

RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC
CooperativeLiving



**THE GREAT
RETURN**

PAGE 8

Margi Whitmore, a biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, holds an Atlantic sturgeon in the state's Pamunkey River.

JASON KAHN/NOAA FISHERIES PHOTO



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VIEWPOINT

Coming Together

Summer is a season of celebration. It brings backyard cookouts, family vacations, county fairs and long evenings spent making memories across the beautiful mid-Atlantic we call home.

For electric cooperatives, summer also marks another important tradition — annual meeting season.

Annual meetings may feel like community gatherings, complete with good food, fellowship and familiar faces. But beneath the hot dogs, lemonade and door prizes is something much more meaningful. These meetings display the best examples of the cooperative difference in action.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, cooperatives are governed by the people they serve. Each year, member-owners gather to learn about their cooperative, hear about the opportunities and challenges ahead, meet the employees who keep the lights on, and elect directors from their own communities. Those



directors help guide decisions that shape the future of the co-op.

Even for co-ops that hold their annual meetings virtually, the goal is the same: engaging member-owners with their electric cooperative.

One of the great privileges of my job is attending annual meetings across our 16 member cooperatives and hosting the association's own annual meeting, where directors and leaders from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware come together to celebrate accomplishments, share ideas and prepare for the future.

This year, as we gather in Cambridge, Md., we'll celebrate another year of service and reflect on 90 years of electric cooperatives strengthening rural communities. While our industry continues to evolve, our mission remains unchanged: serving our members and improving the communities we call home.

Annual meetings remind us that co-ops are more than power providers; they are neighbors working together for the common good. Now that's worth celebrating every summer. ●

Brian S. Mosier

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

Cooperative Living

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

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The Little Engine, Part 2

*A co-op connection, a donated fire truck and
the rest of the story*

by Jack Cooksey, Staff Writer

This is a story with two happy endings. The first moment of grace occurred 20 years ago and was documented in the January 2006 issue of *Cooperative Living*.

In 2006, the Windsor (Va.) Volunteer Fire Department — served by Community Electric Cooperative — had a new fire engine on the way and was retiring its 1972 Ford pumper truck that served the department for 34 years. The old pumper had become a third-line backup, at best, and had outlived its market value, even though it had fewer than 30,000 miles on it.

Weighing what to do with the still-capable truck, Windsor Fire Chief Lee Marshall and his firefighters decided to donate it to another department, specifically seeking any Gulf Coast fire department in need after Hurricane Katrina devastated the region in 2005.

To find candidates, Marshall called CEC's then-CEO Jim Reynolds, who accessed the nationwide co-op network and was soon connected with the West Hancock Fire and Rescue in Pearlington, Miss., which lost two of its three engines during the hurricane. "It was a perfect match," Reynolds said at the time.

A donation from CEC helped spruce up the truck, and within two weeks, Marshall, two firefighters and a retired Windsor chief delivered the truck to Mississippi.

Happy ending No. 1.

Yet the story kept on going, just like the old truck. "It stayed in service for us about nine years after Katrina," says Joseph "Ticker" Dawsey, who has worked in fire and rescue in Pearlington for 45 years. He's now a one-man department, the chief of a station with five volunteers to call on.

When West Hancock acquired a new engine, the 1972 pumper was donated again, this time to a small Louisiana station about 30 miles away. That volunteer squad had one subpar truck at the time, Dawsey says, and Windsor's old soldier kept serving another five years until the salty clime of the coast finally claimed it. It was sold for salvage.

Dawsey remembers how that 34-year-old truck was a godsend to Pearlington. "That was just an old truck to them," he says. "We looked at it as a brand-new truck."

A fire engine twice donated, twice reborn. And a second happy ending. ●



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2006

The Smart Era

Celebrating the seventh decade of Cooperative Living

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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

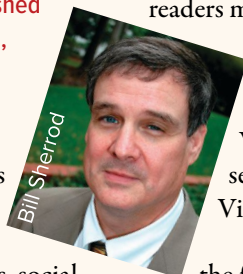
During *Cooperative Living's* seventh decade — from 2006 through 2016 — smartphones replaced flip phones, social media transformed communication and high-speed internet became an essential part of everyday life. As the world became smarter and more connected, so did the electric industry.

For many cooperative members, this decade marked the beginning of a new relationship with electricity. Smart technology offered greater insight into how energy was used and provided opportunities to manage it more efficiently.

Yet even as innovation reshaped daily life, *Cooperative Living* remained grounded in the cooperative principles that had guided the publication since its founding.

That balance between progress and tradition was evident from the very start of the decade. In the October 2006 issue, Tangier native Charles “Lennie” Parks was named the winner of *Cooperative Living's* oldest-issue contest after sharing his treasured July 1948 edition of *Rural Virginia*. The story served as a reminder that the magazine’s legacy lived on in readers’ homes and memories, even as the industry and the publication moved into a complex, digital age.

A new chapter began in 2007 when William V. “Bill” Sherrod Jr. became editor of the magazine. Through Inside



Story, a regular sidebar, readers came to know him through personal reflections and experiences that helped connect readers more deeply to each issue’s content. In January 2007, he wrote about meeting fellow Appomattox native Watkins Abbitt Jr., who was serving his 22nd year in the Virginia General Assembly.

As Virginia grappled with the future of electric utility deregulation, *Cooperative Living* helped readers understand the debate. In the February issue, an editorial examined whether the state’s 1999 deregulation law had achieved its goals and explained why many policymakers believed a return to regulation was necessary after competition failed to lower costs or create meaningful benefits.

The magazine continued to balance public policy with people-focused storytelling. In the November-December 2007 issue, readers met Spotsylvania County resident Dale Brown, who brought joy to children each holiday season as Santa Claus. In January 2008, *Cooperative Living* included a feature story on efforts to revive Virginia’s oyster industry along the Coan River, along with an article on Virginia state legislators Clarke Hogan and Tommy Norment, both key figures in reregulation.

GOING GREEN

Environmental stewardship became an increasingly important topic as electric cooperatives balanced reliability, affordability and emerging environmental concerns.



October 2006

Throughout 2008, *Cooperative Living* explored renewable energy, environmental regulations and the evolving conversation surrounding climate change. Readers learned about energy-efficient technologies, conservation efforts and cooperative programs designed to reduce energy use.

In January 2009, the publication marked a historic moment by reporting on the election of the nation’s first African American president. The following month, readers learned how Virginia’s electric cooperatives provided 4,200

compact fluorescent lights to Virginia State Parks. In June, the publication shared that 42 million consumers nationwide were served by electric cooperatives.

The magazine closed 2009 with a Christmas cover story featuring nostalgic toys and warm holiday memories from readers’ childhoods.

In January 2010, readers met Rappahannock Electric Cooperative lineworker Chuck Tippet, who spent his days maintaining power lines as a “wood walker” and his weekends performing as a daring wing walker.



2016



Chuck Tippet

The phrase “smart grid” was beginning to enter everyday conversation, and *Cooperative Living* introduced readers to the advanced meters, sensors and data systems that promised to improve reliability and efficiency.

SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

While technology transformed the world, *Cooperative Living* remained rooted in the values that have long defined electric cooperatives: family, faith and community. In the March-April 2010 issue, *Cooperative Living* profiled Worth Hudson, a longtime Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative board member who helped establish the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives Education Scholarship Foundation. Later that year, the magazine visited Our Lady of the Angels Monastery near Charlottesville and featured retired Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative manager Jerry Groseclose.

