

RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC
Cooperative*Living*



HOME FUR THE HOLIDAYS

PAGE 10

Every day is a gift for Grant.

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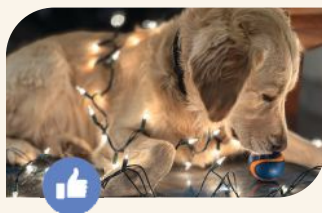
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VIEWPOINT

From Our Family to Yours

As difficult as it is to believe, the holidays are nearly here. Plans are already in the works to visit family and friends with the objective of eating as much as humanly possible. If you are anything like me, you focus on the incredible desserts first. In our combined November-December issue, we share some great recipes along with holiday-related stories to highlight the spirit of the season.

In Our Communities, we feature a Farmville business owner who annually assembles and ships 3,000 boxes filled with toys and other items to underprivileged children worldwide through Operation Christmas Child. It's an inspiring tale that fits the theme for this time of year.

The holiday theme continues in Cooperative Focus, where we share submitted photos of some of our readers' pets, along with their owners' holiday-related stories.

Happy Holidays!



We always appreciate our members' participation, and their Christmas pet photos and experiences truly bring the season to life.

We also feature a story about an impactful community program — Community Matters — that is keeping older adults in Southside Electric Cooperative's service territory (and beyond) feeling valued, engaged and connected. The program's coordinator, Jayne Lloyd, has been a member of SEC for the past 15 years and values the co-op's commitment to community, a guiding principle that aligns with her own passion for community outreach.

We want to wish our wonderful readers a happy Thanksgiving and merry Christmas as we get ready for another year of *Cooperative Living* featuring your favorite columns, community events and articles spotlighting local families and businesses throughout Virginia and Maryland. ●

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

Cooperative Living

VOL. 81, NO. 1 • 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.

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

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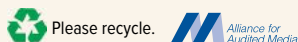
To change your subscription, contact your electric cooperative.

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: \$6.09 per year for members of subscribing co-ops; \$10 per year for all others.

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Dave in Haiti

PHOTO COURTESY DAVE SIMPSON



From left, Dave Simpson and his neighbor, retired Southside Electric Cooperative Line Technician Supervisor Ricky Hux, preparing a shipment.

Paying It Forward

Farmville business owner helps change young lives

by Gregg MacDonald, Staff Writer

ON JAN. 30, 1983, DAVE SIMPSON LISTENED TO A CASSETTE TAPE THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE and started him on a path impacting the lives of thousands of underprivileged children every holiday season.

"I remember that date well," the Farmville, Va., resident says. "It was the day I gave my life to the Lord."

Simpson, who was 20 years old at the time, tended to his father's cows and helped with the family's tobacco harvest. "I never thought I'd ever do or amount to much more than that," he says.

But on that memorable January afternoon, Simpson and one of his three brothers listened to the recording of a Christian broadcast on cassette tape at a family friend's house. "I had grown up in the church, but I had never really understood how Jesus gave his life for my sins," Simpson recalls. "That message came through to me loud and clear while I was listening to that tape. I then gave up some bad habits I had acquired and started living the right way."

His brother was also deeply moved by the message — which, Simpson laughingly says, prompted their father to exclaim, "There is a God!"

"Not long after I was saved, I got into the insurance business, adjusting claims for farmers," Simpson says. "Had I not listened to that cassette tape, I probably would have never changed my ways and gone that direction."

Today, Simpson owns Simpson Insurance Services in Farmville. Through Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse program, he and his company donate 3,000 Operation Christmas Child boxes to underprivileged children worldwide each holiday season. "We put school supplies, hygiene items, sunglasses, a ball cap and either a soccer ball for boys or a jump rope for girls, into each box," he says. "The boxes are then taken to a local church where they are picked up by a tractor-trailer and taken to locations in North Carolina before being delivered all over the world."

Simpson says he is eternally grateful for that day when "God came knocking" — and to the family, friends, neighbors and clients who help him pay his good fortune forward each holiday season.

He says, "They make it all possible." ●

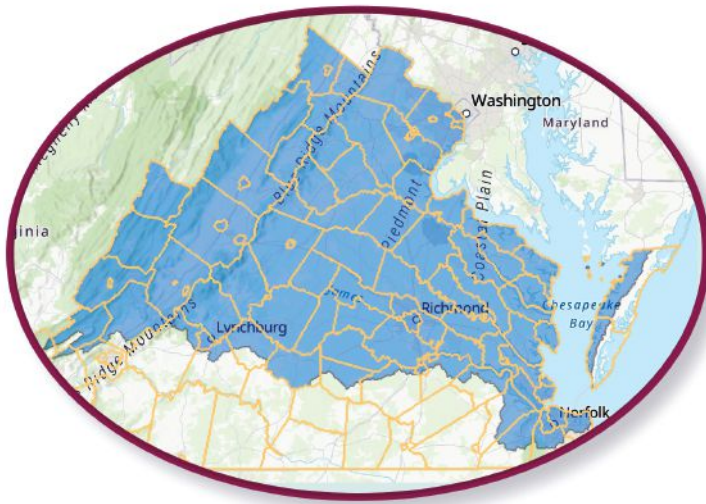
► For more information about Samaritan's Purse and Operation Christmas Child, visit samaritanspurse.org.

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Participating Agencies:





Margaret and Simon Wong

Margaret Wong demonstrates the proper brush strokes in a Chinese calligraphy class.

Community Matters

Program creates social connections for older adults in Southside Virginia

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

Simon and Margaret Wong are all smiles as they greet people filing into the Pocahontas Landmark Center in Powhatan, Va., for a ukulele and dulcimer concert.

Their matching T-shirts, which read “Ask Me About Community Matters,” hint at the pride they have for the program that has given them a true sense of belonging.

The Wongs’ journey to Powhatan began in 2006 when they left behind the busy streets of Chicago, Ill. — and, before that, their childhood home in Hong Kong — for the winding back roads and vast, open fields of Powhatan County.

The Wongs quickly settled into their new home, which is served by Southside Electric Cooperative. “At night, it was so dark that we couldn’t see our fingers. It was scary and exciting at the same time,” says Simon, who had just retired from the pharmaceutical industry.

Between Margaret’s career in software engineering and the arrival of their first grandchild, there was little time for making new connections within the community.

That began to shift when Margaret retired. “You have more time when you are retired. Your whole lifestyle changes. I said to Simon, ‘We’ve lived here so long and we haven’t gotten to know our community,’” she says.

Then, one afternoon while reading Powhatan Today, the Wongs discovered an article about the Community Matters program encouraging residents to get involved.

For the Wongs, it was the invitation they had been waiting for.

LEARNING, SHARING, BELONGING

The Community Matters program was created to address the need among adults 55 and older for in-person opportunities to connect, foster personal growth, pursue lifelong learning and build a strong sense of belonging through the community. The program is administered by the Department of Social Services in Powhatan County.



Jayne Lloyd

Jayne Lloyd, the program’s coordinator, saw how deeply the senior demographic was impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic and created the program in response to those needs. “During COVID, we learned how important neuroplasticity, brain health and social connection was for older residents — and I wanted to do something about it,” she says.

Community Matters isn’t limited to Powhatan County residents. “It’s for anyone 55 and older from Powhatan County, or surrounding counties, who is interested and able to attend,” she says.

The program offers free classes and interactive sessions on a wide range of topics, as well as presentations from inspirational speakers. Classes previously offered include disability awareness, neuroplasticity, mental health, elder law, technology and Medicare resources. Participants have also enjoyed fitness activities, learned to play musical instruments and explored new languages.

“We’ve had everything from cane self-defense, Pilates and tai chi classes to seasonal crafting workshops, history presentations and game days. These examples highlight just how diverse our programming is,” she says. Lloyd encourages people to inquire about the program’s current offerings.

Simon has led several Community Matters classes on writing, a personal passion he enjoys sharing with others. He most recently hosted “Writers/Readings,” where participants were invited to come listen to local authors and writers read aloud from their work.

Margaret has taught origami and Chinese calligraphy. “We enjoy sharing our culture — as well as our knowledge and experiences with others,” she says.

“Simon and Margaret enjoy opportunities to learn, connect and experience, but they — like many others — also step in to help in any way they can. They believe in the concept because of what it has meant in their own lives,” Lloyd says.

MEETING A NEED

At the heart of the Community Matters program is its mission to prioritize the needs and well-being of residents 55 and older — while celebrating the diversity of experiences, talents and perspectives that they bring to Southside Virginia. The program wouldn’t be what it is without Lloyd.

“Jayne is resourceful and creative. The variety of programs she has put together appeals to all types of people from different socioeconomic statuses, and she continues to adapt the program to meet the expressed needs of the community,” says Meghan Carroll, director of social services for Powhatan County.

In September 2023, Lloyd was featured on WWBT/NBC12’s Acts of Kindness on-air feature. “The seniors [participating in the program] nominated her,” Carroll points out. “It takes time to get that kind of trust and respect from your community, and Jayne has done it.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced many into isolation, Lloyd made it a priority to look after the community’s older residents. She secured funding, purchased and divided food and supplies, mapped routes, and coordinated with volunteer teams to deliver items to residents 60 years and older who needed the support.

“Jayne has done — and continues to do — everything she can to help older adults in our community get what they need and stay connected,” Carroll says. “Community Matters is a program that the community can be proud of.”

