its decade of operation, the school has awarded more than 704 associate degrees for applied science in industrial technology as of its most recent graduating class.

SVCC's program offers classroom instruction as well as hands-on training.



Kevin Dalton

Keith Harkins, SVCC's vice president of academics and workforce programs, touts the life-changing opportunities the school's program offers both young students and older career switchers.

"The numbers are overwhelming," Harkins says. "It's something like 90% who get into [the program], complete it and end up with their first job as a lineworker."

Rob Darden, an apprentice lineworker with Community Electric Cooperative based in Windsor, Va., graduated from SVCC in April 2022 and didn't miss a beat.

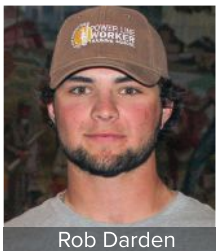
"I graduated on the 20th, and I started working on the 21st," he says.

In July, Darden will complete his apprenticeship and then begin the four-year process to become a journeyman lineworker.

He says his path to linework was somewhat roundabout. During his senior year at Southampton High School in Courtland, Va., Pam Taylor of SVCC gave a presentation to students about careers in the industry, but Darden was skeptical. "I sparked up an interest in it," he says. "You know, I thought about it."

After two years of hodgepodge jobs, Darden says he finally stepped outside of his comfort zone. Now, as he approaches the transition from apprentice to journeyman, the income potential remains a strong motivation.

Entry-level electric cooperative lineworkers can begin at approximately \$25 per hour, reaching roughly \$45 per hour within four years, stepping up after each semiannual professional training course offered through the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.



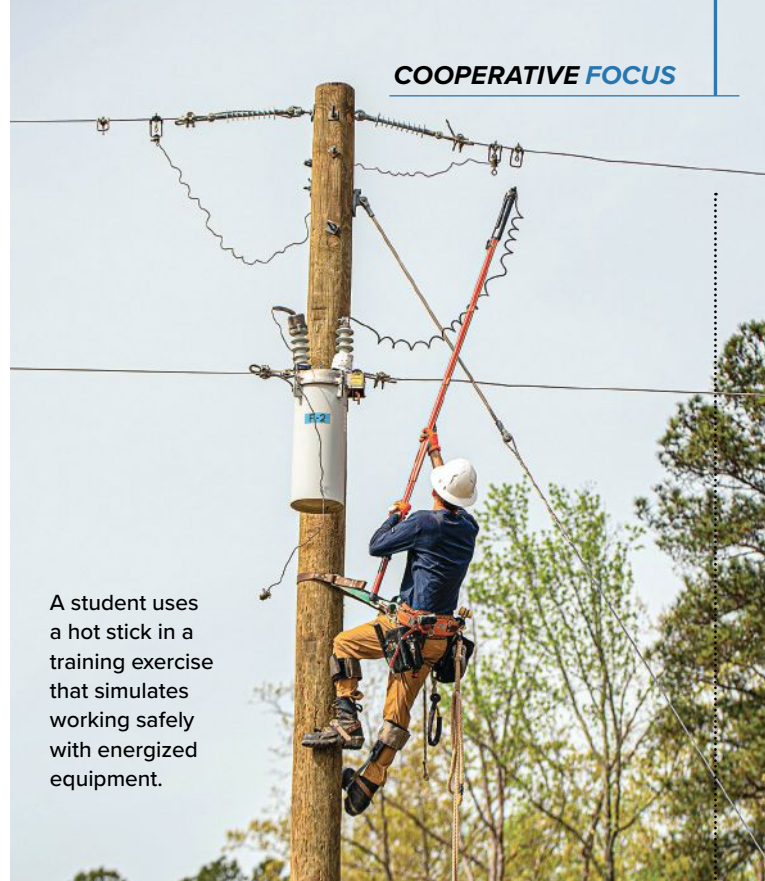
Rob Darden

PROVING GROUND

A pre-apprenticeship program such as SVCC's helps prove the skill and dedication of prospective lineworkers, says Alan Scruggs, VMDAEC's vice president of training and safety services.

The SVCC Power Line Worker Training School equips its graduates with a range of skills and knowledge needed to work with electric utilities. Its linework training facility, which includes a pole yard for practical exercises, is housed at Fort Pickett in Blackstone. In addition to climbing techniques and safety awareness, students learn electrical theory and how to install, repair and maintain the hardware and support structures of utility poles. Graduates of the SVCC training program come away with five different credentials, including a commercial driver's license, CPR and first-aid certification, VDOT Traffic Controller, NCCER Power Line Worker Level 1 and OSHA 10.

With SVCC's tuition currently at more than \$14,100, the program is more accessible than other popular schools,



A student uses a hot stick in a training exercise that simulates working safely with energized equipment.

especially for students with limited financial resources. By comparison, SLTC's current tuition, without room and board, weighs in at roughly \$24,000.

Because the demand for utility workers is growing, various grants from state and federal funding and cooperative scholarships can lower the financial burden. VMDAEC awards \$1,500 scholarships to applicants who demonstrate financial need in addition to academic achievement. Since 2003, the association has awarded more than \$1.4 million to more than 1,350 students.

Randy Crocker, coordinator of SVCC's program, estimates he has seen more than 500 students go through the program in his seven years there.

Crocker says the community college offers three 11-week sessions per academic year with about 25 students per class, many of whom connect immediately with professional opportunities, such as Dalton and Darden.

"One contractor told me that he doesn't even try to look for students on the street or anywhere else," Crocker says. "He comes straight to us when he when needs a lineman. ... We've got really good instructors, and that's how well they think of the program."

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The school's three instructors all come with deep trade experience — a degree of mentorship that adds value for trainees entering a workforce that is steadily drifting toward a younger median age as workers from the Baby Boom and Generation X retire.

(continued on page 12)

Future on the Line

(continued from page 11)

Mike Costley worked for Dominion Energy for 27 years as a lineman and upon retirement quickly transitioned to his adjunct teaching position for the community college, where he's been an instructor for four years.

Costley notes that SVCC continues to improve the program's equipment and facilities. Although energy distribution has remained largely consistent for about a century, he says, innovations and upgrades require him and his fellow instructors — Clyde Robertson and Jamie Jamerson — to stay current with changing technology, such as evolving computer systems at substations and renewable-energy developments.

Costley also notes the evolution of the trade and how the training program supports it. The current cohort of SVCC students includes DehlilaRay Roop, the second female in 10 years to enroll in the program.

Roop's entry into linework is no fluke. Three generations of men before her have worked the trade, and when her class graduates this year, she has high hopes of working for Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, based in Fredericksburg.

"My mom is terrified," she says, "but my dad is extremely proud."

Despite her family connection to utility work, Roop had previously considered a career in the military or firefighting.

While at technical school, her principal suggested she attend VMDAEC's Girl Power® Camp, a one-day introduction to linework skills and concepts. She was hooked. As a member of a cooperative service territory, Roop qualified for a \$1,000 grant from the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation to attend the lineworker training school.

Now, heading toward graduation from SVCC, Roop has met the challenges of the work head-on.

She recalls a hands-on exercise of assembling utility distribution poles. "Honestly, when you're standing on the ground and looking up at all the attachments and wires," she says, "you think, I just went up there, I took it all down and put it back up. ... I just did that."

When she graduates from SVCC this year, Roop will follow in the footsteps of Virginia's first female lineworker, Genevieve Boarman, also the daughter of a lineworker. Boarman



DehlilaRay Roop, three-time Girl Power camp attendee, gets hands-on experience installing an electric meter base in class at SVCC's Power Line Worker Training School.

graduated in 2019 and now works for Warsaw-based Northern Neck Electric Cooperative.

POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Creation of the SVCC Power Line Worker Training School grew out of a series of conversations in 2015 among the school's administrators and Virginia electric cooperative executives, Jeff Edwards, retired president and CEO of SEC and John C. Lee Jr., then president and CEO of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative in Chase City. Edwards, Lee and other cooperative leaders saw the "graying of the workforce," and recognized the growing need to hire more utility workers. They made the case for a workforce development program at SVCC.

To help fund the launch of the program they approached other Virginia electric cooperatives along with the statewide association to raise the money.

In addition to building a workforce pipeline to help keep the power grid running, the SVCC program has also supported the local economy by keeping viable jobs and dollars in the region.