Readers met World War II veterans who shared firsthand stories of combat, survival and sacrifice during one of history’s most significant conflicts. Among them were pilot Joe Bernard profiled in the June 2008 issue, who lost a leg and later earned a Silver Star; glider pilot R.S. “Cal” Moore featured in the September 2010 issue, who flew engine-less aircraft into combat zones; and former prisoner-of-war Richard Dawson, showcased in the May 2011 issue, who survived being shot down during the combat.

In the August 2011 issue, *Cooperative Living* marked 65 years of storytelling, noting that the magazine was still delivered at a remarkably low cost — “a postage stamp plus a nickel.”

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In 2012, *Cooperative Living* helped readers understand issues affecting electric cooperatives. One significant issue involved pole-attachment rates charged to cable companies. The Virginia General Assembly referred the matter to the State Corporation Commission for further study. The resulting review acknowledged that attachment rates should fairly reflect the costs of building and maintaining utility infrastructure.

As the magazine covered complex industry issues, it never lost sight of the people at the heart of cooperative-served communities. The Good Neighbors column debuted during 2012, celebrating ordinary people with extraordinary stories.

In June 2013, readers were introduced to Virginia music legend Wayne Henderson. Throughout 2014, the magazine highlighted the Old Dominion Endurance Ride, explored innovations at Wallops Island Flight Facility, took a firsthand look at the daily work of lineworkers and focused on environmental stewardship efforts taking shape in co-op communities.

MOVING FORWARD

In 2015, readers followed stories about the 13th annual Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, Chesapeake Bay oyster restoration, Truckers Against Cancer and longtime Virginia Sen. Charles J. Colgan. The magazine also explored the growing role of natural gas in



Haiti, 2015

electric generation, advances in workforce development and international efforts to expand access to electricity.

The cooperative spirit knows no boundaries. In the November-December 2015 issue, readers learned about cooperative lineworkers who traveled to Haiti to help bring electricity to remote communities and the partnerships that made those efforts possible.

In January 2016, *Cooperative Living* reported on creation of the Power Line Worker Training School near Blackstone, Va., that provided a pathway for young Virginians to enter the utility industry while helping cooperatives develop the skilled workforce needed for the future.

Mihika Dusat, daughter of NOVEC members, was featured on the July 2016 cover for earning top honors in *Cooperative Living*’s annual Youth Art Contest. Her artwork depicted the traditional Indian dance Kuchipudi.

The magazine’s 2016 readership survey results revealed that readers remained highly engaged with the publication through recipes, photos, contests and local events, and that the magazine continued to be a trusted and useful part of readers’ lives.

As social media feeds multiplied and information moved at the speed of a swipe, readers continued to walk to their mailboxes and open the pages of *Cooperative Living* — a trusted connection to their communities and the electric cooperatives that serve them. ●



The first iPhone was introduced in 2007, shifting the world from physical keyboards to touchscreen computers.



Stock markets plunged during the 2008 financial crisis and the Great Recession.



On Nov. 4, 2008, Barack Obama was elected the nation’s first African American president.



The Ice Bucket Challenge raised more than \$115 million for ALS awareness and research in mid-2014.

1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

We carefully climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

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Back From the Brink

Collaborative efforts lead to the Atlantic sturgeon's 'great return' to the Chesapeake Bay

by D. Hunter Reardon, Contributing Writer

Just one year after the Chesapeake Bay population of Atlantic sturgeon was officially listed as endangered in 2012, a surprising message appeared on the Maryland Anglers' Log, an online journal for Marylanders to share fish stories and photos.

Randy Rowland, a recreational fisherman, wrote: "My good friend and fishing buddy, Bill Harris, and I were carp fishing on the Marshyhope [Creek], minding our own business, when this sturgeon decided to jump in the boat. We were both shocked to say the least! ... We saw and/or heard seven other sturgeon jump on this same day."

The Maryland Department of

Natural Resources responded to Rowland and Harris and then had a hard time reaching them directly.

"We had to convince them to let us know where they were fishing, because they thought they might be in trouble," says Ashlee Horne, anadromous restoration project leader for the Maryland DNR. She adds, "Eventually, Bill Harris told us he had been going out to Marshyhope to fish and watch sturgeon jump for a really long time."

PREHISTORY IN THE PRESENT

It's a very old fish tale, this story about a robust species that can grow up to 14 feet long and weigh up to 800 pounds.

Above from left: Biologist Matt Balazik and Chuck Frederickson of the James River Association conduct sturgeon research.

Though humans have lived in the mid-Atlantic region for about 20,000 years, the sturgeon thrived here more than 120 million years ago — some 50 million years before *Tyrannosaurus rex* trod the Earth.

"When the James River was formed, there was likely sturgeon there," says Albert Spells, a retired biologist formerly with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. "These fish are millions and millions of years old."

At the turn of the 20th century, though, the ray-finned fish that had survived the Cretaceous extinction met a challenge even bigger than a meteor: mankind. By the 1910s, the fish was nearly wiped out on the

Eastern seaboard by overfishing.

"After the Civil War, immigrants from certain European countries came over and said, 'Oh my gosh, it's like a gold mine here,'" says Matt Balazik, conservation biologist for Virginia Commonwealth University. "They knew how to produce caviar and how to smoke the fish well ... and they thought it was an inexhaustible resource."

Today, the sturgeon are rebounding throughout the bay and its tributaries. Active spawning has been documented in Maryland's Marshyhope Creek and Virginia's James and Pamunkey rivers. After first documenting the species' activity there nearly two decades ago, biologists have since tagged more than 2,500 sturgeon in the James.

needs nearly perfect conditions for successful spawning. "They like to lay their eggs on clean cobble and gravel, even boulder — something that's firm and doesn't have a lot of sediment on it," he says.

If fertilized eggs sink to the bottom, they can end up under sediment and deprived of the waterflow and oxygen they need to survive.

Jamie Brunkow, director of advocacy and river ecology for the JRA, points toward water quality as the major reason for "the great return" of the Atlantic sturgeon. A multistate plan

established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 set specific limits on pollutants flowing into the Chesapeake Bay watershed — a conservation effort that helps elevate

dissolved oxygen in tributaries.

"Across the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed, there has been massive investment in wastewater treatment upgrades," Brunkow says, which returns clean, treated water to waterways.

Margi Whitmore, the tidal rivers project lead for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, says water flow is also critical for sturgeon reproduction. "One of the biggest things is precipitation and access to freshwater spawning habitat," she says. Rivers need to run high enough for adult fish to spawn and larvae to grow upstream of the salt front.

In concert with these efforts has been habitat restoration. During the early 2010s, VCU and the JRA partnered to build three underwater spawning reefs in the lower James River.

With spawning activity confirmed in the James and Pamunkey, researchers

are looking to find young-of-year Atlantic sturgeon — babies — which signal reproduction.

One of DWR's next priorities, Whitmore says, is to expand its research in the Rappahannock River, where fishermen say they've released Atlantic sturgeon from their nets with other bycatch. Males streaming milt have been caught and others have been seen breaching upstream.

"There's kind of the convergence of all of these things that just make it very likely that they're spawning in there," she says.

It requires confirmation, though,

(continued on page 10)



Sturgeon can leap impressively high, launching their massive bodies anywhere from 6 to 10 feet out of the water.