Community Matters also empowers participants to give back in meaningful ways. Through the HumbleBee Project, participants create, tag and package blankets that are delivered to the Children’s Hospital of Richmond to provide warmth and comfort to children navigating the challenges of medical care. The motto: “Show up. Do good. Be kind. Make a difference.”

“We invite anyone who wants to come and help. It’s an opportunity to socialize and connect with others while



Tai chi



Cane self-defense

plugging into the opportunity to bless the children at the hospital who get to take the blankets home after medical treatment,” Lloyd explains.

STAYING CONNECTED

The Wongs now wear their Community Matters shirts proudly — not just as participants but as unofficial ambassadors. To anyone willing to listen, they’re quick to share how the program has made their retirement years more vibrant, purposeful and connected.

“It is not just about giving people our age something to do. It’s about connections and providing meaning and purpose to life. It’s about belonging,” Simon explains.

Margaret adds, “This program is important to us.” ●

► For more information, contact Jayne Lloyd at 804-698-0438 or visit facebook.com/communitymatters.



POWER IN PLAYING

Studies show that playing musical instruments with others helps reduce stress, lower blood pressure, improve memory and brain health, directly impacts natural healing processes, and fosters social connection. Community Matters offered dulcimer and ukulele practices on alternating Tuesdays — culminating in a concert on Sept. 24.

Donald Warf, a member of Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, found his way to Powhatan, two hours away from his hometown of Nokesville, after reading about the Community Matters concert in *Cooperative Living’s* Happenings column.

He says, “The mountain dulcimer and ukulele concert was well worth the drive from Nokesville to Powhatan. ... Given the enjoyment on the faces of both the musicians and audience, I would say that this performance was a success and a testament to community engagement.”



Back in Action

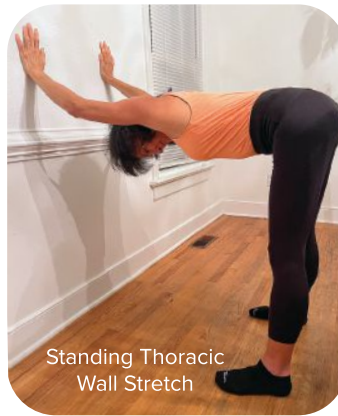
Spinal mobility is the key to an active life

by Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski, Contributing Columnist

Your attempt to reach a cabinet shelf is thwarted by a painful pinch in the shoulder. You can't avoid bending at the waist whenever you lower down to a chair or a squat. You struggle to take full breaths when you are exercising. The culprit? Lack of thoracic extension.

Your thoracic spine is the middle of your back. It starts at the bottom of your neck and ends at the bottom of your ribs. It consists of 12 vertebrae.

The spine helps us twist, bend and reach. It also allows us to breathe freely because the ribs are attached to the thoracic



Standing Thoracic Wall Stretch

vertebrae. If the spine can't move, we will struggle to take deep breaths. Additionally, when the thoracic spine cannot extend properly, the body compensates by excessively rotating and elevating the shoulder blades or scapulae. This creates impingement in the shoulders and results in pain and discomfort when reaching overhead.

Here are four movements designed to improve thoracic extension. You can perform them daily in the morning or at night. Pick one or two you know you'll be consistent with. Then switch them up from month to month. You may do these as often as you like throughout the day.

As always, please take any medical conditions or physical limitations you may have into consideration before attempting any of these exercises. They may not be for everyone.

STANDING THORACIC WALL STRETCH

- Stand facing a wall at an arm's distance away.
- Bend at the waist and put your hands on the wall.
- Push your chest down through your arms while keeping them on the wall.
- Hold for 20 to 30 seconds.

SEATED THORACIC ROTATION

- Sit on a chair or the floor.
- Keeping your hips planted, cross your arms over your chest and gently twist the torso to one side. You can use the back of the chair to assist you with a deeper twist.
- Rotate back to center and twist the other way.
- Gently go back and forth until you can twist naturally with more ease.



Seated



Thoracic Rotation

QUADRUPED THORACIC ROTATION

- Begin on all fours with hands under shoulders and knees under hips.
- Place one hand behind your head and rotate your torso so that your elbow is upward.
- Return to center and then repeat on the other side.

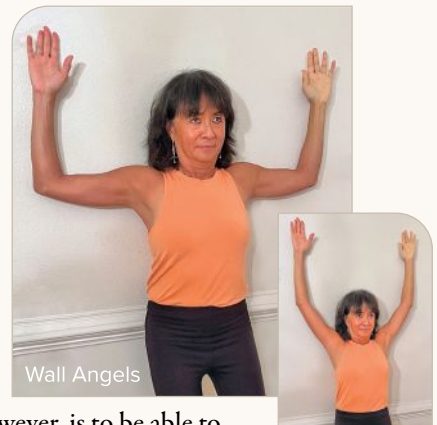


Quadruped Thoracic Rotation



WALL ANGELS

- Stand with your back against a wall with your heels about 6 inches away.
- Raise your arms over your head as far as you can without your back arching. It's OK if your elbows are bent. The goal, however, is to be able to reach overhead with straight arms and a flat back.
- Slide your elbows down the wall, like you are trying to put them in your pockets, then slide them back up again.
- Keep your upper back flat against the wall while raising your arms up and down.
- See if you can notice more ability to straighten your arms overhead after a few passes.



Wall Angels

A mobile, thoracic spine keeps you feeling limber, promotes greater oxygen uptake and allows you to keep up with your active life. Just a few minutes of thoracic work per day can go a long way toward a healthier, happier spine. ●

Vanessa LaFaso Stolarski is a certified nutrition counselor, weightlifting coach, life coach and stress-management specialist.

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U.S. POSTAL SERVICE – STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Title of publication – *Cooperative Living*

Publication No. – 473-300

Date of filing – Sept. 16, 2025

Frequency of issue – 10 times a year

No. of issues published annually – 10

Annual subscription price – \$6.09; \$10

Complete mailing address of known office of publication – 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060

Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher – 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060

Full Name and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor – Publisher – Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060; Executive Editor – Gregg MacDonald, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060; Managing Editor – Brian Mosier, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060
Owner – Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, Virginia, 23060

Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1% or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities – none

Tax Status: The Purpose, Function, and Nonprofit Status of This Organization and the Exempt Status for Federal Income Tax Purposes – Has not changed during preceding 12 months
Publication Title – *Cooperative Living*

Issue Date for Circulation Data Below – September 2025

Extent and Nature of Circulation – Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date

- Total Number of Copies (Net press run) – 605,361; 378,737
- Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 – 602,903; 376,353
- Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 – None
- Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS® – None
- Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS® – None
- Total Paid Distribution – 602,903; 376,353
- Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 – 909; 906
- Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541 – None
- Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS – None
- Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail – None
- Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution – 909; 906
- Total Distribution – 603,812; 377,259
- Copies Not Distributed – 1,549; 1,478
- Total – 605,361; 378,737
- Percent Paid – 99.6%; 99.8%
- Total and Paid Electronic Copies – 0; 259,553
- Total Requested and Paid Print Copies + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies – 602,903; 635,906
- Total Requested Copy Distribution + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies – 603,812; 636,812
- Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Both Print & Electronic Copies) – 99.6%; 99.9%

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Doctor urges seniors to carry medical alert device

Seniors snap up new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills

People don't always do what their doctor says, but when seasoned veteran emergency room physician, Dr. Philip B. Howren, says every senior should have a medical alert device, you better listen up.

"Seniors are just one fall away from being put in a nursing home," Dr. Howren said. "With a medical alert device, seniors are never alone. So it keeps them living independently in their own home. That's why seniors and their family members are snapping up a sleek new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills ever," he said.

Many seniors refuse to wear old style help buttons because they make them look old. But even worse, those medical alert sys-

tems come with monthly bills.

To solve these problems Universal Physicians, a U.S. company went to work to develop a new, modern, state-of-the-art medical alert device. It's called "FastHelp™" and it instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"This slick new little device is designed to look like the pagers doctors wear every day. Seniors love them because it actually makes them look important, not old," Dr. Howren said.

FastHelp is expected to hit store shelves later this year. But special newspaper promotional giveaways are slated for seniors in select areas. ■



■ **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 1961 get new medical alert device with no monthly bills ever

It's just what seniors have been waiting for; a sleek new medical alert device with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button for a one-time \$149 price tag that's a real steal after today's instant rebate

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1961, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am this morning the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch E911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style monitored help buttons that make you talk to a call center and 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, anytime cell service is available



■ **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 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8730 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.

(Continued on next page)

ADVERTISEMENT

(Continued from previous page)

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, the instant rebate that practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever," Lawrence said.

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

Better still, 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.

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," said Lawrence.

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.

"FastHelp is a state of the art medical alert device designed to make you look important, not old. Old style monitored help buttons you

wear around your neck, or require expensive base station equipment or a landline are the equivalent of a horse and buggy," Lawrence says. "It's just outdated."

Millions of seniors fall every year and spend hours lying on the floor helpless and all alone with no help.

But seniors who fall and get immediate help are much more likely to avoid getting sent to a nursing

home and get to STAY living in their own home independently.

Yet millions of seniors are still risking their safety by not having a medical alert device. That's because seniors just can't afford to pay the monthly bills that come with old style medical alert devices.

That's why seniors born before 1961 are rushing to cash in the whopping \$150

instant rebate before the 21 day deadline ends.