Harkins credits Lee, Edwards and others as "geniuses" for zeroing in on an idea that has proven to be transformative for its students, the community college, the Southside region and beyond.

"It's a perfect example of a public-private partnership," Harkins says. "I don't know of a better one. Because there is so much industry support for this program, and a lot of support came from government through the community college. I think it's just a wonderful, wonderful example of that." ●

► For more, visit co-opliving.com to find out how co-op and community leaders sparked the idea of a power line worker education program.

"Something like 90% who get into [the program], complete it and end up with their first job as a lineworker."

— Keith Harkins, SVCC's vice president of academics and workforce programs

**WE SELL LAND, FARMS,
& COUNTRY HOMES**

CHAD PANGLE
NORTHERN VIRGINIA
LAND SPECIALIST
540.975.3487

JEFF PHILLIPS
SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA
LAND SPECIALIST
540.765.8255

KYLE WATERS
NORTH CENTRAL VIRGINIA
LAND SPECIALIST
540.430.5800

BRYAN THOMPSON
WESTERN VIRGINIA & EASTERN
WEST VIRGINIA LAND SPECIALIST
540.691.7749

BLAKE FLEMMING
EAST CENTRAL VIRGINIA
LAND SPECIALIST
252.813.3147

WHITETAIL PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE
HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM

  Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC DBA Whitetail Properties, DBA
Whitetail Properties Real Estate. Licensed in VA - Chip Camp, Broker.

*We want to see
your photos!*

To have your photo(s) considered for inclusion in our reader-photo column, please email image(s) to saycheese@co-opliving.com with caption info.

If your photo is published as part of the Say Cheese column in *Cooperative Living* magazine, we will send you a \$20 Amazon gift card!

*Submitted by
Rob Pellicot*

*Submitted by
Vicky Blosser*

*Submitted by
Daniel Bertorelli*

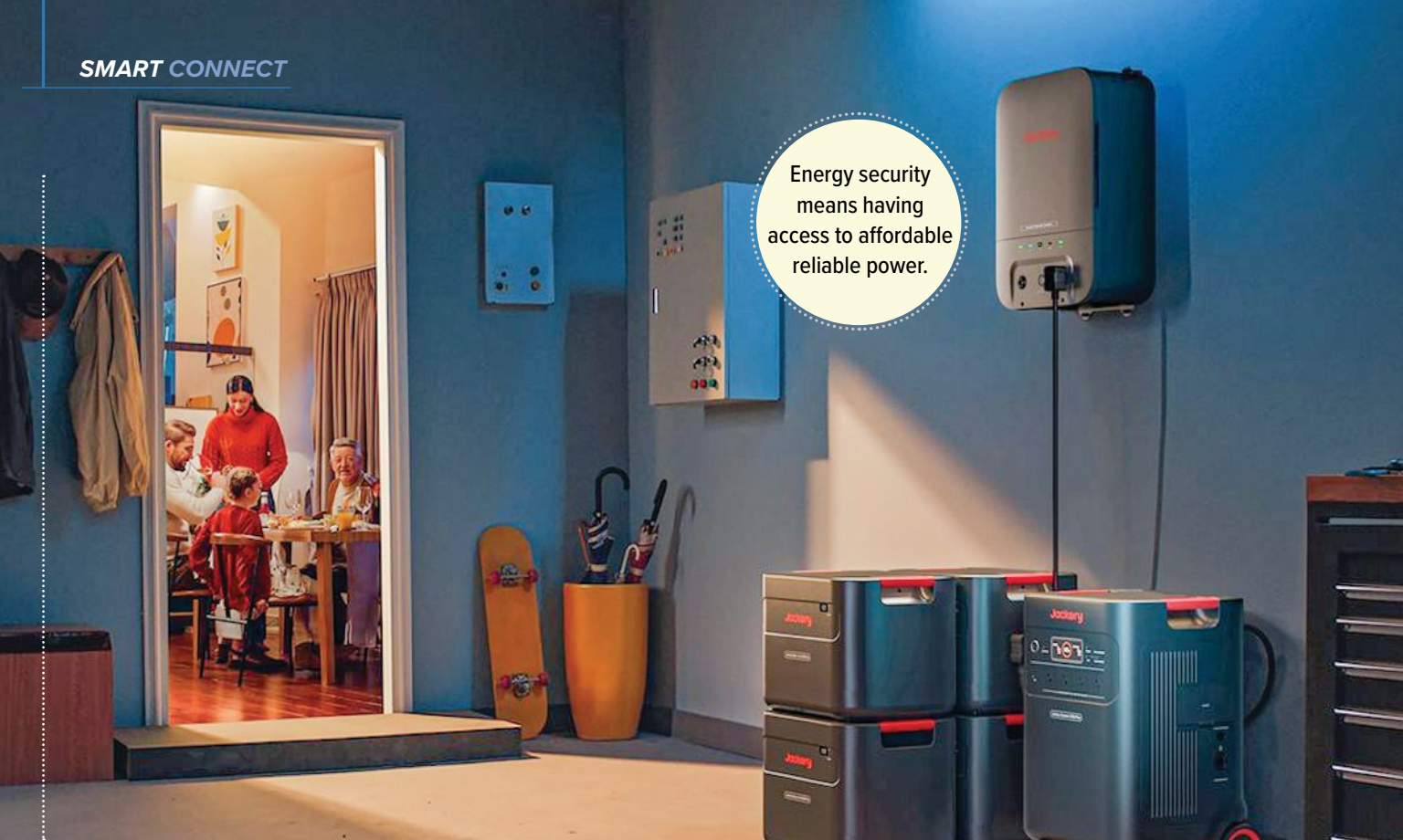
**PROUD TO BUILD WITH
AGRICULTURE**

At County Line Materials, agriculture isn't just an industry—it's our community. We're proud to provide the metal siding, wood trusses, and hardware that help farms and agricultural buildings stand strong year after year.

County Line Materials is your one-stop shop for all of your building needs.

County Line
MATERIALS LLC

540-437-9360
5206 S VALLEY PIKE | ROCKINGHAM, VA



Energy security means having access to affordable reliable power.

Surplus Security

Your tax refund can safeguard energy needs

story courtesy of Brandpoint

Have you received your tax refund? You may find that this year's refund is about 10% higher than last year, according to CNBC, creating a rare financial opportunity. How will you spend it?

In past years, you may have earmarked a tax refund for fun purchases, trips, paying down debt or other discretionary spending. However, this year's refund offers you an opportunity to invest in energy security by purchasing a backup power solution to offset rising long-term energy costs and provide reliable power now and for years to come.

WHAT IS ENERGY SECURITY?

Household energy security goes beyond powering your home's appliances, communication tools, medical equipment and other essentials during a blackout. Energy security means having access to affordable and reliable power to meet your home's daily energy needs.

According to the North American Energy Reliability Commission's 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment, 13 of 23 North American assessment areas face elevated or high resource-adequacy risks over the next five years, with demand growth driven by data centers and AI threatening

to outpace the rate of new resource additions. The rising cost of energy is also putting pressure on household and business budgets nationwide.

POWER YOUR HOME ON YOUR OWN

The good news is that you can generate and store essential home backup power independently of the grid. Solar generators — such as Jackery's portable, powerful and compact home backup power stations — are designed for emergencies, outages and everyday energy savings.

Unlike traditional gas generators, solar generators require minimal maintenance and offer silent, fume-free operation for safe indoor use, keeping essential devices running during outages. More importantly, backup power solutions can help offset rising electricity costs by using stored energy during peak hours to power high-cost appliances.

While solar power is the energy-efficient way to charge backup power solutions, they can also be recharged using a wall outlet or 12-volt car port, giving you flexibility and reliability when it matters most.

Whole-home generators, solar power systems and battery backup systems are also options — though they can be pricier and require coordination with your co-op to ensure they are installed correctly to provide safe, reliable power and protect lineworkers responding when outages occur.

Long-term energy security isn't a luxury. It's essential.