STAN BELBACK PHOTO

"They've seen a whole lot of stuff. I think there will always be a pocket of sturgeon somewhere."

— Albert Spells, retired biologist, formerly with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Each September, the James River Association offers sightseeing tours to watch sturgeon breach in the lower James, a cinematic sight that occurs when spawning males get overly excited and launch themselves into the air.

So, how did the fish go from functionally extinct in the Chesapeake Bay to doing backflips for spectators in the span of approximately 25 years?

Well, Spells says, "They seem to be very resilient animals."

SPAWNING GROUNDS

Sturgeon can live up to 60 years. Often, they do not start spawning until they are around 20 years old, usually in late April or late September, Horne says. The fish spend most of their lives in the ocean but return to spawn in freshwater — typically, in the same rivers where they were born.

Balazik explains that the fish possibly

MEET THE ATLANTIC STURGEON

History: Sturgeon fossils date back 120 million years

Native region: Coastal Canada to coastal Florida

Size/Weight: Up to 14 feet long and 800 pounds

Lifespan: 30 to 60 years

Range of migration: Up to 900 miles

Annual migration: Estimated to be in the thousands of miles

Appearance: Leathery skin — bluish-black or olive-brown (on the back) with paler sides and a white belly. Robust body with a long, flat snout featuring four barbels

Ancient armor: Five rows of exterior bony plates (scutes) along the top and sides

Sharklike flair: Heterocercal tail resembles a shark's tail.

Back From the Brink

(continued from page 9)

and until grant funding becomes available to support the project, she says, DWR biologists will seek to combine efforts with other research teams.

“We’re looking at ways that we can do it,” Whitmore says. “It just means that we’re having to collaborate more closely, like pool what resources we do have.”

In Maryland, there is evidence that sturgeon are spawning in Marshyhope Creek, but no juveniles have been caught. “The adults we catch are in spawning condition — bloated females full of loose black eggs, males streaming with milt, more than 100 miles from the nearest ocean,” she says. “But we have yet to catch a baby.”

A FISH WITH CHARISMA

Beyond the data and logistics of sturgeon research, Whitmore says, there is the singular experience of working with a fish she describes as charismatic. “We all kind of acknowledge that they’re really special fish, and you can’t really put your finger on it.”

She reminisces on notable moments

in the field when she’s been able to observe the animal. One time during field research in the Pamunkey River, she had to stand in a pen of several large sturgeon. “You would never know, looking at the surface of the water, that [there was] a bunch of really powerful, huge fish in there.”

But Whitmore shifted her foot and nudged one. The water erupted. “I mean, it’s just tails thrashing everywhere,” she says. Just as quickly, the frenzy settled back to calm.

During a project years earlier in New Brunswick, Canada, Whitmore caught her very first juvenile sturgeon, which the team took back to shore to surgically insert a tracking device. On the boat ride to shore, she watched the fish swim laps in its holding tank. “It would do a lap around the holding tank and then ... when it came around to where I was sitting, it would roll on its back and expose its belly. So, I would just, like a puppy, give a little scratch, and then it would just do another lap.”



From left: Ashlee Horne, Ben Staud, Tyler Fowler and Tanner Broadwell of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

CHUCK STENCE/MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES PHOTO
THIS ACTIVITY WAS CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO NMFS ESA PERMIT NO. 20314-02.

But what of the Atlantic sturgeon’s future?

Spells says that the sturgeon population was probably never as fully extirpated as previously thought. “Jim Owen, a liaison for commercial watermen, used to tell me: ‘Albert, there’s sturgeon out there. Watermen catch them. But they’re not going to tell you if you don’t ask.’”

In Maryland, Horne says, “Watermen talk to us — ‘They’ve been here all along. We’ve been catching sturgeon for decades.’”

Spells is hopeful about the convergence of knowledge from teams in the region studying the species. “We share information,” he says. “It’s people up and down the East Coast using the same kind of equipment, sharing data, working together for the same goal and willing to help each other out when they can. That kind of stuff makes a difference.”

Future challenges to the sturgeon population could include increased acidification of the oceans and changing water temperatures due to global climate change. But Spells remains optimistic about the fate of a fish that outlived the dinosaurs.

“They’ve seen climate change in their time,” he says. “They’ve seen a whole lot of stuff. I think there will always be a pocket of sturgeon somewhere. This is a fish that’s built to last.” ●

FABLES OF THE FISH



Historians note that the Atlantic sturgeon, as a food source, was “the fish that saved Jamestown,” the first permanent English settlement that faced starvation.

In a piece of early American lore, colonist Martin Hawkins was fishing in the James River in 1779 and managed to catch an Atlantic sturgeon. While trying to beach the fish, Hawkins took hold by sliding his hands into its gills. But the large fish then jolted away, taking Hawkins onto its back. Thus, he became known as the “sturgeon rider.”

Elders of the Pamunkey Indian Reservation tell of a long-passed ancestral tradition challenging young men of the tribe to mount and ride atop a sturgeon as a rite of passage into adulthood.

Native American legends claimed with exaggerated license that the rivers were so full of Atlantic sturgeon a person could cross from bank to bank by walking on the sturdy backs of the creatures — not quite true.

Sources: (pages 9 and 10) Brandeis University; Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; James River Association; National Park Service; NOAA Fisheries; Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources; Revolutionary War Journal



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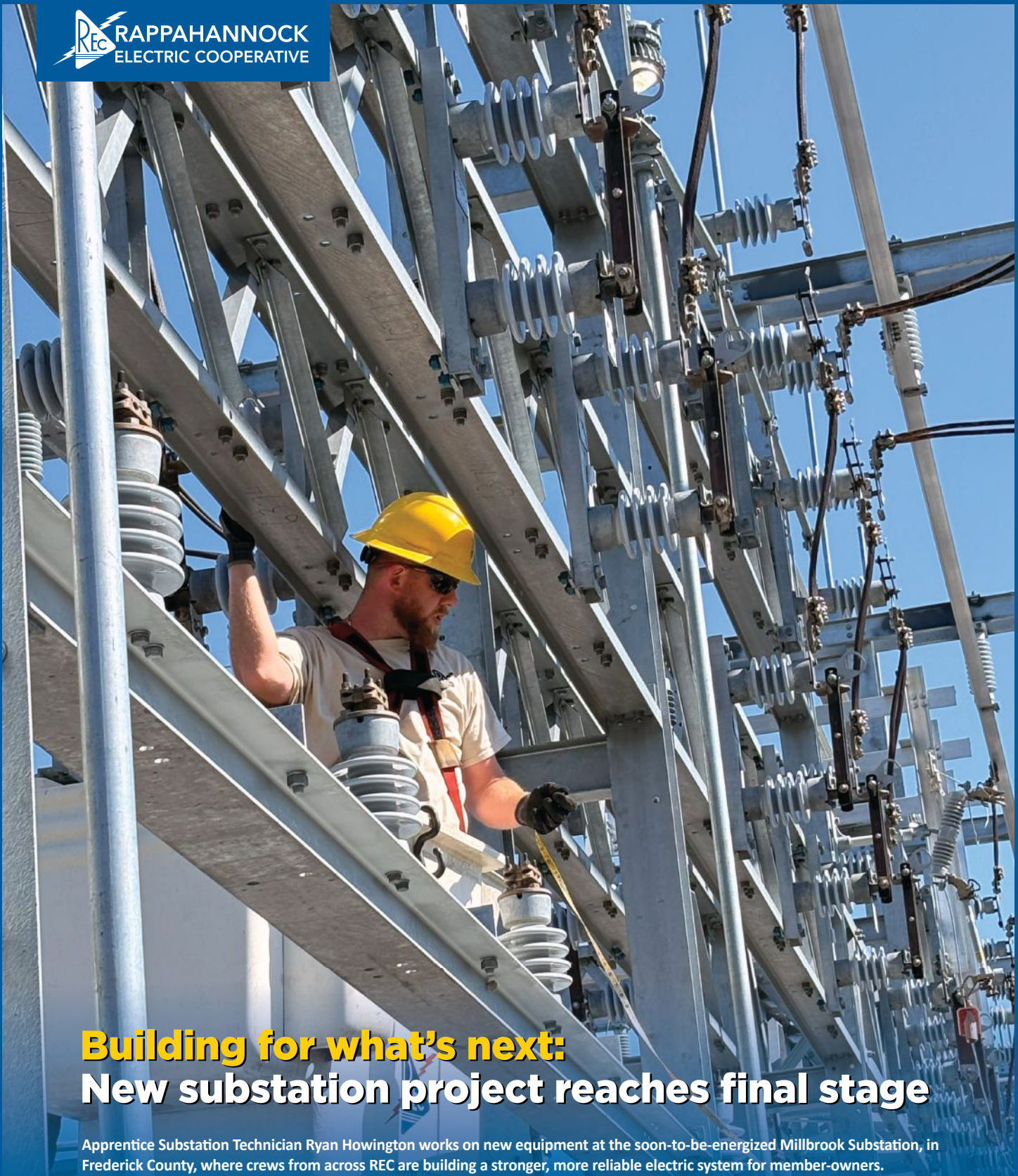