So there's no need to wait for FastHelp to hit store shelves later this year because seniors born before 1961 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's newspaper before the 21 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered. ■

HOW TO GET IT:

► **IF BORN BEFORE 1961:** Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8730

► **IF BORN AFTER 1961:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-330-9423 DEPT. HELP8730

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

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

CONS: Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1961 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 21 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.



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REBATE COUPON

EXPIRES 21 Days from Today's Publication Date

After Coupon Expires: The FastHelp is \$299.00 plus shipping & handling

\$150 Off

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FastHelp™

One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere.

With no monthly bills ever.

USE THIS COUPON: To get \$150 off FastHelp you must be born before 1961 and call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8730 before the 21 day rebate deadline ends.

FASTHELP IS COVERED BY A 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE LESS SHIPPING AND A 1 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY. FASTHELP IS A 4G CELLULAR DEVICE. FASTHELP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE 911 CALLS WHEN CELLULAR SERVICE IS NOT AVAILABLE SUCH AS IN REMOTE OR HIGH DENSITY AREAS. WE SUGGEST TESTING CELLULAR CONNECTION BEFORE USE. SEE OWNERS MANUAL. FASTHELP USES GPS TRIANGULATIONS TO APPROXIMATE YOUR LOCATION WHEN YOUR DEVICE IS TURNED ON. DR. HOWREN IS A COMPENSATED MEDICAL ADVISOR AND FRANK McDONALD IS AN ACTUAL USER AND COMPENSATED FOR HIS PARTICIPATION. OH RESIDENTS ADD 6.5% SALES TAX. UNIVERSAL PHYSICIANS 7747 SUPREME AVE, NORTH CANTON, OH 44720.

Say Cheese: Special Holiday Edition

HOME Fur the Holidays

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

PHOTO COURTESY BRIANNA AND KEVIN HUNDLEY

A Tail of Healing

“ Our fur child is a member of our family. Our first fur baby, Ajax, was a beautiful Tamaskan who took to being a big brother to his human sister like a duck to water. Before she could crawl or walk, she was fascinated by him and would track him around the house. When she could get to him, we would find them cuddled together with her either napping or reading a book on him. Our daughter would confuse her daycare teachers by talking about her ‘brother Ajax.’

“Ajax was also the defender of the household. My husband deployed often to the Middle East, and when he was gone, he knew we were safe because

no one would make it past Ajax.

“When we lost Ajax unexpectedly in 2024, our family was heartbroken — particularly our daughter, who had never known life without her fur brother. In the months after he passed, our family was missing something. We knew we couldn’t replace Ajax, but it became clear that a new fur baby might help pull our daughter out of her sadness. We began looking at puppies.

“We found a beautiful silver lab puppy who happened to have been born on my daughter’s birthday. Bringing Silver Maple home brought laughter (and mess!) to our home. But, more importantly, she brought peace to our daughter. A few weeks after she joined

our family, my husband went overseas. Maple took on the role of therapy dog for our daughter — giving her something to focus on while missing her father. She has helped us to heal by just being herself; she loves snuggles, is super goofy and enjoys long runs with boundless energy.

“The holidays are very important to our family. We have a lot of get-togethers to share in love and laughter. Our fur babies celebrate alongside us, as they bring an extra level of joy to an already joyous time. We couldn’t imagine our holidays without Maple.” ●

BriannaRae Hundley, Albemarle County, Va., Rappahannock Electric Cooperative member



A Loyal Cat, A Loving Home

“ **O**liver joined our family about two years ago. His loving and playful spirit captured our hearts instantly. The holidays are an especially important time for our family. It’s a time for us to gather, reflect on what we’re grateful for and create cherished memories together. We have a large family, so Oliver always has plenty of love and playmates.

“As we decorate the house, we make sure to include Oliver in our holiday traditions. We give him his own tree full of ornaments made from each member in our family, as well as presents and a stocking full of treats. His excitement is contagious as he runs around the house in his festive pajamas, waiting for more toys to play with.

“What I love most about Oliver is his unwavering loyalty and affectionate nature. He’s always there to lend comfort during stressful moments, nuzzling up to us when we need it most. His intuition is remarkable — he seems to sense when someone is feeling down and will gently nudge their hand with his nose, encouraging them to play or simply sit with him.

“His impact on our holiday is immeasurable, and we truly couldn’t imagine navigating this special season without him. The holidays are about togetherness, laughter and creating lasting memories — and Oliver is at the center of it all, bringing us a sense of unity and joy that reminds us of the goodness in life.” ●

*Megan Price, Stanley, Va.,
Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative member*



PHOTO COURTESY JASON AND MEGAN PRICE

A Picture-Perfect Pup

“ **M**y husband, Doug, and I are both retired.

Photography is a real passion of mine and I don’t think there’s a day that goes by that I’m not taking pictures. After both of our golden retrievers, Tucker and Skipper, passed away [in 2022 and 2023, both from pancreatic cancer], we were undecided about getting another dog. But we soon realized how empty our house felt and knew we needed another companion.

“We decided to adopt and put our name in with a couple of rescues. We received a call [from a rescue organization in Reinholds, Pa.] on a Friday night asking if we’d be interested in a golden doodle puppy. She was born in a puppy mill and had an inverted eyelid. They wanted to know if we could be there at 10 a.m.



PHOTO COURTESY DOUG AND LYNN PETERS

the next day. We did the four-hour drive the next morning. She was so little and trembling when we saw her — it was love at first sight.

“I think Tucker and Skipper were

looking down on us and made sure that we got the perfect dog. She sits patiently for our photo sessions and doesn’t mind the outfits I put on her. Our Christmas involves taking a lot of photos of Clover — some we use for cards and some we share on her Facebook page (Tucker and Skipper Therapy Dogs and Clover, too).

“Having Clover helps keep us active and gives us a purpose. I recently had knee replacement surgery and Clover makes sure to help keep me active. The first few weeks after surgery she stayed right beside me and accompanied me on my walks.

“We think she is the perfect dog and feel extremely fortunate that we found her.” ●

*Lynn Peters, Frederick County, Va.,
Shenandoah Valley Electric
Cooperative member*

Home Fur the Holidays

(continued from page 11)

Corgi with a Cause for Celebration

“Grant came into our lives when he was 10 weeks old. Grant, a Pembroke Welsh corgi, was born with many vascular abnormalities that did not present until he was 18 months old. By that time, he was already in liver failure. He had surgery at 23 months old to correct the two worst vascular abnormalities (he has many more) and because his case is so rare, there was no track record for life expectancy. He has been medically managed his whole life. My husband, Greg, and I were hoping he would live to see his 5th birthday. On July 9, 2025, Grant celebrated his 13th birthday.

“Grant has many Christmas outfits and wears them to his classes and social engagements throughout the month of



PHOTO COURTESY GREG AND ALETA SHELTON

December. He has never met a stranger. His good looks and charm have made him a wonderful corgi ambassador for the Powhatan and Richmond areas. He brings smiles, joy and squeals of delight (‘Corgi!’) wherever he goes.

“We celebrate Christmas for the birth of Jesus, our Savior. We believe in

the power of prayer, which, in large part, is why Grant has lived a normal corgi lifespan. He’s a walking miracle. To us, and to Grant, every day is Christmas and a cause to rejoice. Every day is a gift and we are so grateful.” ●

*Aleta Shelton, Powhatan, Va.,
Southside Electric Cooperative member*

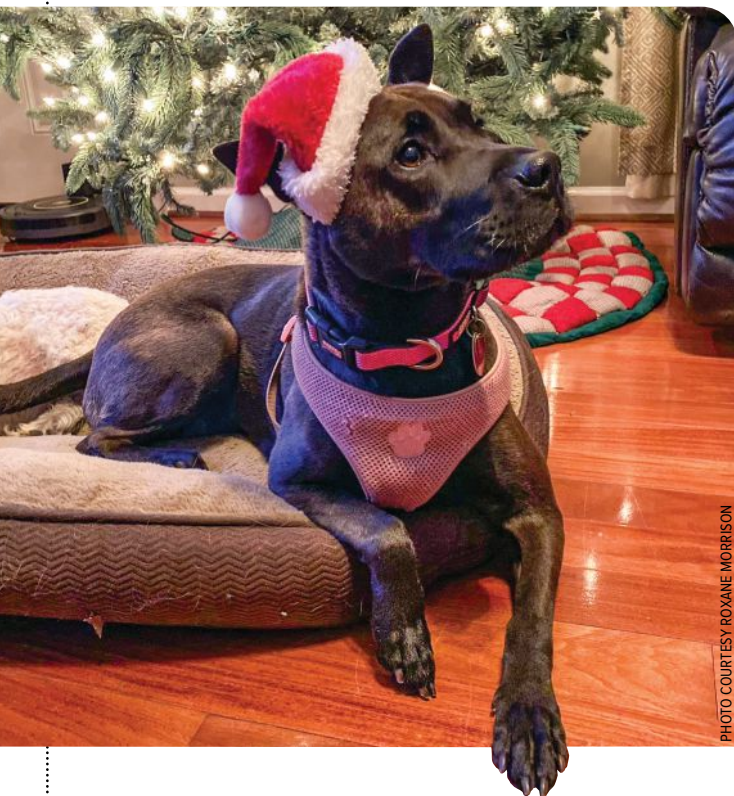


PHOTO COURTESY ROXANE MORRISON

Paws for Santa Claus

“Pearl is one of our granddogs. She’s our son’s dog that he got nine years ago. She is a pound puppy and they believe she is part shar-pei because of some black on her tongue.

