

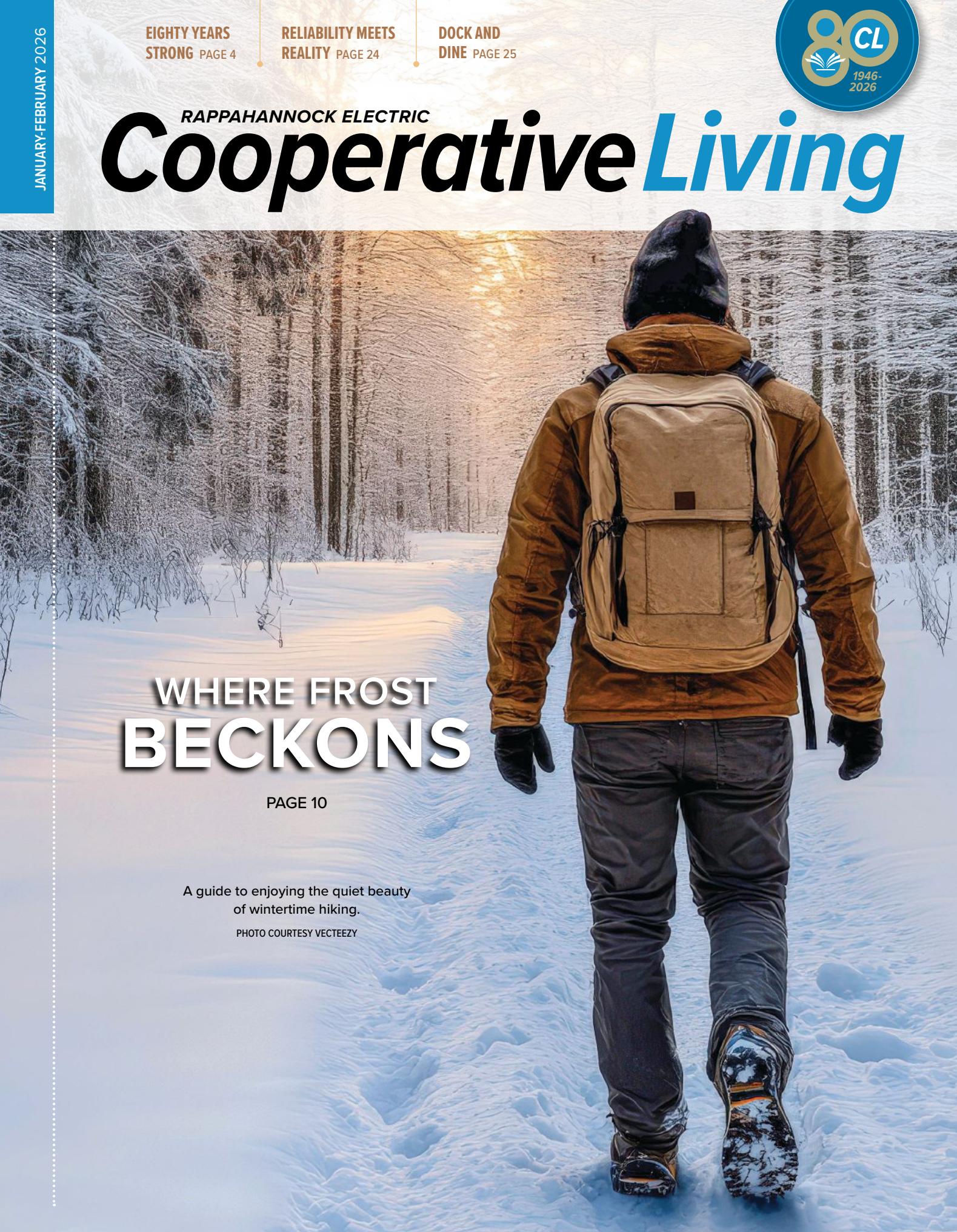
EIGHTY YEARS
STRONG PAGE 4

RELIABILITY MEETS
REALITY PAGE 24

DOCK AND
DINE PAGE 25



RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC Cooperative *Living*



WHERE FROST
BECKONS

PAGE 10

A guide to enjoying the quiet beauty
of wintertime hiking.

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VIEWPOINT

Looking Back and to the Future

I want to start off by wishing everyone a happy New Year. This is a big year for *Cooperative Living*, as it marks our 80th year as a publication highlighting our communities and providing our readers with information they need about how our cooperatives serve more than 2 million people in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

The first issue debuted as *Rural Virginia* in October 1946. Since then, it has grown from a black-and-white newspaper to the largest magazine of its kind with more than 600,000 readers on print and digital platforms. Over the next eight issues, we are going to share some highlights from each decade, culminating in a cover story in October. This month we look at its first decade, from 1946 to 1956.

In many ways, 2026 is also the year that will propel our cooperatives into an uncertain and complex future as we



grapple with new challenges. This includes the increase of electricity needed for data centers that power our AI-driven, web-based economy, to emerging technologies and policy discussions that will impact how we deliver reliable and affordable power to all of the homes, farms and businesses that depend on electric cooperatives to keep the lights on.