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Building for what's next: New substation project reaches final stage

Apprentice Substation Technician Ryan Howington works on new equipment at the soon-to-be-energized Millbrook Substation, in Frederick County, where crews from across REC are building a stronger, more reliable electric system for member-owners. To learn more about this reliability focused project, [read the full article on page 18.](#)

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CEO editorial: Meeting the challenge
of rising electricity costs

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Co-op students enjoy once-in-a-
lifetime Youth Tour in D.C.

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Save money by mapping
your energy use



Meeting the Challenge of Rising Electricity Costs

By John Hewa, President & CEO, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative



The electric industry is entering a period unlike anything we've experienced in decades. Demand for electricity is growing rapidly, costs are increasing across

every part of the electric system, and electric cooperatives must prepare today for the challenges of tomorrow.

At REC, that preparation is already underway.

Since 2023, REC has connected over 12,000 new homes and businesses. Combined with the rapid growth of industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology and data centers, electricity demand is increasing at an unprecedented pace. REC's record peak demand reached 1,204 megawatts (MW), and by 2040, demand on our system could grow to beyond 10,000 MW.

Preparing for this growth means investing in the infrastructure that powers our communities. New substations, transformers, poles, wire and other equipment are essential to safely and reliably deliver electricity to every member we serve.

Like many industries, REC has experienced significant increases in the cost of the materials we use daily, making it more expensive to build and maintain the electric system. Since the beginning of the decade, the cost of many essential materials has increased dramatically, including transformers (146%), conductors (more than 100%) and crossarms (118%). Even utility poles, one of the most visible components of our electric system, have increased by more than 20%. Every new neighborhood, business and reliability improvement

depends on these and other critical materials, making disciplined planning and responsible financial management more important than ever.

Those local investment costs are only one part of the equation. REC also purchases wholesale power through Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, which participates in the PJM regional transmission organization. Across the PJM region, the costs of generating, transmitting and ensuring enough electricity is available during periods of peak demand have also increased significantly.

In fact, a recent report from PJM's independent market monitor showed that during the first five months of 2026 compared to the same period last year, energy costs increased by nearly 60%, transmission costs increased by almost 5%, and capacity costs — the cost of ensuring enough electricity is available when demand is highest — increased by more than 400%.

These are real challenges, but they are also exactly the kind of challenges your Cooperative was built to address. Our responsibility isn't only to provide reliable electricity today, but to prepare for tomorrow in ways that help manage costs while continuing to deliver the level of service our members expect.

That preparation includes making thoughtful investments to strengthen our electric system, planning years in advance for future growth and evaluating new technologies that can improve reliability and help reduce long-term costs.

Battery energy storage systems are one example. By storing electricity when costs are lower and making that energy available during periods of highest demand and costs, battery systems have the potential to reduce wholesale power expense while adding flexibility and resilience to the electric grid. Our analysis indicates the potential for millions of dollars in savings by utilizing

this innovative technology. Like every investment REC makes, these projects are carefully evaluated to ensure they provide meaningful value for our members over the long term. Today, REC is deploying multiple project rollouts across our territory.

Just as important are the programs that give members an opportunity to help manage their own energy costs.

REC's Summer Savings Plan is a great example. By voluntarily reducing electricity use during periods of peak demand, participating members help lower stress on the electric grid while earning bill credits based on the energy they save. Last year, record participation allowed REC to increase the member incentive to \$1.75 per kilowatt-hour saved, rewarding members for actions that benefit both their household budget and the Cooperative as a whole. This year over 13,500 members are enrolled in the program, and our goal is to significantly increase enrollment, allowing more members to work with us to help control the rising cost of wholesale power.

The energy landscape will continue to evolve, and there will undoubtedly be new challenges ahead. While we cannot control national markets or every factor influencing the cost of electricity, we can control how well we prepare for them.

That means making disciplined financial decisions, investing strategically, pursuing innovative solutions and providing programs that help our members manage their own energy use.

The future of energy won't be shaped by standing still. It will be shaped by planning ahead, making smart investments and embracing innovation. That's exactly what REC is doing — preparing today to deliver reliable, affordable electricity for the members who own this Cooperative, no matter what tomorrow brings.

A Journey That Shapes Future Leaders

Four area high school students represented REC during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The annual weeklong event is hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). REC delegates were Lincoln Stuart of Eastern View High School in Culpeper County, Adrian Keyser of Chancellor High School in Spotsylvania County, Maia Parks of Millbrook High School in Frederick County and Noreen Ndonde of Albemarle High School in Albemarle County.

These delegates joined more than 1,800 students from across the nation for a fast-paced and inspiring week focused on leadership, civic engagement and learning about the electric cooperative business model. The program gave participants a chance to experience the nation's capital through a new lens, even for those who had visited before.

"Before Youth Tour, Washington, D.C., was just something I learned about in class. Being there in person, meeting new people and hearing different perspectives made everything feel real. I came home with new friendships, more confidence and a better understanding of how I can make a difference," said Noreen Ndonde, who was selected to represent Virginia on the Youth Leadership Council.

Another student shared similar excitement about the experience, noting the value of meeting peers from across the country while gaining a deeper understanding of how government and cooperatives work together to serve communities.

The experience began with students quickly diving into leadership training and orientation alongside peers from multiple states. Throughout the week, students visited national landmarks, educational institutions and historical sites. Highlights included standing on the steps of the U.S. Capitol,



"I came home with new friendships, more confidence and a better understanding of how I can make a difference."

Noreen Ndonde of Albemarle High School in Albemarle County

meeting with congressional staff, taking a cruise along the Potomac River and visiting Mount Vernon.