“She is the sweetest girl. Our son taught her many tricks within the first few months of having her. In her younger years, they became well-known along his road because they would run together every day. Our son moved three hours away last year, so we don’t get to see her as often. Over the last year, she has developed what doctors believe to be Cushing’s disease. It has taken a bit to get that diagnosis, but after trying three different vets, we believe that this is the diagnosis.

“In this photo, we were dog-sitting her for several days, and she posed so beautifully with the Santa hat. She has always been a very photogenic dog. She shares her home with her younger but much bigger rottweiler brother, Salts.” ●

*Roxane Morrison, Clear Brook, Va.,
Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative member*



PHOTO COURTESY EDDIE AND KIM ARMSWORTHY

Decked-Out Doggie Duo

“Blue Montegue and Ethel Mertz are important members of our family. We have lived in the Northern Neck area for over 25 years. They are both crazy about the holidays, as they love wrapping paper and lights, and they get to go on adventures to nursing homes, schools and hospitals as therapy dogs. Looking at the camera and sitting down while someone reads to them has become second nature to them.

“They both enjoy a full house, lots of lights and singing. Both will chime in during ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas.’ They have more clothes than Paris Hilton! My husband, Eddie, and I can’t get enough of them and are always looking for dog-friendly venues to take them to. Snuggling up by the fire or snowball fights — doesn’t matter; they love all things involving people.” ●

*Kim Armsworthy, Lottsburg, Va.,
Northern Neck Electric Cooperative member*

Beagle Makes Spirits Bright



PHOTO COURTESY ROGER AND TREVA CAMPBELL

“Six years ago, I saw Miss Daisy’s photo on Facebook. I contacted Bedford Animal Shelter, and they set up a visit for us with her. She was a year old [when we adopted her].

“My husband, Roger, and I love her. Miss Daisy has filled our lives with love and companionship. My husband and I are both retired. She loves to be on our farm and as soon as she hears the tractor [engine] start up, she is ready to go. Our great-grandson, Kane, loves her too. He plays with her. Our son lives nearby and when he comes over, Miss Daisy walks him home. She stays with him awhile. Sometimes, she takes a nap on his couch.

“Miss Daisy is the highlight of our lives. We take her on trips. She loves going on vacation. She loves camping too. She also likes to take walks around the lake. Everyone wants to pet her wherever we go.

“Each evening, when it is her bedtime, she comes to me and I pet her on the head. Then, she gets up on the couch and stays there all night. At Christmastime, she watches me put up the Christmas tree and decorations. She has her own stocking hanging from the mantel. She knows Santa will be bringing her toys and treats. She loves stuffed animals — especially the ones that look like Santa or a snowman.” ●

*Treva Campbell, Eagle Rock, Va.,
Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative member*



DISCOVER HOPEWELL *Virginia*

Discover Hopewell, Virginia, located just 20 minutes south of Richmond at the convergence of the James and Appomattox rivers. Come take in a show at the historic Beacon Theatre. Explore the water on foot or kayak at the Hopewell Riverwalk. Browse the shops in historic downtown, then break for coffee or lunch at one of our cafés or restaurants. Visit historic Weston Manor and Appomattox Manor to walk in the footprints of the nation's founders. Enjoy drinks and dinner on the deck of the Boathouse at City Point overlooking the James River.



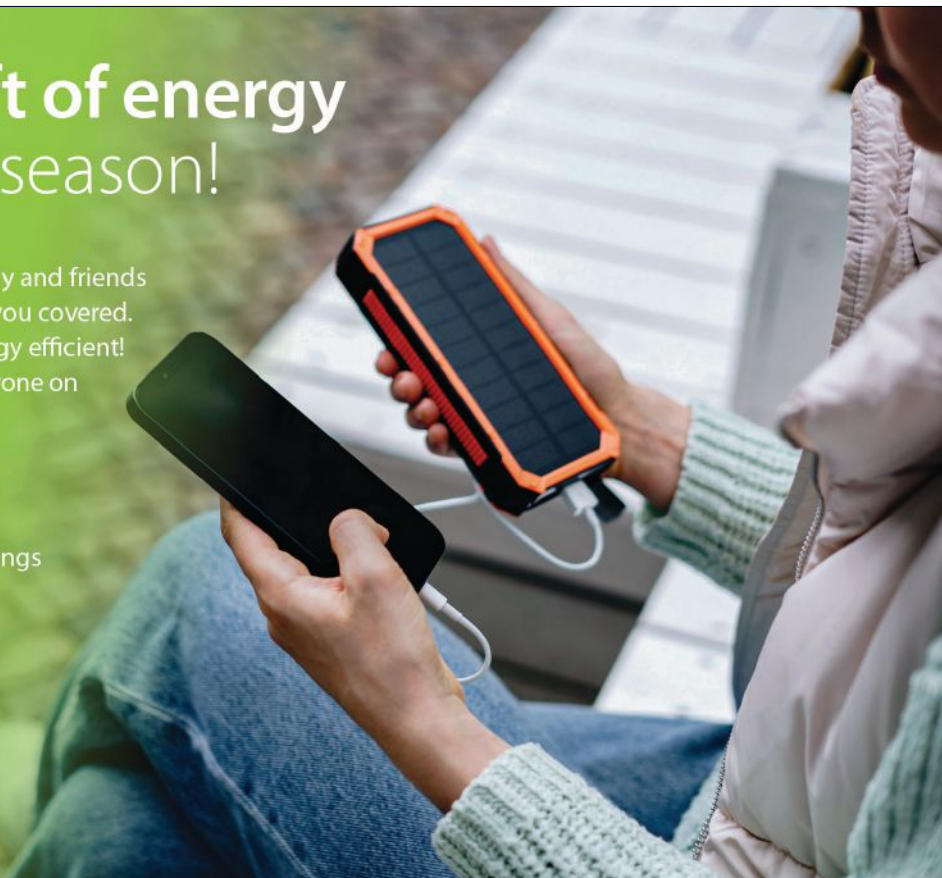
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- Solar charging bank
- Digital shower timer
- Smart outlets





RAPPAHANNOCK
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Investing in Reliability

Brandon Pickeral





2025 System Reliability Actions and Investments

All figures are year-end projections.



8,100+
**Animal Guards
Installed/Upgraded**

Animal guards enhance reliability by lowering the chance of wildlife-related faults. This significantly reduces outage risks, especially at locations prone to wildlife interference.



1,200+
**Miles of Right-of-Way
Cleared**

Clearing vegetation from rights-of-way prevents trees, limbs and branches from contacting power lines and causing outages.



~7,500
Hazard Trees Removed

Removing trees that pose a hazard improves reliability by preventing them from contacting poles, lines and other infrastructure.



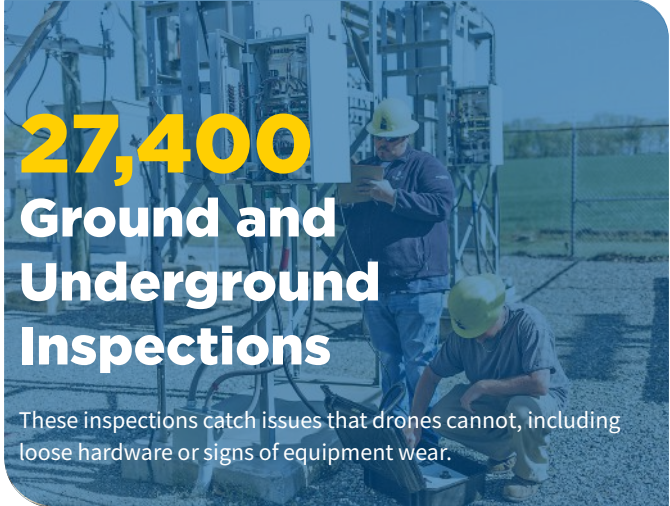
40,000
Drone Inspections

Through drone inspections, REC teams can spot issues early instead of waiting for something to break. Drone inspections have identified 12,000 improvements in 2025.



5,550
Poles Replaced

Regularly replacing poles helps to address increased loading and evolving infrastructure. It also contributes significantly to system-wide reliability and resiliency.



27,400
**Ground and
Underground
Inspections**

These inspections catch issues that drones cannot, including loose hardware or signs of equipment wear.

Energy Capacity & Demand: Virginia at a Crossroads

by John Hewa, President & CEO



Across the commonwealth, demand for electricity is outpacing supply, and the gap is growing. This challenge is not unique to Virginia, but here it is especially pressing. Our state has been highly successful

in attracting energy-intensive industries, like data centers, manufacturing and technology hubs. At the same time, we have seen older energy resources retired early, lengthy delays in PJM's interconnection queue — the regional waiting list for connecting new power projects to the grid — and increasing challenges in getting new energy facilities approved.

This imbalance did not appear overnight. The retirement of power plants has decreased the amount of reliable, on-demand energy available to the grid, while new resources that could help fill the gap are stalled for years waiting for available transmission infrastructure to be built. Virginia's economic growth is something to be proud of, yet the arrival of major employers of energy-intense businesses has added enormous demand without

an equivalent increase in the resources available to supply them with power.

The consequences of inaction are serious. Families will feel the pinch as bills rise with more scarce supply driving up energy costs and billions of dollars needed for new or upgraded transmission. Reliability could suffer if resources cannot meet energy needs during times of peak demand. Businesses may hesitate to come to or to expand in Virginia if they cannot be certain that enough power will be available when needed or that it will be affordable.

At Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, we are not waiting on others to sound the alarm. We are engaging policymakers and community leaders to share the sobering facts, validating concerns through independent studies and exploring solutions. In some cases, that could mean facilitating new generation resources for partners who are ready to invest. For those already supporting these efforts, thank you — your engagement matters.

Still, REC cannot solve this challenge alone. At the local level, economic development leaders must treat available power as a core part of their planning. Energy availability is no longer a given, and utilities need to be part of the discussion early on when projects are considered. Zoning and permitting must also

reflect the energy realities of communities that hope to grow.

At the state level, Virginia has reached a pivotal moment. Gov. Youngkin joined a bipartisan group of governors raising concerns with PJM and highlighting the importance of states' roles in that process. When Virginia's General Assembly wrote the Clean Economy Act five years ago, they wisely included safeguards to account for challenges that could not have been predicted when the law was passed. In the upcoming legislative session, those safeguards to preserve affordability, protect reliability and safeguard Virginia's economic competitiveness must be utilized effectively. That means prioritizing in-state, always-available power sources that can be counted on when energy demand is high, while continuing to pursue clean energy goals and keep pace with technology developments.

Virginia's energy future is not about abandoning progress but protecting it. If we want reliable service, affordable power bills, a cleaner environment and an economy that continues to thrive, we must make thoughtful, practical choices today. REC will continue to be a strong voice in that effort, working alongside members and policymakers to ensure the commonwealth is ready to meet the demands and opportunities of tomorrow.



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Neighbors helping neighbors with their REC electric bill.



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To give a gift, please scan the QR code.

myrec.coop/gift





OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING: Apply for 2026 Youth Tour and Scholarships

Youth Tour

If you are a junior in high school with a parent or guardian who is a member of REC, you have a chance to do something amazing.

The 2026 Youth Tour, taking place June 15-19, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for high school juniors. It can change the way you see your future.

You will stand where the nation's great leaders have stood and walk in the halls where they make the biggest decisions. You will see history up close. You will also form lifelong connections and friendships.

The REC application period for the 2026 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., is open and closes on Jan. 31, 2026. Each year, REC selects students from its service territory to join the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives for the tour. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association sponsors the Youth Tour, which is in its 49th year.

Youth Tour Questions: community@myrec.coop



myrec.coop/youthtour

Apply by: Jan. 31, 2026

Scholarships

REC is offering \$20,000 in scholarships to 17 students who want to advance their career goals by attending a college or a career and technical school.

REC awards two scholarships for \$2,500 and 15 for \$1,000. To apply, the applicant's parent or guardian must be a member of REC. The applicant must also plan to enroll, or be enrolled, in an accredited educational or training institution.

Those eligible to apply include:

- High school seniors who plan to attend a college or university.
- High school seniors who plan to attend a career or technical school.
- Students enrolled in a college or university, or a career or technical school.

Scholarship Questions:

community@myrec.coop or 540-891-5912



myrec.coop/scholarships

Apply by: Feb. 27, 2026

Where Are They Now?

2024 Alum's Youth Tour is Still Going Strong



In a way, Jackson Hunley's youth tour experience has kept on going, all the way to the Ivy League. Hunley represented REC at the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in 2024 as a high school junior. The youth tour took Hunley from his rural home in Spotsylvania to the U.S. Capitol.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association organizes youth tour. It brings together more than 2,000 students from around the U.S. to learn about the power of electric cooperatives and their government.

At the youth tour, Jackson was elected to a seat on the national Youth Leadership Council as the Virginia representative. He flew to Atlanta, Ga., in March 2025 to take part in NRECA's Annual Meeting, PowerXchange.

The Next Chapter

His duties representing REC may be over. But Hunley has added another chapter — and trip — to his tour. In August, Hunley landed in the Finger Lakes region of New York to start classes at Cornell University in Ithaca.

Massaponax High School has about 1,700 students. Just months after graduating, Hunley walks the Cornell campus with more than 27,000 other students. Hunley said he's embracing every challenge and opportunity.

"I'll admit that Cornell's size has been overwhelming — but in the best sense of the word," Hunley said. "With the biggest campus and student body of any Ivy League university, it can be difficult to navigate."

An 'Astonishing' Experience

Hunley enjoys meeting classmates from around the country and world.

"In my few weeks here, I've met dozens of people from around the world — from Ukrainian refugees to students from rural America, like me," he said. "The diversity of backgrounds and perspectives here is astonishing."

Hunley is majoring in public policy. He enjoys the coursework and the learning. But researching and writing at a college level is a challenge, he says.

Bees and Band

Hunley has joined the Bee Club — as in actual bees, not the spelling kind. The club educates students and the community about bees and beekeeping.

"Before, beekeeping was something I enjoyed in solitude," said Hunley, who's been a hobby beekeeper for three years. "But it's refreshing to be part of a community as passionate about honeybee conservation as I am."

He also plays the tuba in the Cornell Big Red Marching Band. The band, in all humility, touts itself as the "only real marching band in the Ivy League."

Hunley has played the tuba for seven years and marched in his high school's marching band. He said he's lucky to be part of the Cornell Big Red Marching Band.

"At over 200 members, the band is much bigger than my high school's, so it's been an adjustment learning to play in such a large ensemble," he said. "But the other members immediately treated me like part of the family, and band has been a great outlet to meet all sorts of people."

All the best to Hunley, as his tour continues.





Joining Forces to Defend Virginia

Experts from your Cooperative participated in Cyber Fortress 25

While their business casual outfits stood out in a large group mostly wearing military camouflage, so did the deep knowledge and expertise of the REC and BrillIT employees invited to take part in Cyber Fortress 25.

During a simulated cyberattack on the region's electricity grid and operational systems, more than 250 Virginia Army National Guard and Virginia Defense Force members worked alongside critical infrastructure partners.

“Joint-combined collaboration between the whole of government, industry and critical infrastructure is crucial for domestic operations and national defense. Training with the critical infrastructure partners is cardinal to ensure we continue to operate in times of emergency.” – Maj. Andrew Slonopas, U.S. Army



Director – Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Services – Information Security Officer Doug King led a team during Cyber Fortress 25.

Space Heater Safety and Efficiency Tips

Check the cords before you use space heaters. Don't use a space heater with a frayed, brittle or cracked cord. Never use an extension cord.

Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper and other flammables.

Don't put space heaters in high-traffic areas.

Place space heaters on level, hard, nonflammable floor surfaces. Don't put them on carpets, furniture or countertops.

Your space heater should have guards from heating elements and automatically shut off if it tips over or overheats.

Use space heaters sparingly. To run one space heater for 12 hours every day for a month could cost around \$76. Instead, use small electric blankets for direct heat to avoid the cost of heating an entire room.





Takisha Frye believes the REC CARE Board “found her” at just the right time.

Drawing on empathy learned from her mother and firsthand knowledge of community needs, Frye had been looking for a way to help others.

“I think it’s a good way for me to give back, and because I have been a single mom, I understand the struggle of life,” said Frye, customer experience manager for Citizens Bank. “Life happens sometimes, and it can be inconvenient. I want to help people through those times.”

Frye grew up in Caroline County and recently moved back from Fredericksburg to be closer to her daughter, who teaches at Ladysmith Elementary School.

Frye has worked for Citizens Bank since 2001, and she knows her job has made her more understanding of what people might be going through — like losing their home. An important aspect of her position is to advocate for customers.

“You have to be able to listen so that you can figure out what you can do. That’s very

similar to how [on the CARE board] you listen to the needs of the county or program and then find a way to meet that need.”

Her empathy for others drives her personally and professionally. It’s a trait she inherited and learned by example from her mother.

“She always taught me to have empathy, pushed us to see the greater good and be there for people and give them comfort.”

Frye has always found herself helping others or resolving things for her friends and family. She finds purpose in helping others — whether in her inner circle or beyond. It’s why she was attracted to the CARE Board opportunity.

In her first year on the board, Frye has appreciated looking beyond her own community of Caroline County and gaining new perspectives she can use to enhance programs in her home county. Programs for the very young and older adults are near and dear to Frye.

Frye also advocates for The Power of Change, a voluntary program where REC members choose to round up their monthly

bill to the nearest dollar. The proceeds all go back into communities across the Cooperative’s territory.

“I feel like members should enroll because you should want to be a part of creating change,” Frye said. “Just round the bill up — it’s no more than a few dollars a year. Why not give it to help someone else?”

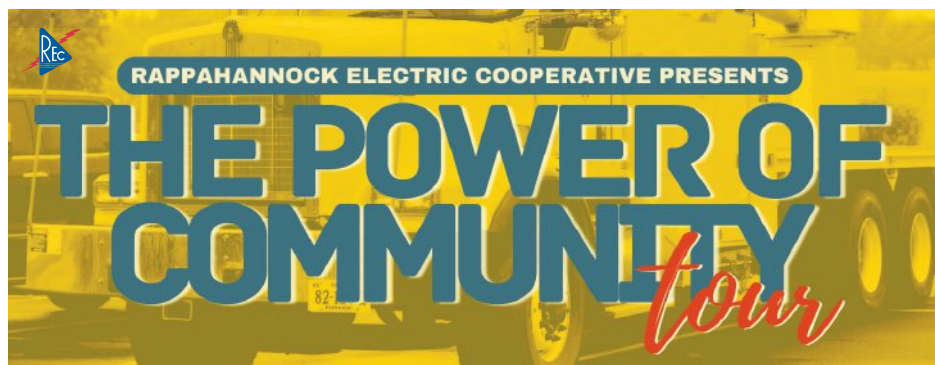


THE POWER OF CHANGE

Join the more than **36,000** REC members who round up their bill to the nearest dollar. In 2024, The Power of Change gave **\$211,000** back through **68** grants across REC’s service territory. The grants are awarded twice each year by the Community Awareness of Rappahannock Electric Charity Inc. Board, which is made up of 10 REC members who volunteer to serve and are appointed by the REC Board of Directors.