This year, consider investing your tax refund in your home's long-term energy preparedness and independence. ●

Lineworkers Cole Scruggs and Kemp Davis work on one of many wooden poles across REC's service territory that help give the rural Virginia landscape its timeless look, but also carry lines that are part of a state-of-the-art electric and broadband grid. For more on how REC is building for the future, read the article on page 18 of this issue.



page 17

Unclaimed Capital Credits

page 18

Building for Tomorrow's Needs

page 20

REC Recognized for Outstanding Community Service



Increase in Electric Bill Driven by Higher Power Costs

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) members will see an increase in the power cost adjustment (PCA) on electric bills issued on or after May 1. This change will increase costs by approximately \$9.81 for every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) used, meaning higher use results in a greater impact to the overall bill. The PCA reflects the cost of wholesale power purchased by the Cooperative on behalf of its members, and is set by our wholesale electricity provider, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC). As a distribution cooperative, REC delivers electricity but does not generate it. This increase is driven by higher demand for electricity during this past winter with its prolonged extreme cold and rising wholesale energy costs.

“We know that any increase in costs can place added strain on our members, and we take that seriously,” said Casey Hollins, managing director – communications and public relations. “Many families are already facing difficult

decisions when it comes to managing monthly expenses, including their monthly electricity bill. At REC, we’re here to help, whether that’s through programs, tools or one-on-one support, while continuing to provide safe, reliable service our members can count on.”

We offer tools and support to help you manage your bill.

If you’re concerned about your bill or need support, we encourage you to explore the options below or connect with our team at myrec.coop or by calling us directly. We can also help connect you with additional assistance resources available in your community and across the state.

Earn bill credits with the Summer Savings Plan.

Reduce energy use during peak times from June to September and earn \$1.75 in bill credits for every kilowatt-hour (kWh) saved. Small changes can add up quickly. Sign up today to save! Learn more at myrec.coop/summersavings.

Choose a billing option that works for you.

Prepay and Budget Billing can help reduce surprises and give you more control over when and how you pay. Explore options at myrec.coop/payment-choices.

Get to know your energy use.

Tools in MyREC SmartHub make it easy to track use, identify trends and understand what’s driving your bill so you can make informed decisions. Visit myrec.coop/myrecsmarthub.

Access additional financial assistance resources.

REC connects members with local organizations and statewide programs that may be able to help with energy costs. Visit myrec.coop/heretohelp to explore available resources or contact us for guidance.

Provide Peace of Mind with SurgeAssist

Power surges can happen at any time and cause serious damage to electronics, appliances and other electric household items. REC's Vividly Brighter SurgeAssist helps cover the repair or replacement costs of damaged equipment.

Surges can be caused by lightning, trees contacting power lines or vehicle accidents. Sensitive electronic equipment is particularly susceptible, but surges can also damage televisions, computers, HVAC systems, well pumps, refrigerators, microwaves, stoves, washers and dryers.

SurgeAssist offers peace of mind and financial protection. For a minimal monthly fee, members are not faced with the entire repair or replacement expense for eligible damages.

Enroll in SurgeAssist for \$5.95 per month to receive reimbursement up to \$2,000 in a rolling 12-month period.

There is an initial waiting period of 30 days after the first payment for the coverage to be active, and members can cancel at any time.

Visit myrec.coop/surgeassist to learn more.

"Through Vividly Brighter, REC provides value-added services that help members protect their homes from the unexpected, and improve their quality of life through greater peace of mind."

Louis O'Berry, director – energy services solutions

Vividly  Brighter[®]

BY  **RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**



You May Have Money Waiting for You

Each year, REC publishes a list of Unclaimed Capital Credits.

What are capital credits?

Capital credits are member-owners' share of the Cooperative's margins, returned over time. Unclaimed capital credits are funds that belong to past members but haven't been delivered, often because contact information is outdated.

Go to myrec.coop/capitalcredits to see if you or someone you know is listed. If you see your name, or have information on how to locate someone on the list, call 800-552-3904 and speak with a member service representative.

With your help, we can locate those listed and deliver their checks.

If the member or other person legally entitled to the Capital Credit does not claim his or her money within 120 days from publication of the listing, this patronage capital becomes the sole property of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.



Memorial
DAY

remember and honor



REC Offices Closed

Memorial Day, May 25, 2026

If you experience a power outage or power emergency during this time, contact the Dispatch Center 24 hours a day at **800-552-3904**.

Outages can also be reported:

- In MyREC Smarthub
- Online at myrec.coop/out
- By texting "Out" to **63273**



Power You Can Count on —

For nearly a century, power lines spanning wooden poles have been a familiar feature of the rural Virginia landscape. That basic pole and crossarm design, seemingly unchanged since its first use, hints at timelessness and days gone by. It's easy to assume the power lines and grid connected by them are also as timeless and unchanged as the simple poles.

In fact, those power lines deliver energy from a grid that uses ever-changing technology to more effectively and reliably meet increasing demand, more quickly restore service when it's lost and develop increased resilience to weather and other impacts.

Constant improvements are essential for grid reliability. It's why REC is continuously modernizing its grid across its 22-county service territory.

Building a Better Grid

REC is upgrading its electric distribution system to improve reliability and help crews restore power faster.

The Cooperative is following a long-term system plan and replacing aging infrastructure across its service area, while strengthening lines, increasing capacity and building a more resilient system.

"Lines are being rebuilt for bigger equipment and greater capacity. Redundancy is a key word right now," said Nathan Fewell, director – distribution design.

Those data-driven upgrades, along with sturdier equipment and added capacity, help REC respond to record consumer load growth.

"The type of development across our service territory varies quite a bit. It affects how members use electricity and the demand placed on our system," said Fewell.

Expanding the Broadband Network

REC is leading the way in expanding broadband in rural areas by building fiber infrastructure on its electric system. In the process, the Cooperative is strengthening poles, improving system redundancy and making the electric system more resilient for members. From establishing an 800-mile fiber utility network that vastly improves REC's communications across its entire territory to connecting more than 12,000 members to high-speed internet through its partnership with Firefly Fiber BroadbandSM, REC is building a network that increases reliability and improves quality of life for members.



Now and in the Future

“We’re reinforcing and strengthening our system. The work is decreasing outages in our outage prone areas. Overall, it’s a more resilient system that benefits members,” said Mark Ponton, senior director – broadband and fiber services.

Even those wooden poles that give many rural landscapes a timeless look, despite their appearance, are not always the same poles they were even just a decade ago. The Cooperative has replaced more than 10,000 poles with larger, taller poles to accommodate fiber attachments. By supporting more than 68,000 pole attachments and dark fiber leasing, REC is bridging the digital divide in rural Virginia.

Through REC’s leadership and infrastructure investments, internet service providers have greatly expanded broadband access in 20 counties in the Cooperative’s service area since 2021.

Powering Reliability with Battery Storage

REC is also investing in utility-scale battery energy storage systems (BESS) as another tool to support the electric system. These large batteries can store electricity and send it back to the grid when demand is high or the system is under stress, helping REC improve reliability, manage peak power costs and serve growing energy needs.

First and foremost, these systems provide a powerful reliability measure. REC’s current 2-megawatt (MW), 8-megawatt hour (MWh) BESS can power 1,000 homes for eight hours, providing seamless power even during major regional outages.

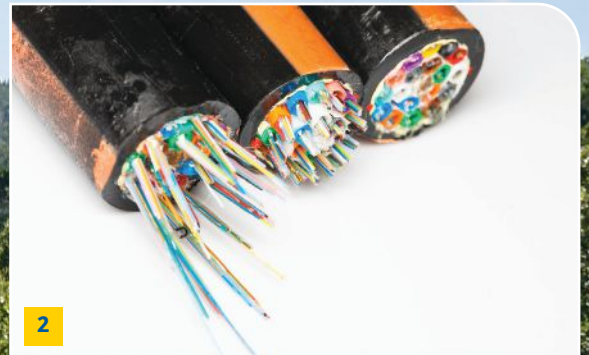
Reliability is not the only benefit, though, according to Karan Patel, managing director – energy solutions and clean energy. The batteries charge during off-peak hours when energy prices are lower, and the grid is less strained. They discharge their stored energy

into the grid during times of peak consumer demand.

“Battery storage reduces REC’s wholesale power costs that are linked to peak demand periods. That saves members money,” said Patel.

Since its installation in 2021, the BESS has operated 305 times during peak hours to help reduce demand. Lowering use during peak hours has a direct impact on power costs for the Cooperative, which improves affordability for members.