"Programs like Youth Tour are a great way for students to see firsthand how their communities are connected to civic life and how electric cooperatives work behind the scenes to serve members," said Casey Hollins, Managing Director – Communications and Public Relations. "REC is proud to help provide opportunities that broaden perspectives and support the next generation of leaders."

Applications for the 2027 Youth Tour will open in September. Rising high school seniors whose parents or guardians are member-owners of REC are eligible to apply. Students can learn more about the program at myrec.coop/youthtour.



TOP: Noreen Ndonde introduces herself to Youth Tour delegates from all 50 states after being selected to represent Virginia on the Youth Leadership Council.

BOTTOM: Youth Tour delegates take in the sights and history of Washington, D.C., during a private, staff-led tour of the U.S. Capitol after meeting with their congressional representatives. From top of stairs down are Noreen Ndonde, Maia Parks, Adrian Keyser and Lincoln Stuart.

2026
**ANNUAL MEETING &
DIRECTOR ELECTIONS**

Make Your Voice Heard at the Annual Meeting

If you registered for REC's Annual Meeting, watch your email on Aug. 5 for instructions on how to join the meeting and please participate that evening. The virtual meeting is an opportunity to hear Cooperative updates, take part in important business and make your voice heard as a member-owner through the director elections being held this year for regions IV, V and IX. Your participation is an essential aspect of the cooperative model — members having a say in decisions that support reliable service and strong communities.

MyREC SmartHub Usage: Your Road Map to Managing Costs

Tracking how much energy you use can reveal patterns that are easy to miss on a monthly bill. Some days, the story is simple: hotter weather, extra guests or more laundry. Other times, your monthly bill may catch you off guard. That's where MyREC SmartHub can help. By monitoring your energy use, setting alerts and comparing patterns over time, you can better understand when you're using the most electricity — and what changes can help make your bill more manageable. Think of these tools as a guide to when, where and how your home uses electricity.



Catch unusual usage early

Increased electricity use often starts days or weeks before the higher bill arrives. MyREC SmartHub usage alerts can help you spot when your home is using more electricity than expected, giving you time to investigate before the end of the billing cycle. A sudden jump could be tied to extreme weather, backup heat, a space heater, guests, an appliance that needs to be fixed or an HVAC system running longer than usual.



Did you know?

A malfunctioning heating or cooling system can drive up usage fast. If a cooling system gets stuck running around the clock, it could add \$30 to \$40 or more to your bill in just a couple of days — and hundreds of dollars if it goes unnoticed for a full month.



How to make it work for you

Turn on usage alerts in MyREC SmartHub. When an alert comes in, check your daily or hourly graph and ask: What changed? The sooner you spot the pattern, the sooner you can take action to prevent nasty surprises when your bill arrives.



Find what's driving your usage

Some household activities use more electricity than others. Heating and cooling, water heating, clothes drying, cooking, EV charging, pool pumps and space heaters can all have a noticeable impact on your bill. MyREC SmartHub can help connect your household habits to your usage patterns, especially when you complete your Home Energy Profile and review appliance-level insights and customized tips to save.



Did you know?

An older refrigerator can quietly add to your bill year-round. ENERGY STAR® says refrigerators over 15 years old could cost more than \$80 a year to run and that older refrigerators use about 35% more energy than ENERGY STAR® certified models. MyREC SmartHub appliance-level insights can help reveal whether an always-on appliance may be worth a closer look.



How to make it work for you

Complete your Home Energy Profile under the usage menu in MyREC SmartHub, then look for patterns in your usage. Choose one high-use area to investigate first. Try changing one habit — such as drying fewer loads, adjusting the thermostat, reducing space heater use or changing pool pump runtime — and watch the graph over the next few days to see the difference it makes.





Find your household baseline

Every household has typical energy use patterns. That's why your best comparison is your own home. MyREC SmartHub even allows you to track external temperatures compared to your usage day-by-day to provide insight on how weather affects your bill.



Did you know?

Two homes on the same street can have very different “normal” usage. Thermostat settings, laundry habits, older appliances, pool pumps, space heaters and each home's insulation can all change the pattern. That's why your own past usage is usually a better baseline than your neighbor's bill.



How to make it work for you

Use MyREC SmartHub to find your home's normal trends: overnight use, daily peaks, weekend patterns and seasonal changes. Then look for ways to lower that baseline, such as replacing an older appliance or adjusting thermostat habits and other routine use.



Prove your savings

Energy-saving tips are more powerful when you can see the results. MyREC SmartHub lets you compare usage over time, so you can test whether a change actually made a difference. Maybe you adjusted the thermostat, shifted laundry to a different time, reduced space heater use, changed pool pump settings or delayed EV charging. Your usage graph can show the before and after.



Did you know?

An American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy review found households saved 4% to 12% when they had clearer feedback on their energy use. For REC's average residential usage, that could equal about \$85 to \$275 a year in avoided energy costs.



How to make it work for you

Whenever you make a change, compare your usage to the week before or to a similar period. When the bars drop, you will have the reward of seeing that the change made a difference.



Apprentice Substation Technicians Ryan Howington and Bryan Cutlip work on new equipment at the soon-to-be-energized Millbrook Substation.

Building for What's Next: Millbrook Substation Nears Completion

Crews are putting the finishing touches on REC's Millbrook Substation, near Winchester, bringing a major reliability investment closer to completion.

Outside the station, wooden poles originally installed decades ago are being replaced with modern steel structures designed to better withstand severe weather and reduce the risk of outages.

The project also includes adding new circuits along the rebuilt line, creating additional pathways for electricity to travel and improving system flexibility during outages and changing operating conditions.

"The goal of this work is simple," said Mat Anderson, Director – Substation and Transmission Engineering and Technical Services. "The construction of this new substation and the replacing of the old line

infrastructure around it will allow us to provide reliable service for years to come."

Crews are installing equipment to help maintain dependable service for members. From robust modern poles leading to the substation, to the breakers and animal guards inside the substation, to state-of-the-art transformers, breakers and relays, they all advance one goal; building a stronger grid that delivers safe, reliable energy to members.

"This work is about strengthening the system in a very practical way," Anderson said. "Every new substation we build or improvement we make inside an existing substation helps ensure we can deliver reliable service when it matters most."

The project has also brought together REC's regional substation crews, creating training opportunities while maintaining

a focus on safety, quality and reliability in the field.

"That partnership in the field is important," Anderson said. "It allows us to blend different experiences and to help newer technicians learn their craft from more experienced ones."

Substation technicians remain central to the effort, inspecting, maintaining and troubleshooting equipment to ensure the system operates safely and as intended.

"Our technicians are the ones who keep a close eye on the system every day," Anderson said. "Their work is detailed, technical and essential to making sure everything performs the way it should."

This major project is expected to be completed near the end of 2026 or the beginning of 2027.



Apply Now: Applications Due Aug. 10.

Eligible nonprofits in REC's service territory: Time is running out to apply for **The Power of Change**. Applications close **Aug. 10**, so don't delay—submit your request now for member-funded support that strengthens local communities. **Apply before the deadline at thepowerofchange.org.**



Prepare for Storm Season During Virginia's Tax-Free Holiday Aug. 7-9



Virginia's Sales Tax Holiday, Aug. 7-9, is an opportunity to stock up on qualifying storm and emergency preparedness supplies without paying sales tax. For households that can mean checking batteries, flashlights, weather radios and other essentials before the next severe-weather event.