Learn more and enroll today
myrec.coop/donate.



NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 23

Ashland Olde Time Holiday Parade
Ashland

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 5

Toy Lift
Ruckersville

Madison Christmas Parade
Madison

DECEMBER 6

Orange Christmas Parade
Orange

Christmas Parade
Clarke County

Christmas on Main Parade
Front Royal

Lake Anna Lighted Boat Parade
Louisa

DECEMBER 6 continued

Spotsylvania Christmas Parade
Spotsylvania

DECEMBER 7

Lights on Main Street
Stanardsville

Culpeper Christmas Parade
Culpeper

Middletown Christmas Parade
Middletown

Little Washington Christmas Parade
Rappahannock

Tappahannock Christmas Parade
Essex

DECEMBER 13

Bowling Green Holiday Parade
Bowling Green



John D. Hewa
President &
Chief Executive
Officer



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Happy Holidays to You and Yours!

Your Cooperative's offices will be closed Nov. 27-28, and on Dec. 25. 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.

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Stiltz is a world leading Homelift manufacturer, so you'll be in good hands. Your elevator will be installed and maintained by Stiltz trained professionals who truly care about your freedom.



This is a time of year that many families gather and a good time to make sure your aging loved ones are safe in their homes. Mobility can change quickly so if the stairs are becoming a challenge it might be time to consider making a change.

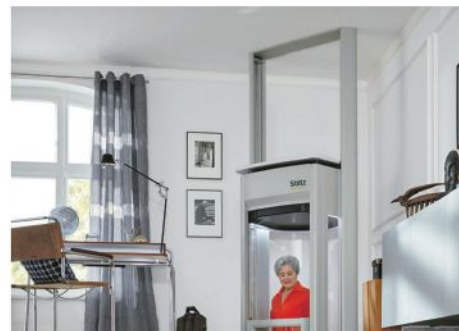
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– Mr. James, Roanoke, VA

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—2025— HOLIDAY GUIDE

From delicious treats and holiday parades to roaming carolers and handmade treasures, this year's Cooperative Living Holiday Guide features unique gift ideas and opportunities to enjoy festive fun across the commonwealth.

KRIS KRINGLE MARKET

Discover the magic of the season at the Kris Kringle Market in Middletown, Va. This event is hosted by Belle Grove Plantation on Saturday, Nov. 22, and Sunday, Nov. 23, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. Immerse yourself in a winter wonderland filled with unique gifts, delicious treats and festive fun. Explore vendor booths offering handcrafted treasures perfect for your holiday shopping list. Savor the flavors of locally made food, enjoy the sounds of roaming carolers and create lasting memories with exciting activities for kids of all ages. Early shoppers who arrive on Saturday between 10 a.m. and noon will be charged an entry fee of \$2 per adult (children 12 and under are free). For all other times, admission is free. For more information, visit bellegrove.org.



HIGHLAND COUNTY

Join the picturesque mountain community of Highland County, Va., at Wintertide on Dec. 6. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the season with a craft vendor market, visit from Santa Claus and a Christmas parade. For more information on Wintertide, or to find out more about Highland County attractions like the Sounding Knob Fire Tower or Barn Quilt Trail, visit highlandcounty.org.



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Finally, if you're still stuck on what to give, consider *Cooperative Living* magazine. For \$10, you can give a year's worth of happy reading to the recipient of your choice. To give a gift subscription, contact Sonja Kinney at skinney@vmdaec.com.

All of us at *Cooperative Living* wish our readers and their families a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season! ●

Stay merry and bright

with simple savings tips this holiday season!



While shopping for holiday decorations, remember that holiday lighting options differ in more ways than just style—they vary widely in their energy use and cost to operate. LED lights offer the most energy-efficient and cost-effective way to light up your home this holiday season. They produce very little heat, increasing energy savings, safety, and longevity. LED lights are typically rated at 20,000 hours or more, and as high as 60,000 hours, which means they will last for many holiday seasons to come.

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story and artwork
by Anne M. Dellinger,
Contributing Columnist

If your sock drawer is looking a bit shabby these days, take heart ... the holiday, gift-giving season is near and, most likely, new socks will soon be coming your way!

Socks may seem like an *unexciting, simple* gift to receive, but they are actually the perfect present — particularly if your drawer is full of threadbare mismatches.

First of all, socks are practical. *Everybody* needs them, especially during winter. Can you imagine your wardrobe without socks? How would you keep your toes toasty warm and protected?

But socks are not just beneficial for your physical comfort. They can also be a fun tool to express your unique sense of self. By wearing a variety of styles, bright colors, whimsical patterns and favorite characters, your feet will show off your interests and personality.

So, when you open a gift of cozy socks in a favorite, cool style this holiday, know that someone not only cares about your well-being but also celebrates and supports your individuality. And that feels really good!

A HISTORY OF NO COLD FEET

Socks could spin quite a yarn about their evolution down through the centuries.

Our earliest ancestors did not like cold “tootsie toes” any more than you do. Ancient cave paintings have shown that early cave dwellers kept their feet warm with foot wrappings made from woven grasses, vines, or animal skins and matted animal hair. Talk about rough, rugged footwear!

It wasn't until 300-500 A.D., in Egypt, that a woolen fabric was hand-fashioned into a split-toe design to wear with sandals. Probably not the most comfortable footwear, but definitely a big improvement from walking around almost barefoot on all those rocks during the Stone Age! Ouch!

Socks ... a treat for your feet!



By the Middle Ages, 1000-1500 A.D., socks, or stockings that protected the entire leg, were being handmade.

These were elaborate, decorative leg coverings created from wool, silk and linen by special craftspeople. It was a time-consuming, expensive process that made socks a luxury item to be enjoyed mainly by the rich nobility of Europe. But in 1589, there was a

game-changing moment in sock ownership when William Lee of

England invented a knitting machine. Socks were soon produced efficiently and quickly, making them available and affordable to the general population. From that time forward, socks were no longer just for the feet of the elite!

Down through the years, new materials have been introduced into the manufacturing of socks. Textile improvements, like cotton fabric, elastic, nylon, polyester and spandex, have helped create a comfortable, snug fit.

While socks have always been designed with protection and comfort in mind, today's styles have taken this goal to a whole new level. Socks have become the *rock stars* of everyone's wardrobe!

From hiking socks to fuzzy slippers to just plain cute and crazy socks, there seems to be a sock for every event or mood!

“Fun socks make happy feet!” — unknown

As the holiday season approaches, socks and stockings will take on a whole new role, going from feet holders to treat holders! Children in many countries will hang them from mantels or banisters, or even bedposts, in anticipation of gifts being secretly stuffed inside by a kindly character.

Depending on the folklore of different cultures, there will be variations of this tradition. Some will use a shoe instead of a stocking. Also, the gift-giving character and the dates of this figure's arrival will differ.

This traditional practice is most famously associated with Dec. 25 and the arrival of St. Nicholas on Christmas Eve.

According to legend, St. Nicholas secretly helped a poor family by dropping gold coins down their chimney,



with one landing in a daughter's stocking hung by the fire. Over time, this story developed into a custom of children hanging stockings, or shoes, on Christmas Eve — hoping for small gifts from a kindly figure now known as Santa Claus.

If Christmas is celebrated by your family, you may have a special stocking that holds holiday treats.

Have you ever found any of these items in your stocking:

- An orange?
- Coins?
- Assorted candy and nuts?
- Small toys, like a car or favorite stuffed animal?
- Socks?

These represent the small, traditional gifts that are sentimental reminders of the St. Nicholas legend.

However, today there is a much wider variety of *stocking stuffers* available that match modern times and individual interests, including technology and gift cards. Now, Santa Claus receives very specific requests, often with a link connecting an item to its purchase location!

Just for fun, decorate this little stocking with colorful markers and then add three things you hope to find stuffed inside!

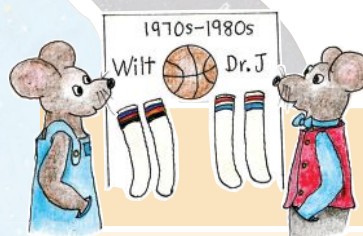
Socks have come a long way from the “foot mittens” and “toe huggers” of the past to the novelty socks of today. The next time you pull on a fresh new pair, think about the kids of ancient days struggling to tie on their “foot bags” of animal skins and plant fibers.

How lucky are you to be living in the golden age of socks where there is a style for most every occasion and putting them on is hassle-free. ●

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

“One can never have enough socks.”

— Dumbledore from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series
[A reminder that homeless shelters are always appreciative of sock donations.]



CALLING ALL *Super Sleuths*

A one-size-fits-all athletic sock style was trendy in the 1970s and 1980s.

These simple white socks reached mid-calf or higher, had two or three colored bands at the top and lacked a heel.

Sports heroes of that time, like basketball stars Julius “Dr. J.” Irving and Wilt Chamberlain, wore these socks with shorts and popularized them with American youth.