These investments mean REC is prepared for more homes and businesses, data centers and other large facilities, with a system built to perform under tougher conditions. The goal is a grid that is stronger, smarter and better able to keep up with growth while reducing disruptions and improving service for members over time.



Photos **1**. Improvements such as the red animal guards seen here help reduce outages and improve overall grid reliability. **2**. Hundreds of miles of fiber run alongside REC’s power lines, providing improved communications across the grid and connecting rural members to high-speed broadband. **3**. Battery energy storage systems provide power backup in outages and peak use situations, improving both reliability and long-term affordability.



Lake Anna Community Recognizes Rappahannock Electric Cooperative for Outstanding Community Service

REC received the 2026 Richard Binns Community Service Award from the Lake Anna Business Partnership (LABP) Feb. 17 at the partnership’s annual Business After Hours awards gathering at Callie Opie’s Orchard in Mineral, Va.

REC was recognized for The Power of Change grant, which help fund local nonprofits through voluntary member bill roundups, and for volunteer support of Adopt-a-Highway roadside cleanups in Louisa County in partnership with Louisa Clean.

Accepting on behalf of the Cooperative were Casey Hollins, managing director – communications and public relations; Tracy Woods, public relations specialist; Terri Bevers, community engagement specialist; and Lindsey Edwards, communications project specialist. These employees were directly involved in leading and coordinating these programs.

The Richard Binns Community Service Award is presented annually by the Lake Anna Business Partnership to recognize a business or organization that demonstrates an exceptional commitment to serving the local community. The award is named in honor of Richard Binns, a longtime partnership member remembered for strengthening community connections and encouraging service. The LABP selects recipients based on ongoing involvement, positive impact and dedication to the people they serve.

“Rappahannock Electric Cooperative truly embodies the spirit of the Richard Binns Community Service Award. Their ongoing commitment to Lake Anna — from community involvement to events like our Lighted Boat Parade — reflects a genuine dedication to the people they serve. We’re grateful for REC’s



partnership and proud to recognize them as this year’s recipient,” said Jacob Conley, president of the Lake Anna Business Partnership.

The Power of Change with REC is fueled by voluntary giving from the Cooperative’s member-owners who choose to round up their monthly electric bill and donate the difference. Each month, more than 37,000 REC member-owners participate. Since launching in 2005, the program has provided 471 awards totaling more than \$1.7 million to nonprofits across REC’s service territory. A volunteer member CARE Board reviews applications and invests those funds back into the same local communities where member-owners live.



“As a rural electric cooperative, we strive to be engaged in the communities we serve,” said REC’s Hollins. “We can go beyond providing electricity to our members, and put our hands to good use in the communities in other ways, that enhance peoples’ lives.”

The Lake Anna Business Partnership is a nonprofit organization focused on strengthening Lake Anna through business connections, economic development and tourism, while also supporting community service projects and fundraising efforts.

REC Earns Tree Line USA Recognition for 26th Consecutive Year



Your Cooperative has once again been named a Tree Line USA utility, earning the distinction for the 26th consecutive year.

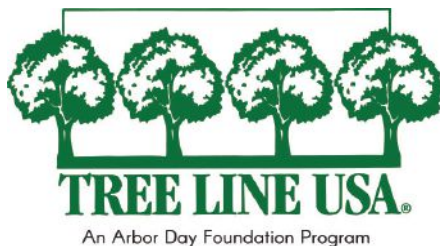
Awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation, the Tree Line USA designation recognizes utilities that demonstrate best practices in tree care, worker training, public education and environmental stewardship. For REC, that recognition reflects a long-standing commitment to balancing safe, reliable electric service with responsible vegetation management.

That work has a direct impact on reliability. Trees cause 70% of power outages across the service territory. To reduce that risk, the Cooperative prunes approximately 20% of its 7,500 miles of overhead line each year and responds to roughly 3,000 annual tree-related inquiries from member-owners. REC also uses field observations, satellite data, GIS mapping and circuit analytics to identify trouble areas and guide proactive trimming.

The Cooperative's continued inclusion in Tree Line USA underscores its commitment to safety, reliability and environmental stewardship.

“Being awarded the Tree Line USA designation again is indicative of our commitment to excellence in vegetation management.”

**Cindy Musick,
senior director –
vegetation management**



“Being awarded the Tree Line USA designation again is indicative of our commitment to excellence in vegetation management,” said Cindy Musick, senior director - vegetation management. “Trees provide wildlife habitat, shade, clean air and water, energy savings and beauty, but they also cause most of our outages, so managing them wisely is important for continued reliability and quality of life of our members.”

REC Storm Preparation Checklist

Are you ready for summer storms? Peace of mind starts with a plan, and the best time to prepare for a power outage is before one occurs. Use this checklist to ensure you and your family are prepared. For more information, visit myrec.coop/stormprep.

1. Before the Outage: Be Ready

Taking proactive steps now can significantly reduce stress and ensure your household is ready for anything. Think of it like a safety net: The more you prepare, the more secure you'll feel when an outage occurs.

- **Build an Emergency Kit**

While each of us has items specific to our personal needs — such as multiday supplies of medications, baby food or items for pets — this is a solid starting point for preparing you and your family for a major storm.

- **Prepare Your Home**
- **Stay Connected**

2. During the Outage: Stay Safe & Informed

Even the best preparations can't prevent an outage, but knowing what to do when the lights go dark can make a significant difference in your safety and comfort.

3. After the Outage: Move Forward Safely

While the immediate crisis may be over, be aware that REC crews may be active in your area, restoring power and repairing damage.

Download your own printable checklist here:





You're invited

22nd Annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo™ and Expo

May 15-16, 2026

Meadow Event Park, Doswell, Va.

Free Event

Gaff-n-go.com



Most people only see linework in its results: the lights stay on, or the power comes back after an outage. The annual Gaff-n-Go event gives members a closer look, bringing lineworkers together for a public competition built around the climbing, repair and equipment skills they use on the job. In 2025, the rodeo included 13 scored events, and REC turned in a strong performance with a first-place overall equipment-operator team and several top-10 finishes.

For members and their families, the draw goes beyond the competition. Gaff-n-Go includes family events, an expo, a BBQ Bash and T-shirt Exchange, giving visitors a chance to enjoy food and festivities while seeing up close the skill, teamwork and safety focus required for what lineworkers do every day.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month and your Cooperative wants everyone to be safe around electricity. The U.S. Fire Administration says electrical malfunctions caused more than 23,000 residential fires in 2023, or 7% of all residential building fires, while the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates consumer products have been involved in an average of 100 non-work deaths yearly in recent years.

So how can you avoid becoming one of these statistics? Most common risks fall into five categories, and that's where simple steps can help you improve your electrical safety:

Five Easy Ways to Be Safer Around Electricity This Spring



Look up and keep your distance when working near power lines

Know where overhead lines are before you start any spring projects. Keep ladders, long tools and branches well away, and call a professional if the work is anywhere near a power line.



Wait until conditions are dry to use electric tools

Don't use power tools in wet grass, near puddles or in damp conditions to reduce the risk of shock. Wait until the area is dry before starting outdoor work.



Check cords and tools before use

Inspect cords, plugs and tools for cracks, fraying or other damage as these issues can cause shocks, burns or even fire. Replace worn equipment, and make sure anything used outside is rated for outdoor use.



Use a GFCI-protected outlet

Look for outlets with "test" and "reset" buttons. Those are GFCIs, and they help shut off power quickly if there's a problem. If an outdoor outlet doesn't have one, use a portable GFCI, as moisture is a dangerous mix with electricity.



Check before you dig or cut

Visit va811.com or call 811 before digging, and slow down when drilling or cutting into walls or other hidden spaces where wiring could be present.



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

Contact Information:

P.O. Box 7388

Fredericksburg, VA 22404

800.552.3904 | office@myrec.coop

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SUBMIT YOUR
CLASSIFIED ADS A FEW WORDS
CAN GIVE YOU
BIG RESULTS!

Our **Marketplace** page is reaching **over 600,000** homes, farms and businesses throughout Virginia and Maryland!

REAL ESTATE • EVENTS • WANTED • FOR SALE



COLLECTIBLES • BUSINESS • AUCTIONS

BUY IT! • SELL IT! • FIND IT FAST!

Contact Sonja Kinney at **804-297-3429** or at skinney@vmdaec.com.