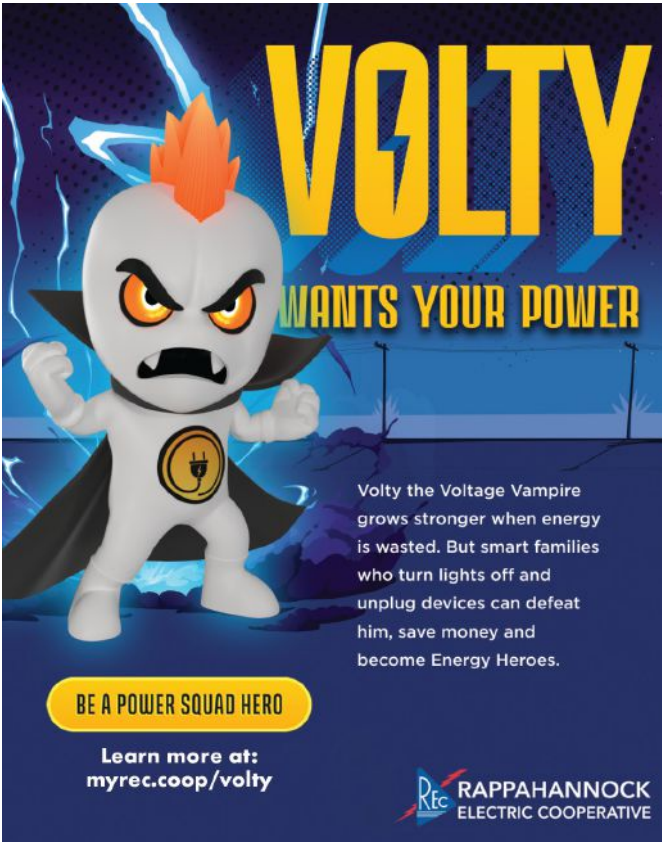
The tax holiday applies to certain hurricane and emergency preparedness items, as long as they meet the state's price limits. Qualifying items include portable generators priced at \$1,000 or less, gas-powered chainsaws priced at \$350 or less, chainsaw accessories priced at

\$60 or less and other specified hurricane preparedness items priced at \$60 or less.

The tax-free weekend also includes qualifying ENERGY STAR® and WaterSense® products priced at \$2,500 or less when purchased for noncommercial home or personal use. These products can help support long-term energy efficiency while offering another way to make the most of the tax holiday.

Eligible online purchases may qualify. Before completing a purchase, review product details and confirm the tax exemption appears at checkout, since eligibility depends on the item, price, purchase timing and shipping address.

A little preparation can make a major difference when severe weather arrives. Use the tax holiday as a reminder to review your family's emergency plan, refresh your supplies and make sure your home is ready for the season ahead. Learn more at myrec.coop/stormprep.



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REC Offices Closed Sept. 7 for Labor Day

Your Cooperative's offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, for Labor Day. REC's Dispatch Center is open 24 hours a day to take your call and send repair crews. To report an outage, use the [MyREC SmartHub app](#), visit myrec.coop/out or call **800-552-3904**.

Give Locators a Target: **Outline Your Dig Area Before You Contact VA811**

Planning to install a mailbox, fence post or shrub bed, but don't want utility flags all over your entire yard?

If you're only digging in one section of your yard, outline that area first with white paint or white flags. That tells utility locators where to focus and helps avoid extra markings across the rest of your lawn.

Contact Virginia 811 at least three working days before digging. VA811 is a free service that notifies participating utilities so buried lines can be marked before work begins. Even shallow digging counts — some utilities may be only a few inches below the surface. Submit a request at VA811.com or call 811, then respect the marks and dig with care.



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Aug. 1

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Green Top Sporting Goods
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Aug. 4

National Night Out — King William
King William High School
4-8 p.m.

Aug. 4

National Night Out — Ruckersville
Ruckersville Walmart
4-7 p.m.

Aug. 4

National Night Out — Louisa County
Louisa Courthouse Square
5-8 p.m.

Aug. 4

National Night Out — Front Royal
Main Street Gazebo, Warren
5-8 p.m.

Aug. 4

National Night Out — Spotsylvania
Spotsylvania Towne Centre
5-8 p.m.

Aug. 6

National Night Out — King and Queen County
King and Queen Courthouse
6-8 p.m.

Aug. 12

Clarke County Fair
Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds
5-8:30 p.m.



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Old Dominion Electric Cooperative is a member-owned, not-for-profit generation and transmission cooperative providing wholesale power to electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. ODEC invests in demand response and energy efficiency programming to proactively meet member needs.



Grid Resilience

Energy efficiency is an essential asset within a diverse power portfolio

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

Across cooperative territory in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, access to energy remains foundational to powering opportunities for people, schools, businesses and communities. Energy drives economic growth, supports health and public safety, and allows our schools and local businesses to thrive.

The ever-growing electrification of our world — driven by economic development and new technologies — has had a major impact on demand. As demand for energy grows, so does the importance of using it efficiently.

Much of today's energy conversation centers on how to generate more power. It's an essential focus. But just as important is how we manage the energy already in our portfolio. Energy efficiency — strategically managing energy use in daily life — is one of the most immediate, practical and cost-effective ways to meet growing demand without increasing strain on the system.

Energy efficiency works quietly but powerfully within a home or business.

For some, energy efficiency might look like installing a smart thermostat and setting schedules for energy savings. Others might enhance efficiency by making improvements in insulation, heating and cooling systems, lighting and Energy Star appliances — all of which reduce the amount of electricity needed on a daily basis.

Generation partners such as Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, working closely with member distribution cooperatives, help provide these simple solutions. These actions add up, incrementally lowering overall demand on the grid, which benefits the entire community.

This becomes especially important when considering how the electric grid is planned and priced. In regional markets such as PJM Interconnection — which coordinates power generation and movement across 13 states including Virginia, Maryland and Delaware — utilities must plan for the single highest hour of electricity use each year. That one moment helps determine how

As not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives are focused on delivering value to their communities.

much generation capacity must be available to keep the lights on when demand is at its highest, as well as the price it costs generation facilities to make themselves available. Because of this, even small, consistent reductions in energy use can make a meaningful difference. If demand is lower during that peak hour, fewer resources are needed, which helps manage costs and supports long-term reliability.

Research shows widespread efficiency improvements could significantly reduce both total energy use and peak demand in the decades ahead. National analysis from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy found that, by 2040, energy efficiency alone could lower U.S. electricity demand by about 70 gigawatts — enough to power up to 1 million homes.

Closer to home, within cooperative territory, the combined impact of member-driven energy programs — supported by generation partners such as ODEC — has delivered nearly 3 megawatts of savings to the grid, demonstrating how local action can contribute to broader grid resilience.

Three megawatts might seem like a drop in the bucket, yet every electron saved is valuable. This ability to reduce demand at critical moments is why energy efficiency is increasingly recognized as a form of grid resilience, becoming another essential asset within a diverse power portfolio.

Traditionally, resilience has been defined by physical infrastructure — the power plants generating electricity. Today, however, it includes the ability to manage and shape demand. By lowering stress on the system, efficiency reduces the likelihood of outages and improves system stability.

An all-the-above energy strategy



By lowering stress on the system, energy efficiency reduces the likelihood of outages and improves system stability.

ODEC PHOTO

recognizes that the cheapest megawatt is the one you never have to generate.