Today this sock style is still recognized for its comfort and is a common choice for school uniforms and sports teams.

Hay Seed and City Slicker are not into socks but are curious to know more about this special style.

For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, and do the following:

- Find the special socks hidden in this magazine, giving the page number.
- What is the name of this sock style?
- Do you have these socks in your sock drawer? If so, do you like wearing them?

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER *Super Sleuths*

The September Super Sleuths was about finding your inner nerdiness. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**, kids were asked to find a book, with title and author, hidden in the pages of the magazine and then give the page number. They were also asked to provide the name of the book and its author, state whether they've read the book and name their “nerdy passion.”

The winning answers are:

- Page 8
- “If I Ran the Zoo” by Dr. Seuss
- Yes
- Crocheting

OUR WINNER IS LIBERTY.

Congratulations, Liberty!



Sips of the Season

Holiday drinks that bring comfort in a cup

Eggnog Punch

recipe courtesy of Wendy Lankford

Ingredients:

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -2 quarts French vanilla or cinnamon ice cream
2 quarts dairy eggnog
1 liter cream soda, chilled
peppermint, cinnamon sticks or candy canes
ground cinnamon

Directions:

Place ice cream in extra-large punch bowl. Add half the eggnog. Stir and mash mixture with a potato masher until ice cream is melted and mixture is well combined. Stir in remaining eggnog. Slowly pour in cream soda, stirring to combine. To each glass add a peppermint, cinnamon stick or candy cane and add punch. Sprinkle lightly with cinnamon. Makes about 24 6-oz. servings.

White Hot Chocolate

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

Ingredients:

3 cups half-and half
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white chocolate baking pieces
1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon almond extract
ground cinnamon (optional)
whipped cream (optional)

Directions:

In a medium saucepan, combine $\frac{1}{4}$ of the half-and-half, white chocolate baking pieces, cinnamon stick and nutmeg. Stir over low to medium heat until white chocolate is melted. Add remaining half-and-half. Stir and cook until heated through. Remove from heat. Discard cinnamon stick. Add vanilla and almond extract. Stir until mixed through. Pour into your favorite mug(s). Top with whipped cream and sprinkle with ground cinnamon.



Christmas Punch

recipe courtesy of Wendy Lankford

Ingredients:

4 cups warm water
12-oz. can lemonade concentrate
2 (46-oz.) cans pineapple juice
2 quarts ginger ale
3 (3-oz.) boxes red or green Jell-O
4 cups sugar
9 cups boiling water

Directions:

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Bring sugar and 4 cups warm water to a boil. Add to Jell-O mixture; let cool. Add lemonade concentrate and pineapple juice. Put in freezer and freeze in a container that will fit in a punch bowl or two smaller containers, if desired. Thaw 3-4 hours before using. To serve, add 1 quart of ginger ale to a gallon of punch. Makes 2 gallons.



Gingerbread Cookie Shake

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Culinary.net

Ingredients:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups vanilla protein shake
1 tablespoon molasses
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger
1 frozen banana
1 tablespoon chia seeds
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ice

Directions:

Add all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. Serve.



GOT A TASTY TREAT TO SHARE?

Email your favorite **soup 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 them online at co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen.

Because of volume we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. Cooperative Living cannot warrant results.



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Don't Sell November Short!

There's more to this month than Thanksgiving

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



With holiday hoopla looming around the corner, I hope there won't be any scares or surprises. Those can

come in any form and I am sometimes taken unaware.

This year, I've decided to fully embrace everything November has to offer. I believe November and March are often overlooked months that don't receive the respect they deserve. On second thought, March isn't much more than St. Patrick's Day. But November? There's a lot to enjoy!

In November, some of the trees still have hearty fall leaves clinging to them. It's a happy sight, and one that we won't be able to enjoy much longer as we embark into winter.

The weather can be unpredictable in November. One day might be filled with bright, warm sunshine, and the next, snow could be blowing through the air. Who knows what we'll get?

It's still a month with plenty of great walking opportunities. And we can take our time walking since it's no longer scorchingly hot.

One thing that comes to mind in November is classrooms filled with youngsters tracing their hands on paper and then turning their artwork into turkeys. I think it's also time to root through the cupboards and gather all the cooking implements and holiday-themed dishes to get them ready for the big feast at the end of the month.

I hope you're looking forward to a house full of relatives and friends, all coming together to share food and joy. Sometimes, these gatherings can turn into disagreements and loud arguments. It's a great time to avoid discussing politics altogether.

Here's what my family does to prevent anyone from being overserved alcohol: Try Welch's grape juice. Serve it in champagne glasses. It tastes great, and driving home

isn't an issue. Save the spirits for after all the guests have left.

There's really no way to eat judiciously during Thanksgiving.

It's all so delicious, and we don't get a lot of Thanksgiving-like meals the rest of the year. Give me a Thanksgiving turkey over an Easter ham any day!

If you and your loved ones like to live dangerously, there's a trend to deep-fry an entire turkey in a big vat. It looks pretty scary, and there is no way I'd try doing it. But if someone manages to fry up a big turkey and no disasters occur, I would certainly like to sample some of it.

Here's my take on Thanksgiving desserts: Forget about them! Personally, I think my two least favorite desserts are pumpkin pie and mincemeat pie. So, I usually plan to have another helping of mashed potatoes and dressing instead.

Isn't the very best thing about Thanksgiving dinner the fact that the next day there are turkey, cheese and cranberry dressing sandwiches? That's what I like best about Thanksgiving.

I hope you all have a happy holiday! Save yourself a few sandwiches for later. Don't forget to be thankful! And why not take a long walk and burn off some of those Thanksgiving calories! ●

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.



[SCENE IT!]



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 **Nov. 20**. The winner will receive a \$25 Amazon email gift card.

PHOTO BY MARGARET JOHNSON, SVEC MEMBER

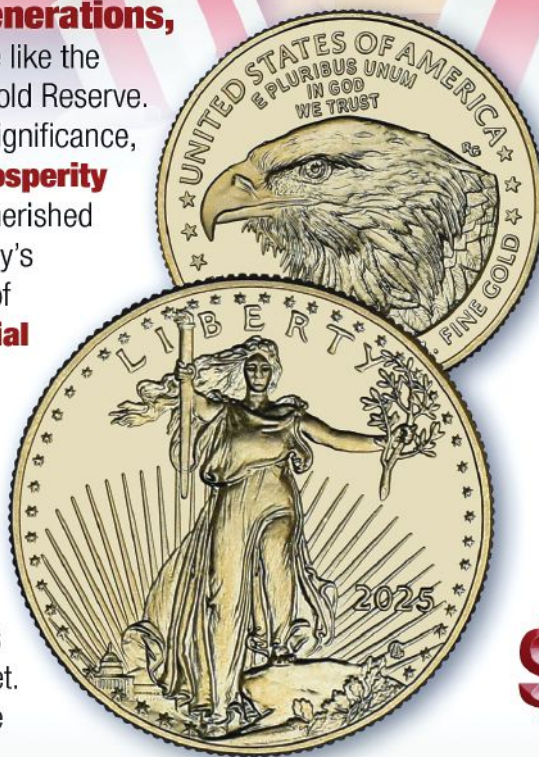
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ANNUAL NOTICE

This notice is required by Rule F 2.4, "Association, Organization and Society Subscriptions," of the Alliance for Audited Media bylaws and covers the publication period Jan. 1, 2025, through Dec. 31, 2025.

Cooperative Living magazine is published 10 times annually by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives for 13 subscribing electric-distribution cooperatives. This includes monthly issues except for combined January-February and November-December issues.

These subscribing cooperatives use the magazine to notify their members — who are also the owners of the cooperative utilities — about important co-op business news. Such news includes annual-meeting notices, board-of-director election-candidate profiles, voting proxy forms, proposed bylaw changes and rate adjustments, member committee meetings, and articles on other topics important to each cooperative's business operations.

The magazine also publishes energy-saving information, community-support stories and other material in keeping with the fifth and seventh cooperative principles, "Education, Training and Information" and "Concern for Community."

Subscribing cooperatives pay 56.9 cents per member per issue to send the magazine to each member, or a total of \$5.69 per year per member. This price includes printing and mailing.

The cooperatives that subscribe to *Cooperative Living* are A&N Electric Cooperative (Tasley, Va.), BARC Electric Cooperative (Millboro, Va.), Choptank Electric Cooperative (Denton, Md.), Community Electric Cooperative (Windsor, Va.), Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative (New Castle, Va.), Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative (Chase City, Va.), Northern Neck Electric Cooperative (Warsaw, Va.), Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (Manassas, Va.), Powell Valley Electric Cooperative (New Tazewell, Tenn.), Prince George Electric Cooperative (Waverly, Va.), Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (Fredericksburg, Va.), Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (Rockingham, Va.), and Southside Electric Cooperative (Crewe, Va.).



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RATES: Non-business: \$100 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: \$350 per block.

DEADLINE: Dec. 5 for January-February issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.