MOORMAN'S 1530 SF

Our brand new craftsman model!



Currently on promotion for \$330,990, which includes \$70,500 towards site work costs! Featuring double doors for a grand entrance into this 3br, 2ba open floor plan with split bedrooms. Including a 2-car garage and front and rear porches. **Visit our website or give us a call to see if we build in your area.**



www.bethelbuilders-va.com

209 East Main Street | Louisa, VA 23093

540-748-8810



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, www.hopewelldowntown.com, www.hopewellva.gov



HOPEWELL DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

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!

Bees



“A bee is never as busy as it seems. ... It’s just that it can’t buzz any slower.”

— Kin Hubbard, cartoonist, humorist and journalist

Truly busy — or just buzzing about?

story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist



Every season has unique sights and sounds that make the passage of time meaningful. And while it is easy to *see* the familiar things that define each three-month span, you might be missing some of the season’s sounds.

Now that spring is in full swing, take a moment to just *listen* to this season. Lawn mowing, crop planting, sporting events, birds mating and nesting, spring peepers “peeping” — all add loud, recognizable sounds to this outdoorsy time of year.

Springtime can be very *noisy* as the air fills with the clamor of activities. But there is also *quiet sound* that often goes unnoticed unless you are a sharp-eared listener. It is a faint buzzing and humming sound heard wherever flowers are blooming in gardens, canopies of fruit trees, hay fields and backyards.

You can probably guess that the steady droning comes from some very important members of the animal kingdom — the “tiny but mighty” busy bees!

Bees buzz and hum around the globe and are found everywhere except the polar regions. Worldwide, there are more than 20,000 known species of bees with 4,000 native to the U.S. alone. These winged creatures come in as many shapes, colors and sizes as the flowers that they pollinate, yet the average person is familiar with only one or two bees, especially the honeybee.

This golden-yellow buzzing bundle of energy arrived with European settlers in the 17th century, so it is not native to the U.S. The honeybee is called a *social* bee because it lives in a highly organized



colony with workers, drones and a queen. Sweet honey comes to mind with this bee, but be aware that the female worker bee can deliver a mean sting. Its venom-injecting stinger is barbed and locks into its victim. Unfortunately for the bee, it is a fatal, one-time sting because the implanted stinger causes the abdomen to tear as the bee tries to fly away.

Another recognizable bee, known for its large, fuzzy body of yellow-and-black stripes and loud buzz, is the bumblebee. It is both native and social. Unlike the honeybee, its stinger is barb-free and can deliver multiple painful stings, if threatened, and still live to “buzz” about it.

Most bees are solitary, meaning they live alone, usually in the ground or in hollow wood and stems. Without the protection of a hive and the sharing of responsibilities, the female solitary bee leads a demanding life:

- She builds and defends her own nest.
- She lays her own eggs.
- She gathers nectar and pollen for her offspring.
- She does it all without help and gives real meaning to the “busy as a bee” expression.



KNOW YOUR BEES

As you spend the warm months outdoors, challenge yourself to discover the different bees buzzing around in your neighborhood.

Here are a few clues to help you identify these common solitary bees. Better still, take a cellphone picture and use the Visual Look Up feature or an insect guidebook to help identify them.

MASON — A small bee, metallic blue or black; uses mud to build nests in holes or tubes; is non-aggressive and rarely stings. Some people create mason bee condos to welcome these super-pollinators to the neighborhood.



CARPENTER — A large bee with a shiny, black abdomen; often mistaken for the bumblebee. It sometimes hovers at eye level and “stares” but cannot sting.



SWEAT — A tiny, metallic blue, metallic green or striped bee; attracted to human sweat.



Mason bee condo





Super Sleuth CORNER

“A _____ of bees in May is worth a load of hay.”

The missing word refers to a colony of bees that has outgrown its hive and is searching for a new home. The large group of bees might look like trouble, but they are full of honey, they are calm and they’re unlikely to sting unless provoked.

Complete the rhyme to discover the name of the Super Sleuth challenge. Follow the directions below and then submit your findings for a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

- Find a picture of a bee colony hidden in this magazine and give the page number.
- What is this cluster of bees called?
- Have you ever seen a huge collection of bees like this one?
- If you discover a huge mass of bees, what is something you could do to protect it from harm?

Submit your answers online at co-opliving.com/super-sleuth or send answers with your 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.

They are non-aggressive but will deliver a mild sting if trapped or swatted.

LEAF CUTTER — A small black bee; the female has fuzzy yellow bands on the abdomen; it cuts neat, circular pieces out of leaves, especially roses, to line its nest; non-aggressive and rarely stings.



May 20 has been set aside as World Bee Day to remind everyone that *“a future without bees would really sting.”* This quote is believed to have originated from a beekeeper’s journal in the 1940s, but its message will always hold true. Life would not only be painful but disastrous if bees disappeared.

The global food supply, agriculture, wildlife and healthy ecosystems all depend on the vital pollination services provided by bees. Along with this understanding comes the troubling knowledge that bee populations are declining globally due to habitat loss, pesticides, climate change and disease. Bee protection is more crucial than ever for the human race.

The bees, of course, are unaware of their vital role in keeping the world healthy and in balance as they scatter pollen grains.

But if they were mindful of their significant **superpower** and how it is being threatened, they might send out this letter to the planet: ►



From the bees’ point of view, we’re all in this together, so we need to do our part for bee conservation. Talk with your family about planting more flowers, leaving a few “wild” spots in the yard for nesting solitary bees and avoiding the use of pesticides.

The hum of bees is a quiet, reassuring voice of springtime, to be appreciated now and protected for the future.

Go listen and cherish the buzz! ●



SPELL IT OUT

As a fun recap of the bee info, try this twist on a traditional **spelling bee**. Finish spelling these eight bee-related words **found in this column** by filling in the missing letters. Perfect spelling is guaranteed!

SPELLING BEE ANSWERS
SOCIAL QUEEN
STINGER
POLLENATE
NATIVE
BUZZ
PROJECT

S _ C _ _ L
_ T I _ G _ R
N A _ _ V _
S _ _ I T A _ Y
Q _ _ _ N
_ O L L _ N _ T E
_ U _ Z
_ R O T _ C _

MARCH

Super Sleuth Winner

The **March Super Sleuths** was about wind, nature’s invisible superpower. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find a drawing of the continent where the windiest place on Earth is located hidden in the magazine and then provide the page number it was hidden on. They were also asked to name the windiest place, as well as provide some ways they have played with the wind.

The winning answers are:

- Page 29
- Antarctica
- “I have thrown a boomerang back and forth with my brother.”
- “I live seaside and it gets windy, which makes it harder for us to throw the boomerang.”

OUR WINNER IS ROLAND.

Congratulations, Roland!

A&N Electric Cooperative member



Over Vapid Vegetables



VEGGIES

Dressed Up

Easy upgrades for everyday vegetables



Recipes originally published in the April 1969 issue of *Rural Living*.



Broccoli Stuffed Tomatoes

Ingredients:

- 6 large tomatoes
- salt
- 2 cups high-protein cereal, such as Kellogg's Special K
- 2 cups cooked broccoli, chopped
- 2 slices bacon, crisped and crumbled
- 2 tablespoons onion, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon butter or margarine

Directions:

Wash tomatoes. Cut slice from tops. Scoop out pulp and reserve. Lightly salt tomato shells; turn upside down and drain. Chop tomato pulp. Crush cereal slightly. Combine pulp, cereal crumbs, broccoli, bacon, onions, salt and pepper. Fill shells with mixture. Dot tops with butter. Place filled tomatoes in large, well-greased muffin cups or a baking pan. Bake at 375 degrees for about 25 minutes or until tomatoes are tender. Serves 6.

Spinach au Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

- spinach
- vinegar
- olive oil
- salt
- pepper

Directions:

Cook well-washed spinach for two minutes in its own steam. Drain thoroughly and chop with a sharp knife. Cool to room temperature and serve dressed with olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, using about half as much vinegar as olive oil. Serve warm or chilled.