For electric cooperatives across the region, these outcomes align directly with their purpose. As not-for-profit, member-owned organizations, electric

cooperatives are not driven by generating returns for shareholders. Instead, they are focused on delivering reliable, affordable power and long-term value to the communities they serve. It's why many generation partners, such as ODEC,

and distribution cooperatives are finding ways to provide easy access to energy programs, making it possible for member-owners to manage their energy use.

Looking ahead, meeting the region's energy needs will require a broad mix of solutions. Building new resources, strengthening infrastructure and advancing new technologies will all play a role. But managing energy consumption must be part of that equation as well. Energy efficiency offers a solution that can be deployed today — lowering costs, supporting reliability and helping ensure every available resource is used as effectively as possible.

In an energy landscape defined by rapid growth and tight margins, even the smallest reductions add up, proving that the energy we save is just as valuable as the energy we produce. ●



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Follow these simple summer habits for a cooler home.



FIRE UP THE GRILL: Keep your home cooler and save energy by cooking outside in the summertime. Flip burgers, not thermostat settings.



COOL PEOPLE NOT SPACES: Running ceiling fans counterclockwise at high speed in the summer can create a windchill effect. Only run fans in occupied rooms. Fans cool people, not spaces.



BLOCK HEAT BEFORE IT GETS IN: Keep blinds closed during sun peak hours to keep the room cool, especially south and west facing windows. Blinds block sun, savings pour in.

For more energy saving tips,
visit [odec.com/waystosave](https://www.odec.com/waystosave).



Old Dominion
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History Takes Flight

With vintage warbirds, the Capital Wing brings World War II to life

by Jack Cooksey, Staff Writer



Fairchild UC-61
Forwarder



B-17 Flying Fortress



B-25 Mitchell Bomber

It's a bright June day in Midland, Va., as a gleaming B-17 Flying Fortress warbird descends toward Warrenton-Fauquier Airport. As the World War II bomber touches down and taxis on the tarmac, bystanders can hear the force of air blowing from its propellers, driven by four roaring engines. This is what history sounds like — it's not just something you see in a museum.

The restored Flying Fortress was one of four vintage aircraft featured at the June 14 Warbird Expo hosted by the Capital Wing, a Culpeper, Va.-based unit affiliated with the Commemorative Air Force. The CAF is a volunteer organization with more than 80 units across the U.S. (and one in England) that bring WWII history to airfields where visitors can see the storied machines up close, hear their engines roar to life and even pay for a chance to fly aboard one.

Col. Jeremy Renken, a retired U.S. Air Force fighter pilot and a Capital Wing member, says visitors may come to a CAF event perhaps to connect with the lived history of an elderly or deceased relative who served in WWII.

"So, now [they] can shimmy into the little seats and see all the tiny places and nooks and crannies where they would have had to work and see what the whole experience was about," he says. "And that's a big deal for them because it's visceral. It connects them."

Renken is fascinated by the history of the planes his unit and other CAF units bring to the expo.

"All the planes in the Capital Wing have legitimate connections to missions," Renken says. The wing maintains six planes total, including a torpedo bomber, an observation plane

and two warbirds used to train pilots for combat — all are single-propeller aircraft, and one is a biplane. Two of the planes are member-owned but maintained by the unit.

At the June expo, he explained in detail the history behind one of the planes on display, a Fairchild UC-61 Forwarder, a four-seat, single-engine aircraft used to transport officers and conduct anti-submarine reconnaissance.

Renken notes the Fairchild was one of many civilian aircraft pressed into service during WWII. In the prewar world, he explains, it was a plush, luxury passenger aircraft

used for executive transport. "This is how bankers went from Wall Street to Martha's Vineyard for the weekend, right?"

Joining the event as a partner was Airbase Arizona, from Mesa, Ariz.,

which brought the B-17 Flying Fortress and a B-25 Mitchell bomber to Culpeper. Airbase Arizona is one of the CAF's larger units, with about 500 members, enabling it to maintain larger aircraft that tour across the U.S.

Mike Garrett, tour director for the Arizona unit, and Renken say all CAF aircraft are part of a collective trust. "We [the CAF] have 140 airplanes that are actively flying," Garrett says. "We got about another 30 to 40, which are in restoration."

Renken notes that none of the aircraft belongs exclusively to CAF units. "These aren't our planes. We're temporarily given the privilege of taking care of them. They're the future's planes." ●

► To learn more about the Capital Wing and its upcoming events, visit capitalwingcaf.org.



Seniors get new medical alert device

No contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever

FastHelp is the only Medical Alert device that won't break the bank. That's because it comes with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever – which makes FastHelp a great choice for seniors, students and professionals because it connects to one of the largest nationwide networks everywhere cell service is available for free. You don't need a cell phone or a land line.

And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get

FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek new cellular embedded medical alert device that cuts out the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you. ■



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

Seniors born before 1964 get big boost

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

Seniors born before 1964 get new medical alert device

**Nationwide:
Demand for new Medical Alert Device soars**

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1964, it's a deal too good to pass up.

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

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

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, today's instant



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-221-2809 DEPT. FSTH187 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

—ADVERTISEMENT—

Smoky & Savory

Winning recipes from Cooperative Living's
2006 Great on the Grill contest



Grilled Tuna Steaks

recipe courtesy of Jennifer Harris of Ruckersville

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 6 (6-oz.) tuna steaks | ⅓ cup cider or balsamic vinegar |
| 2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce | ¼ cup water |
| 3 cups papaya or mango, peeled or diced | 2 tablespoons brown sugar |
| ½ cup golden raisins | ½ teaspoon ground ginger |
| | dash of salt |

Directions:

Place tuna steaks in a shallow dish. Drizzle soy sauce over both sides of fish. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Combine the remaining seven ingredients in a small saucepan and bring mixture to a boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer until

papaya is tender. Remove the chutney from heat and keep warm. Prepare grill. Place tuna on grill rack coated with cooking spray. Grill for 4 minutes on each side or until tuna is medium rare. Serve tuna steaks with papaya chutney.

Summer Lime Chicken

recipe courtesy of Christina White of Centreville

Ingredients:

- 1 (20-oz.) can pineapple chunks
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt and pepper, per dish
- juice of 3 limes
- 4 chicken breasts, boned and skinned

Directions:

Combine first six ingredients in a bowl or large zip-top plastic bag. Add chicken; marinate at least 1 hour, longer for more flavor. Grill until cooked through. Garnish with cilantro.



GOT A FAVORITE RECIPE?

Eighty years of *Cooperative Living* means 80 years of delicious recipes. Which recipes 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.

AUCTIONS

ESTATE OF DAVID MIDKIFF. Cumberland, Va. NASCAR collectables, household items, tools, farm equipment and more! Bidding begins Friday, July 31, 6 p.m. Auction Closing Date, Friday, Aug. 14, 6 p.m.

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

BUSINESS

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

FOR SALE

BOSE WAVE MUSIC SYSTEMS: We sell and repair all Bose bookshelf/table top radios & CD players. Free estimates. Stereoadvice.com. Pennington Gap, Va. 321-279-8849.

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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. Call John at 434-953-8794.