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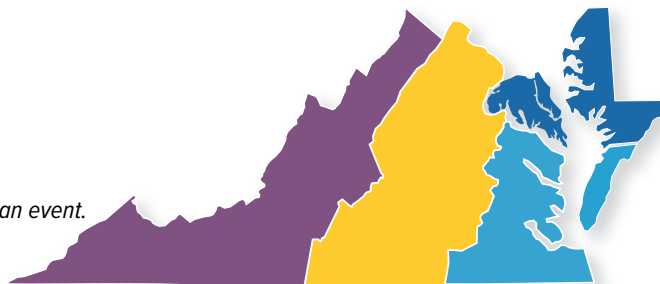
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Events Around the Area

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

NOVEMBER

14-15 WINCHESTER. Women of the Moose Harvest Craft Fair. Moose Lodge. 215 E. Cork St. Times vary. 540-667-8865.

15 BERRYVILLE. 4th Annual Berryville Turkey Trot 5K & 1 Mile Kids Fun Run. Chet Hobert Park. 9 a.m. & 10 a.m. Runsignup.com

22 FORT VALLEY. 4th Annual 2 Mile Turkey Trot. Fort Valley Fire Department. 9 a.m. 571-239-9666.

22-23 MIDDLETOWN. Kris Kringle Market. Belle Grove Plantation. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Bellegrove.org

28 MIDDLETOWN. Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. 4:45 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

DECEMBER

5 FRONT ROYAL. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "The Very Best Time of Year." Front Royal Presbyterian Church. 7:30 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

6 HIGHLAND CO. Wintertide. Highlandcounty.org

7 MIDDLETOWN. Christmas Parade. Historic Main St. 2 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

12, 14 BRIDGEWATER. The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society: "O Holy Night." Bridgewater Church of the Brethren. Times vary. Singshenandoah.org

13 HARRISONBURG. Winchester Musica Viva Choir: "A Christmas Carol." Park View Mennonite Church. 7 p.m. Winchestermusicaviva.org

14 WINCHESTER. Winchester Musica Viva Choir: "A Christmas Carol." Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. 3 p.m. Winchestermusicaviva.org

14 WINCHESTER. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "The Very Best Time of the Year." First Baptist Church. 3 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

31 MIDDLETOWN. First Night Middletown. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

PIEDMONT

NOVEMBER

15 CULPEPER. Stand Firm Christian Church Christmas Bazaar. 18230 Birmingham Rd. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 540-270-1666. Mahjwh@verizon.net.

22 BROWNTOWN. Browntown Christmas Bazaar. 96 Browntown Rd. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Browntowncommunity.com

22 MINERAL. Christmas Bazaar. St. Jude Catholic Church. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Louisacatholics.org

22 GUM SPRING. Fall Craft and Bake Sale. Gum Spring United Methodist Church. 8 a.m.-12 p.m. 804-556-3494. Gumspringumc.org

29 CHESTERFIELD. "Ye Corne Beer & Rosted Deer." Thanksgiving Food and Drink Traditions of Early Virginia. 251 Henricus Park Rd. 10 a.m. 804-748-1611.

DECEMBER

5-6 HAYMARKET. Haymarket Town & Country Garden Club Holiday Shoppe. 3510 James Madison Hwy. Times vary. Htcgardenclub.com

5-6 MANASSAS. Christmas Market Spectacular. 9419 Battle St. Times vary. 703-330-2787. Virginiaartfactory.org

6 WALKERTON. The Upstairs Downstairs All Around the House Art Show. Locust Grove Farm. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Locustgrove1665.com

7 UPPERVILLE. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "The Very Best Time of the Year." Trinity Episcopal Church. 3 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

11-13 WARRENTON. Warrenton Chorale Christmas Concert. Warrenton United Methodist Church. Times vary. Warrentonchorale.org

18 MANASSAS. Christmas Cabaret. 9419 Battle St. 7-9:30 p.m. 703-330-2787. Virginiaartfactory.org

TIDEWATER

NOVEMBER

15 ONANCOCK. Champagne and Oyster Tasting. 6 College Ave. 4-7 p.m. Historiconancockschool.org

22 ONLEY. Annual Kiwanis Craft Show. Nandua High School. 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. 757-442-4427.

22 MONTROSS. Stratford Harbour Holiday Bazaar. 2657 N. Independence Dr. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Msalcetti@aol.com.

DECEMBER

6 CHINCOTEAGUE. Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade. Main St. 6 p.m. Chincoteaguechamber.com

MARYLAND

NOVEMBER

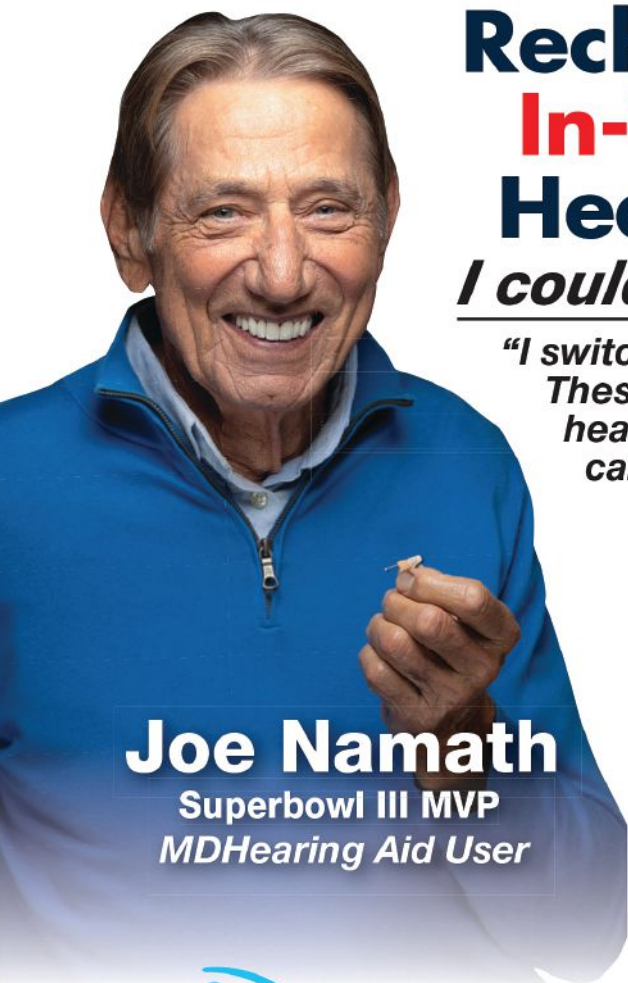
22 ST. MICHAELS. Eastern Shore Sea Glass and Coastal Arts Festival. Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Seaglassfestival.com

DECEMBER

12-13 CHESTERTOWN. Chester River Chorale Concert: "A Celtic Christmas." Presbyterian Church of Chestertown. Times vary. Chesterriverchorale.org

PRINT DEADLINES: Dec. 1 for Jan. 15-Feb. 28
Feb. 1 for March 15-April 15

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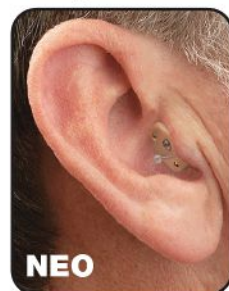
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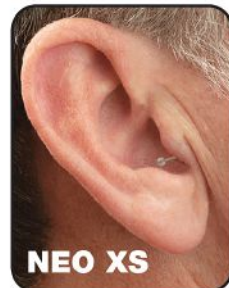
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	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
30	8.77	7.56	9.71	8.60	13	11	18	16	58	27.70	21.98	50.43	36.04	89	62	169	116
36	8.77	7.93	10.35	9.44	14	13	22	18	59	30.37	23.51	55.50	38.76	98	67	186	126
37	8.77	8.15	10.52	9.81	15	13	22	20	60	33.49	24.28	60.76	41.71	109	73	206	136
38	8.77	8.16	11.19	10.18	16	14	24	21	61	36.49	25.09	66.43	47.10	122	83	236	154
39	9.13	8.31	11.62	10.55	17	15	25	22	62	39.88	27.91	73.90	51.32	136	92	262	166
40	9.55	8.48	12.04	10.98	18	16	27	24	63	43.69	34.01	81.54	57.25	153	102	287	187
41	10.05	8.72	13.10	11.58	20	17	30	26	64	47.91	38.28	90.20	62.32	170	112	323	200
42	10.48	9.01	14.21	12.30	22	19	33	29	65	52.81	40.88	100.33	68.23	191	125	361	223
43	10.98	9.36	14.72	13.18	23	20	38	31	66	58.71	44.61	114.29	75.40	211	135	392	242
44	11.58	9.73	15.67	14.10	25	22	41	34	67	64.59	49.08	125.27	83.64	234	146	436	261
45	12.17	10.15	16.86	15.16	28	24	45	38	68	72.24	59.65	143.07	105.55	254	173	485	322
46	12.84	10.64	17.85	15.83	30	25	49	40	69	79.34	64.22	158.23	129.28	288	188	547	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.03	16.68	32	27	54	44	70	86.85	68.11	177.24	147.66	318	203	595	375
48	13.48	11.88	20.27	17.37	35	29	58	47	71	102.45	82.60	203.10	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.69	12.33	21.73	18.32	37	31	63	52	72	113.68	93.16	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.36	12.98	23.00	19.82	40	33	69	57	73	127.55	106.68	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.37	13.75	25.30	20.65	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	119.36	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.36	14.87	27.63	22.13	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.95	24.81	54	42	98	73	76	200.03	168.51	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.68	16.72	33.99	26.20	60	46	110	81	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.70	17.50	37.13	27.85	67	50	121	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	42.01	31.07	74	53	138	96	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
57	24.69	20.63	45.81	33.43	81	58	150	107	80	450.50	386.47	816.15	596.78	1625	1180	3050	2164

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