Sweet Potato and Apple Bake

Ingredients:

- 1 (18-oz.) can sweet potatoes, drained
- 1 cup canned apple slices, drained
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped

Directions:

Arrange half the sweet potatoes in a 7-inch skillet or baking dish. Top with apple slices. Sprinkle with nutmeg and brown sugar; dot with butter. Arrange remaining sweet potatoes on top. Dot with remaining butter. Sprinkle chopped walnuts over the top. Bake in moderate oven at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes or until heated through. Serves 5 to 6.

GOT A FAVORITE RECIPE?

Eighty years of *Cooperative Living* means 80 years of delicious recipes. Which ones have become your family's favorites? Email your favorite recipes to 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.

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



PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

\$5 Gold American Eagles at COST! It's that simple. These Government issued coins are the easiest and safest way to protect your money and your family! A 5 minute call can change everything. DON'T WAIT!

CALL TODAY:

(346) 445-6656

"Gold is money. Everything else is credit." - J.P. Morgan



\$439
per coin

Vault Code:
GAN526

If you are buying as an investment, a gift, or just safeguarding your cash, this is the perfect way to do so! We are looking forward to EARNING your business, not just gaining it!



SUPREME COIN AND BULLION
Your future self will thank you

LIMITED TIME OFFER -
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST



- Free of Dealer Markup.
- Portfolio Diversifier.
- Inflation Proof.
- Ultimate Safety Net.

A Timeless Haven Tailored for Your Craft.



From a small garage to tinker on your vintage automobile to an elaborate workshop to focus on your woodworking hobby, a residential storage and hobby building designed and constructed by Morton is crafted to provide a stronger, longer-lasting, better-looking structure customized to fit your needs. Don't settle for second best — because Morton has a quality that's unmistakable, just like you.

Visit mortonbuildings.com or call 800-447-7436.



Built Stronger. Lasts Longer. Looks Better.

4909 ©2026 Morton Buildings, Inc. A listing of GC licenses available at mortonbuildings.com/licenses.

Small energy decisions can make a meaningful difference over time.



Managing the Demand

Electric co-ops take innovative steps to reduce grid strain, keep prices stable

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

With electricity demand rising across the country, electric cooperatives are becoming more innovative than ever before. As mission-driven, not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives are constantly offering new opportunities for members to take control of their electricity use.

As the summer sun intensifies, that need becomes even greater. Electricity use rises along with the temperature, as cooling systems run longer and more often to keep homes comfortable during extreme heat. Because many households use electricity at the same times — early in the morning and again in the

evening — this puts an added strain on the electric grid.

All that increased use raises electricity demand. During last summer's record heat wave, grid operators along the East Coast came close to calling for rotating outages as demand pushed the system to its limits. As electricity demand continues to increase nationwide and the available power supply tightens, moments like this show why energy efficiency programs and smart energy use matter more than ever.

That's where generation partners like Old Dominion Electric Cooperative and distribution electric cooperatives make a difference. As member-owned

utilities, cooperatives focus on providing reliable, affordable power for the people they serve. They plan for the future while also offering practical tools members can use right now.

Small energy decisions can make a meaningful difference over time — from how efficiently a home is heated and cooled to lighting choices and everyday electronics. Household energy use adds up.

It's why cooperatives, often in partnership with generation partners such as ODEC, are proud to support programs that help members manage their energy use. Many cooperatives offer online platforms where members

can shop for energy-efficient products at special cooperative discounts. These programs make it easier for families to upgrade to more efficient technologies and lower monthly bills. In addition to offering members energy-efficient devices, many co-ops provide members with energy calculators on their websites.

These calculators give members detailed insights into how energy is used in the home and smart ways to save. After all, the lowest-cost megawatt is the one you never have to generate.

While energy efficiency helps save energy at all hours of the day in any season, another important grid-planning tool is demand response. This focuses on specific hours of the day when the grid is under the most stress and encourages members to reduce energy

use during peak-demand periods. Many cooperatives use a voluntary program, sometimes called Beat the Peak, to notify members of these high electricity-use periods. By voluntarily using less electricity during peak times, members

By voluntarily using less electricity during peak times, members help ease strain on the grid.

It's a clear example of the cooperative difference — members working together to support one another.

Many electric cooperatives make participation in demand-response programs easy through offerings such as smart thermostats. These devices allow cooperatives to make small, temporary adjustments during peak periods, often without members even noticing a change in comfort. Although the adjustments are minor, the impact these reductions

help ease strain on the grid and support reliable service for the entire community.

have on peak demand is significant.

Together, these efforts help manage rising demand, reduce the risk of outages and give members more control over their electricity use. By putting members first and working together, electric cooperatives continue to deliver reliable power — even during the hottest summer days.

This cooperative approach is built on collaboration — among generation partners, distribution cooperatives and member-owners. Through strong partnerships, community focus and a commitment to service, electric cooperatives are well-positioned to meet today's energy challenges. By combining energy-efficiency programs with long-term planning, distribution cooperatives and generation partners such as ODEC remain dedicated to providing affordable, reliable and responsible power — now and into the future. ●

Save energy naturally with summer shade

Well-planned landscaping has the power to lower energy costs all year round. In fact, strategically placed deciduous trees can lower energy usage up to 25%—providing cooling shade in the summer. In addition, try shading the home's air conditioner unit to increase its efficiency up to 10%*.

For more energy savings tips visit odec.com/waystosave.



*Department of Energy



Save more, sweat less: Summer prep that pays off



Schedule routine maintenance

Have HVAC systems inspected and serviced by a professional to ensure peak performance.



Install a smart (programmable) thermostat

Maximize energy savings by setting thermostats to 78°F in the summer when home and adjusting higher while away.



Change your air filters regularly

Clean and change filters to improve airflow and indoor air quality. Replacing a dirty filter can increase system's efficiency up to 15%*.



Apply weatherstripping & seal leaks

Seal cracks around doors and windows to prevent warm air from entering homes and cool air from escaping. Small fixes can lead to noticeable savings.

*Department of Energy

For more energy savings tips visit
odec.com/waystosave.



Protecting Connections

Virginia legislators move to keep broadband, fiber optic cables safe, reliable

by Kyle Shreve, Staff Writer

In today's world, access to reliable, high-speed internet is no longer a luxury. It is necessary to everyday life.

From providing for the essentials, such as education and healthcare, to supporting critical economic development for our localities, broadband plays a vital role in keeping our communities connected.

Across Virginia and Maryland, electric cooperatives have been deploying fiber to expand broadband access, especially in rural areas. Virginia has invested more than \$875 million in state funding and \$1.1 billion in federal funding to expand broadband infrastructure. Fiber networks now run alongside electric lines, strengthening connectivity and supporting local communities. As broadband access expands and infrastructure continues to be deployed, protecting and maintaining it is just as important as building it.

Fiber-optic cable is highly effective but also vulnerable to damage. The glass fibers inside can easily break, causing outages that affect entire communities. Repairs are disruptive and costly. Service interruptions can also interfere with critical communications, including emergency services.

That is why modernizing Virginia's laws through legislation such as House Bill 317 and Senate Bill 743, patroned by Del. Kimberly Pope Adams and Sen. Lashrecse Aird, is so important. The Virginia General Assembly convened on Jan. 14 for its 2026 legislative session, and these bills were a priority for the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Broadband Cooperatives.

Virginia law makes it illegal to intentionally damage utility infrastructure such as electric and telephone lines. However, the law has not kept pace with rapid advancements

in technology, and the protection did not clearly include broadband and fiber-optic cable.

This year's bills update the law to reflect modern infrastructure by clearly including broadband and communications systems under the same protections that already apply to other utilities. These commonsense bills received bipartisan support and passed unanimously, reflecting how critical protecting broadband has become

to our communities. If the legislation is signed by Virginia's governor, it will go into effect on July 1, 2026.

The General Assembly also returns on April 23 to finalize the commonwealth's biennial budget, and VMDABC supports continuing funding for the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative. This fund is an important tool for continuing broadband deployment through rural Virginia.

Reliable broadband networks must not only be built, but they also must be protected. That protection cannot depend on this legislation alone. It also depends on awareness and personal responsibility. Being mindful around power lines, especially during hunting season, and encouraging others to do the same helps protect the networks on which our communities rely.

Efforts such as the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources' "Shoot at Wings, Not Wires" campaign help raise awareness and serve as a reminder to exercise caution and hunt safely around utility infrastructure.