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

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



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SUBMIT: We accept classifieds by email (classifieds@co-oliving.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: Aug. 5 for September issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

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Remember 9/11

Freedom Flag: Official Flag of Remembrance

Meaning of the Freedom Flag:



Blue Background: all Americans united together for freedom

Top Red Stripe: the bloodshed of those who perished at the Pentagon and the crew and passengers on American Airlines Flight 77

White Star: all who lived and died for freedom

Two Broad Red Stripes: the Twin Towers and the bloodshed of the people who perished at the World Trade Center and on American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175

Five White Bars: the Pentagon and the organized protection of our freedom

Three White Stripes: the rescue workers, firefighters, police officers, Port Authority employees, and others who worked tirelessly during and after the terrorist attacks

Bottom Red Stripe: the bloodshed of the crew and passengers who perished on United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania

MADE IN USA

Order 9/11 Freedom Flags, lapel pins, patches, challenge coins and more at freedomflagfoundation.org.



NEVER FORGET!

Highland Hijinks

The rich, and sometimes guilty, pleasures of our county fair

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



I guess one of my favorite things about August is the Highland County Fair. There's a parade and carnival rides and a horde of

kid-raised farm animals. (I don't want to think about where those cute things go after the fair.) There's a building packed with home-canned garden goods, cookies, cakes, showy flowers and lots of art, along with handsewn aprons and quilted goods. These Highland folks stay busy throughout the year.

One year, I reserved a space inside and set up to sell my book, "A Party of One." It was so enjoyable talking with the fairgoers as they strolled by, even if they didn't buy a book.

Turns out, I was set up right in front of rows of homemade cookies. They had already been judged, and the red, white and blue ribbons had been awarded. Well, I got a little hungry and then realized I could snatch a cookie or two off each plate, and no one would be the wiser. I felt a tad guilty

— but not much. The cookies were delicious.

There are also some — well, let's call them "attractions" — that I have no interest in whatsoever. Those are the tractor pull and the demolition derby. It is very noisy and more than a little crazy. There's just no getting away from the roar of engines and the dust and, often, the mud, yet these are perhaps the most popular attractions at the fair every year.

One sight to gape at is our rural highway, Route 220, between Hot Springs and Monterey on demo derby day. It's something you've got to see to believe — countless heaps of already demolished cars, sometimes painted with weird slogans, in a dilapidated parade of their own for some 30 miles or more.

Of course, considering my love of all things canine, the dog show on Saturday morning is my favorite event. It's even more fun for me than the sheep costume contest — a close second in the crowd-pleasing department.

There are purebred hound dogs of all types, each in full voice. There are tiny fluff balls of lap dogs, many of them shaking at the deep-throated barks of the hounds. Surprisingly, most of the dogs get along quite well. I don't recall

any kind of fight — maybe some snarling or low-voiced growls, but that is all.

The farm animals, such as the bulls and goats, are usually better groomed than most of the fairgoers, including myself. And the bunnies? They are adorable. I hope they get to go home after the show and enjoy a carrot.

The children and adults of Highland County are dedicated to their tasks. These folks plan for the fair all year long, and that preparation shows. Even the food vendors — most of whom come from local clubs and offer the same delicious fair food every year in the same booth location — do a superb job. If you have never had a hot, fresh maple-glazed donut at the fair, you've missed one of the great Highland highlights.

The fair runs just one weekend, starting with the parade, which I think is always on Wednesday. Then, by Saturday night it reaches its zenith, and by Sunday morning, the field and the display and animal barns are swept clean until next year.

The whole thing takes place on the last weekend before Labor Day (Sept. 2-5 this year). So, make your plans to take the gorgeous ride up to Monterey, and enjoy all that the Highland County Fair has to offer. Please try not to steal the cookies. ●

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

80

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, NANCY!



Nancy Holbrook, of South Hill, Va., joins *Cooperative Living* in turning 80 this year (on Aug. 29)! Holbrook retired after 25 years with Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative. She still organizes the co-op's monthly retirement luncheons, keeping everyone connected. She enjoys traveling, reading and playing cards with friends, but treasures her family most — especially her two grandchildren, whom she calls "the loves of my life." Reflecting on her MEC career, Holbrook says, "I loved the people, and I loved the work."

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.

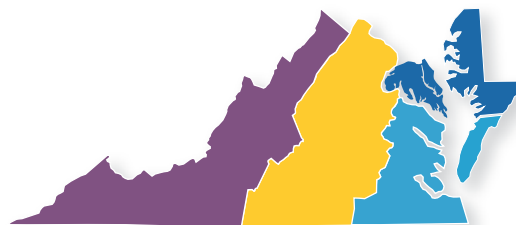


WHEREZ IT?

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

AUGUST

28-29 MIDDLEBROOK. Horse Drawn Heritage Days. 54 Cherry Grove Road. Times vary. 540-490-2565.

28-29 STAUNTON. Oak Grove Folk Music Festival. Oak Grove Theater. Times vary. Oakgrovefestival.org

29 MIDDLETOWN. Shenandoah Sips. Belle Grove Plantation. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Bellegrove.org

SEPTEMBER

12 BERRYVILLE. The Big Flea. Downtown Berryville. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Berryvillemainstreet.com

12 MIDDLETOWN. Farm to Table. Church Street. 4-6:30 p.m. Nwworks.com

PIEDMONT

AUGUST

22 LOUISA. Men's Alliance Car Show. 305 E. Main St. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 804-304-6779.

28-29 MANASSAS. Stone House Quilters Quilt Show. 9501 Dean Park Lane. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Stonehousequilters.org

SEPTEMBER

11 BOYDTON. The Historic Boyd Tavern's Front Porch Friday. 449 Washington St. 5-9 p.m. 757-619-9796.

11-13 SOMERSET. 50th Annual Pasture Party. 14349 Blue Ridge Turnpike. Times vary. Somersetsteamandgas.org

11-13 FREDERICKSBURG. Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's 30th Anniversary Annual Conference. 1119 Hanover St. Cvbtor.org

11-20 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's "No Exit." 9419 Battle St. Times vary. Info@virginiaartfactory.org.

TIDEWATER

AUGUST

15 ONANCOCK. 8th Annual Crab Crackin' at Ker Place. 69 Market St. 4-8 p.m. 757-787-8012. Shorehistory.org

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

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

29 DELTAVILLE. Bonus Groovin'. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 5-8 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

SEPTEMBER

5 CAPE CHARLES. LOVEFest. Central Park. 6-9 p.m. 757-210-8083.

12 DELTAVILLE. Oyster Roast Reception. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 5-9 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

MARYLAND

SEPTEMBER

29 VIENNA. Battle of Vienna. Handsell Historic Site. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Viennamd.com

PRINT DEADLINES: Sept. 1 for Oct. 15-Nov. 15
Oct. 1 for Nov. 15-Dec. 31

Email: happenings@co-opliving.com
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NUTTY BY NATURE



by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS!

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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.



◀ HEAD HONCHO

This squirrel started as branch manager — but now he's running the entire head office.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY ROBERT AND JANE HOLLEMBEAK

NUT MY PROBLEM ▶

The neighborhood squirrel was off the clock — and then he spotted an audience.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARGARET DIERDORFF



◀ EXCUSE ME, HUMAN

"I guess you're nut letting me in??"

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SUSIE PEARCE

NUTTIN' PERSONAL ▼

"This town ain't big enough for both of us, Fluffy."

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LISA MARTINSON



▲ SQUIRREL IMPOSSIBLE

The squirrel was already halfway through his daring escape plan when he realized Sammy, the cat, had seen everything.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MARTHA HEMINGWAY



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