These efforts are about protecting the connections we depend on every day, and through legislative or community education efforts, we are spreading the message that everyone must do their part to help protect our infrastructure. ●



From Jet-Setter to Porch-Sitter

After a stubborn suitcase misadventure, the porch wins

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



It's almost vacation time! Well, for most folks, it's almost vacation season — and time to start planning. For me, these days, vacation is sitting on the screened porch with a book.

It's sort of a shame I don't have the desire to go on vacation anymore. I sure took advantage of it back when I could. In fact, I could safely say I was on a constant vacation from age 22 until, oh, a few years ago. When you've lived in places like Key West, Fla.; San Francisco, Calif.; and even Bath County, Va., you've lived in vacation land!

If I were to go on a vacation now, I'd probably have to drive, and I don't enjoy driving as much as I once did. Not long ago, hopping in the car and driving five hours to Virginia Beach was simple enough. Today? I could not even imagine it! I'd have to break it up into two days.

If I were to go on vacation, no matter for how long, I'd have my choice

of suitcases. I hesitate to spend time counting how many sets of matching luggage I have. And I haven't used any of them in quite some time.

Sadly, the only time I've used a suitcase or a tote bag is for a trip to the hospital for some surgery or other. And that's no fun at all.

Back when I went to Greece, I learned that it does not matter whether you have one massive suitcase and several smaller ones to match it. I learned that you may as well leave that huge suitcase at home. Sure, it holds a lot of clothes, some shoes and even my pillows, but you'll never get on the plane with it.

My Greek vacation happened to coincide with new airline restrictions: No bags on board that measured an inch over the limit or weighed more than 13 pounds.

Thank heavens we arrived at the Baltimore airport with time to spare. When they weighed my bag, the stern-faced matron decreed, "This weighs too much. You'll have to check it."

My experience with checked baggage has been this: The baggage always takes its own trip and never arrives when I do.

I got what I thought was a brilliant idea. Right there on the floor of the BWI airport, I opened the suitcase and

started removing clothes. And putting them on. There were no restrictions about that! I think I was swathed in seven outfits by the time my case weighed in at 13 pounds. I sure didn't feel chilly on the plane.

Once we landed in Athens, I began toting three heavy bags around to every ship and hotel we visited. By departure date, I absolutely hated my luggage. I packed the souvenirs and gifts into one small bag and checked the rest.

Upon landing back at BWI, an announcement came: Would the following passengers contact the flight attendant? One of those passengers was "Mr. Oxendine." I prayed that there was a man with my unusual name on the manifest.

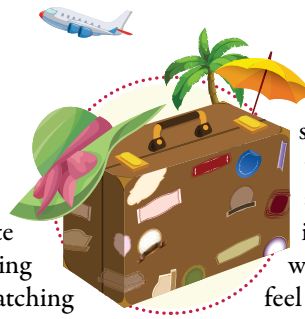
But no; it was I. My bags had not made it onto the plane and would be delivered to my home as soon as they arrived.

I had a heck of a time describing just where my rural house was in Virginia. The closest airport was Lewisburg, W.Va., so I said I'd pick it up there.

Days went by. A week passed. Still no luggage. Finally, a call from British Airways: "We're happy to say your luggage has arrived in Luxembourg," the lady chirped.

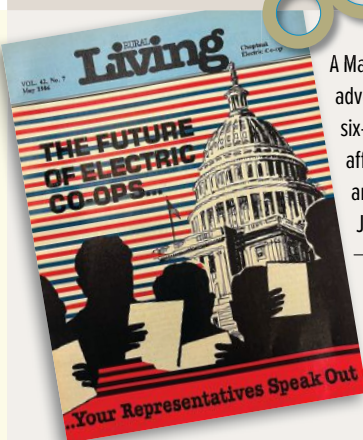
I still laugh when I think of that. Is it any wonder I am leery of ever flying anywhere again? ●

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.



CELEBRATING

Rural Living, May 1986



A May 1986 issue of *Rural Virginia* highlights the importance of advocating for the future of electric cooperatives. In the related six-page cover story, *Rural Living* posed two questions about policies affecting electric cooperatives to Virginia and Maryland lawmakers and published their responses. Cover illustration designed by John Kessler of Richmond, Va.

Know someone turning 80 this year?

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



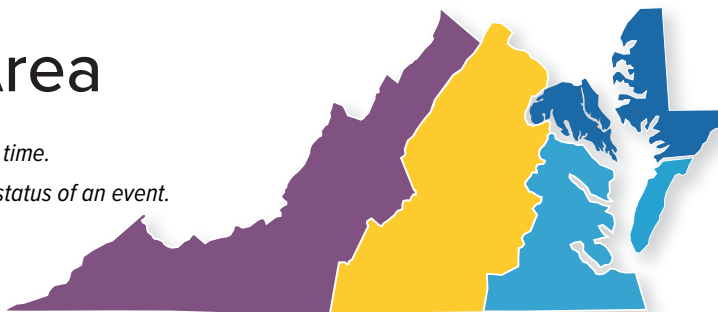
Look for the CL logo, like the one above, in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **WherezIt**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at co-opliving.com under "Contests." Deadline is **May 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

MAY

16 CLIFTON FORGE. Alleghany Highlands Annual Triathlon. Sharon Community Center. 9 a.m. Cliftonforgeva.gov

22-23 STEPHENS CITY. 34th Annual Newtown Heritage Festival. Newtown Commons. Times vary. Stephencity.org

25 MIDDLETON. Wreath Laying Ceremony. 8050 Main St. 1 p.m. Middletown.gov

JUNE

6 MIDDLETON. Belle Grove Plantation Garden Fest. 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Bellegrove.org

6 STEPHENS CITY. 13th Annual American Military Heritage Museum. 811 Fairfax Pike. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Facebook.com/amhmuseum

PIEDMONT

MAY

15-16 DOSWELL. Gaff-n-Go® Rodeo. Meadow Event Park. Gaff-n-go.com

15-17 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's "Medusa & Circe: An Odyssey." 9419 Battle St. Times vary. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Virginiaartfactory.org

16 GLEN ALLEN. ASCV 5K and Family Fun Day. 4951 Lake Brook Drive. 8 -11 a.m. Asc5k.org

30 BEAVERDAM. Lafayette's 1781 Encampment at Scotchtown. 16120 Chiswell Lane. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Preservationvirginia.org/tickets/patrick-henrys-scotchtown

JUNE

5 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's "Disney Newsies." 10960 George Mason Circle. 7:30 p.m. 703-330-2787. More dates online. Virginiaartfactory.org

6 SPOTSYLVANIA. Gospel Sing. 6823 Partlow Road. 6 p.m.

6-7 STRATFORD. Virginia Resolved. Stratford Hall. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. More information online. Stratfordhall.org

13 CUMBERLAND. Juneteenth Festival. Bright Hope Center. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

TIDEWATER

MAY

16 CAPE CHARLES. Chamberfest. Cape Charles Beachfront. 4 Bay Ave. 3 p.m.

17 DELTAVILLE. Pop-Up Fundraiser. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 3-6 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

23 DELTAVILLE. Groovin' in the Park. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 5-8 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

23 DELTAVILLE. Holly Point Market. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

MARYLAND

MAY

9 MASSEY. Chili Fiesta Airplane Fly-In. Massey Aerodrome. 33541 Maryland Line Road. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Masseyaero.org

JUNE

13 FEDERALSBURG. Smokey Cat Lavender Festival. 5090 Long Swamp Road. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Smokeycatlavender.com

PRINT DEADLINES: June 1 for July 15-Aug. 15
July 1 for Aug 15-Sept. 15

Email: happenings@co-opliving.com
Send to: Happenings, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060
Online: co-opliving.com/happenings



Tell Us All About It!

Your cooperative keeps your community connected, but its people, events and attractions make it your home.

So, help us shine the spotlight on the place you love.

Submit your story ideas to *Cooperative Living*.

Email: editor@co-opliving.com

Or call: 804-346-3344

Nearly 400 professionals compete while showcasing skills of the trade!

In its 22nd year, the Gaff-n-Go® Rodeo provides a close look at the work performed by utility lineworkers. Enjoy over 80 exhibitors, a family area with interactive features, food trucks and more!



 Ateco
GAFF
•n• **GO**
RODEO

gaff-n-go.com

May 15-16 | Meadow Event Park | Doswell, Va.

Free admission.

Opening ceremonies: Friday, 10:15 a.m. & Saturday, 7:45 a.m.

Hosted by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives



AUCTIONS

SIMMONS MOVING SALE. Amherst, Va. Timed online auction. Bidding begins Friday, April 24, 6 p.m. Auction Closing Date, Friday, May 8, 6 p.m.

NEW DAY FARM DISPERSAL. Saxe, Va. Timed online auction. Bidding begins Friday, May 1, 6 p.m. Auction Closing Date, Friday, May 15, 6 p.m.

CARWILE AUCTIONS INC. Facebook & Auction Zip. VAAR392. 434-547-9100. www.carwileauctions.com

BUSINESS

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

FUNDRAISER

PLANTS, POTS & THINGS WORKSHOP. Ruther Glen, Va. Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Explore and shop for beautiful plants, herbs, trees and shrubs. Wrights Chapel United Methodist Church. 8063 Ladysmith Road, Ruther Glen, VA 22546.

REAL ESTATE

ARE YOU PART OWNER OF A FARM OR INVESTMENT PROPERTY? With family members, partners or unknown parties? Do you want to separate or cash out your interest? Call today for a free consultation. (VSB #91236) Attorney John Janson at 434-953-8794. Johnmjanson@gmail.com.

WANTED

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

Steel Mobile Home Roofing
Leaks? High energy bill? Roof rumble?
Contact us at 800.633.8969 or roofover.com
PERMA-ROOF
from Southern Builders
Mobile Home Roofover Systems Since 1983

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.

VA250
Patrick Henry's Red Hill
Celebrate America's 250th Independence Day at Patrick Henry's Red Hill with food, fun, family, and Fireworks!
Just 40 minutes south of Lynchburg, VA!
1250 Red Hill Road Brookneal, VA 24528 434-376-2044 www.redhill.org

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: May 5 for June issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



CL ADVERTISING INDEX

Bethel Builders	23
City of Hopewell	23
County Line Materials	13
Lane Hearing	3
Laurel Ridge Community College	Inside Front Cover
Lifetime Building	8
Morton Buildings	27
ODEC	8
ODEC	30
Perma Roof	35
Red Hill	35
Stauer	Inside Back Cover
Supreme Coin	27
Virginia Farm Bureau	7
WaterFurnace	Back Cover
White Tail Properties	13

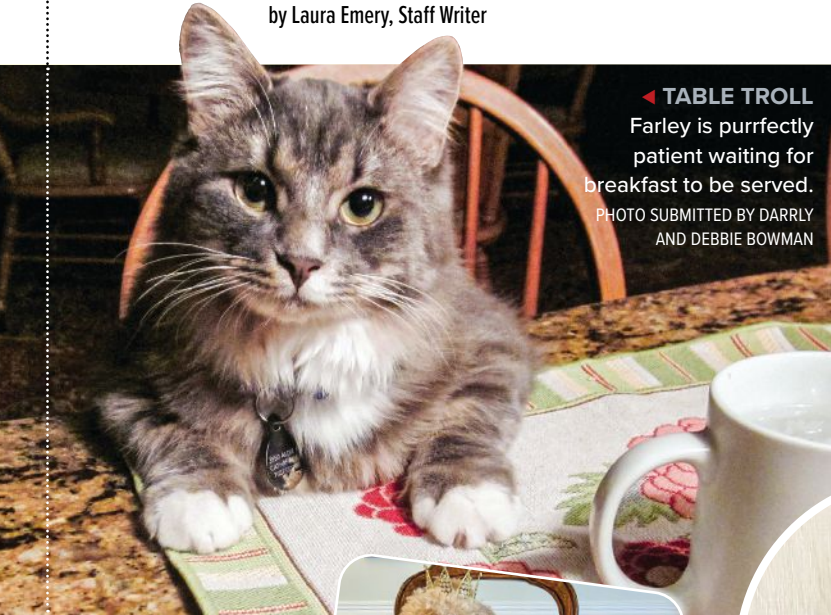
HUNGRY Eyes

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS!

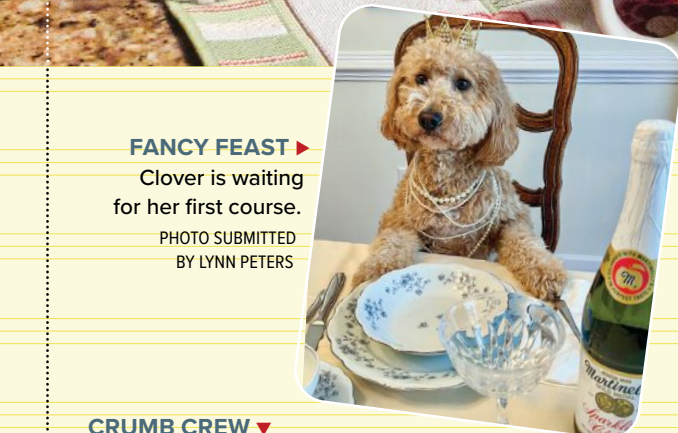
Submit a photo for a chance to win a \$20 Amazon gift card!

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.



◀ **TABLE TROLL**
Farley is purrfectly patient waiting for breakfast to be served. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DARRLY AND DEBBIE BOWMAN

BEARLY INVITED ▶
At least he has table manners. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY STEPHEN GREENE



FANCY FEAST ▶
Clover is waiting for her first course. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LYNN PETERS



◀ **FOOD COURT**
Kiwi is silently judging the lack of food on the table. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CINDY RULLAN

CRUMB CREW ▼
Teamwork makes the dream work. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY TIM MANLEY



▼ **TAKE THE CAKE**
Beau's cake stakeout advice: Always keep your eyes on the prize. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY HAYLEY AND ERIC LOOS



Urgent: Special Summer Driving Notice

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory...

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

The finest optics: And buy one, get one FREE! Eagle Eyes® has the highest customer satisfaction of any item in our 20 year history. We are so excited for you to try the Eagle Eyes® breakthrough technology that we will give you a **second pair of Eagle Eyes® Navigator™ Sunglasses FREE—a \$59.95 value!**

That's two pairs to protect your eyes with the best technology available for less than the price of one pair of traditional sunglasses. You get a pair of Navigators with stainless steel black frames and the other with stainless steel gold, plus one hard zipper case and one micro-fiber drawstring cleaning pouch are included. Keep one pair in your pocket and one in your car.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not astounded with the Eagle Eyes® technology, enjoying clearer, sharper and more glare-free vision, simply return one pair within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The other pair is yours to keep. No one else has such confidence in their optic technology. Don't leave your eyes in the hands of fashion designers, entrust them to the best scientific minds on earth. Wear your Eagle Eyes® Navigators with absolute confidence, knowing your eyes are protected with technology that was born in space for the human race.



Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



Navigator™ Black Stainless Steel Sunglasses

Receive the Navigator™ Gold Sunglasses (a \$59.95 value) **FREE!** just for trying the Navigator™ Black



Navigator™ Gold Stainless Steel Sunglasses



Certified EAGLE EYES® was developed from original NASA Optic technology and was recently inducted into the Space Foundation Technology Hall of Fame.

Fit-ons available for \$39+S&H
Black or Tortoise-Shell design



Two Pairs of Eagle Eyes® Navigator™ Sunglasses \$119.90†
Offer Code Price **\$49 + S&P**
Save \$70.90
Offer includes one pair each Navigator™ Black and Navigator™ Gold Sunglasses

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: **ENS294-01**
You must use this insider offer code to get our special price.

Stauer®  **Rating of A+**

14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. ENS294-01, Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com

† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

~~TOO GOOD TO BE~~ TRUE



Geothermal. It's easier than ever to score big with the nation's best incentives.

WaterFurnace geothermal units use the stored energy in your backyard to provide luxurious comfort and dramatic savings on heating, cooling, and hot water. They're 2x more efficient and last 40% longer (25yrs with geo vs 18yrs with ordinary) than any other HVAC system. Plus, many state, local, and utility programs offer incentives to lower installation costs. It's never been easier to switch!

Visit waterfurnace.com to learn how to turn "Too Good To Be True" into "True."



Ready to get started?

Scan the QR to connect with your Geothermal Concierge today!



visit waterfurnace.com