In this issue, we kickoff a series of articles to unwind the complex web of issues that influence the operation of our power grid. With difficult decisions facing our industry and co-ops as we adapt to the increasing demands of modern life, *Cooperative Living* in 2026 will remain a reliable, entertaining and trustworthy source for information about our rural communities and members, as it has been for the past 80 years. ●

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



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Cooperative Living

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OUR MISSION

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

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Flying High Again

Rehabilitated bald eagle soars over Smith Mountain Lake

by Jeff Reid, Contributing Writer

A BALD EAGLE RETURNED TO THE WILD IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF NEARLY 100 ONLOOKERS LAST OCTOBER AT SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE COMMUNITY PARK IN MONETA, VA. The eagle, known as patient 25-3592, was released close to where it was first discovered in Franklin County the previous month.

"This majestic eagle came to us after a fierce territorial fight with two younger eagles," says Chester Leonard, executive director of the Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center. "When it arrived, it was utterly exhausted, battered and so weak it could barely lift its head inside the cardboard box it was transported in."

Leonard's team immediately went to work. After a few days of much-needed rest and recovery, the eagle slowly but surely began to regain its strength. "After several days of intensive care, it stood tall once again, alert and powerful, and ready to stretch its wings," Leonard says. "When the time came for a test flight in our 50-foot flight pen, it soared beautifully — a clear sign that its recovery was well underway."

Eagles require a minimum 100-foot-long flight enclosure to rebuild the endurance and power they need to survive in the wild, so the eagle was transferred to the Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro for the final stages of rehabilitation.

"Fortunately, the eagle had no physical injuries like broken bones or lacerations from altercations with other eagles, so it seemed fine physically — but when we ran blood work, we discovered subclinical levels of lead in its system, which is a huge issue for eagles and many other animals in the wild," says Connor Gillespie, director of outreach for the Wildlife Center of Virginia.

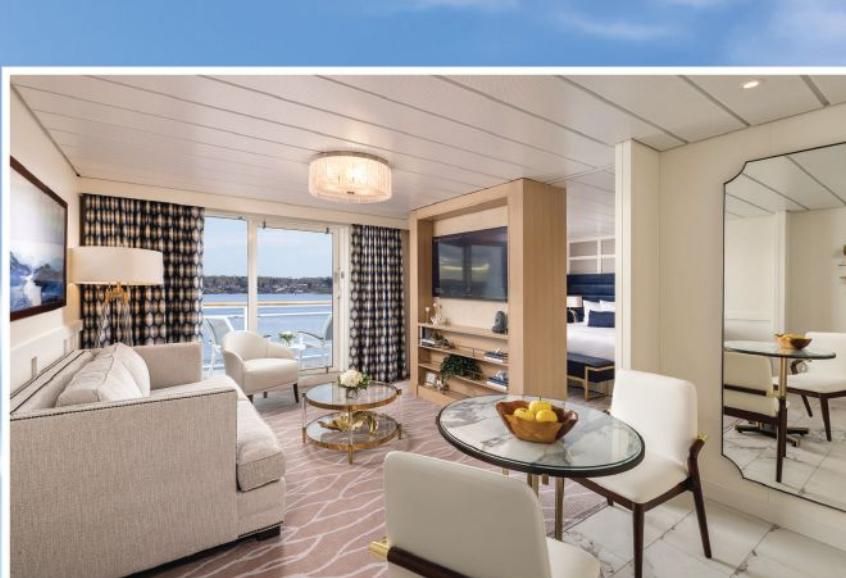
After weeks of flight conditioning and chelation therapy to remove lead from its blood, the eagle was ready to return home. Wildlife Center of Virginia President Meg Gammage-Tucker says the goal is to treat and rehabilitate animals to release them back into the wild. In the center's 43 years, they have treated more than 100,000 animals.

The eagle received ID number 25-3592 as the 3,592nd patient admitted to the wildlife center in 2025. Now, after a long and incredible journey of healing, this bald eagle is once again soaring over Smith Mountain Lake. ●



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1946-

A Bright Beginning

Celebrating the first decade of Cooperative Living

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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

The magazine's first decade (1946-1956) unfolded during the years just after World War II, a time when rural electrification was transforming life across Virginia. During its first decade, *Rural Virginia*, a broadsheet newspaper, had two editors. It was under W. P. McGuire's blue pencil and capable eye that the fledgling publication was guided through its infancy. In 1951, Alexander Hudgins assumed the role of editor and continued the mission with a fresh perspective.

The newspaper kept members informed on the rapidly expanding rural electrification program and celebrated the cooperative spirit that continues to define the magazine's pages eight decades later.

REACHING RURAL HOMES

The response to *Rural Virginia's* debut issue, which reached 22,000 homes and businesses at an annual subscription cost of 60 cents, was overwhelmingly positive. Readers praised the publication as informative, interesting and useful — providing a front-row seat to a rapidly changing world. "I sincerely hope that this publication will enjoy eminent success," wrote William N. Tuck, Virginia's then-governor, in a letter to the editor.

At the time, approximately 3 million American farms — of which more than 130,000 were in Virginia — still lacked electric service. When it came to schools, only four of the 100 counties in Virginia, both rural and urban, had electricity.

The impact of electrification in Virginia was so significant that *Rural Virginia* dedicated space within its pages to listing the names of residents who had received electricity in their homes through an electric cooperative. It was, as McGuire explained, to show the power of people joining together for a common cause to "do what none of them could have done alone."

In the magazine's early years, rifle fire hitting insulators was a frustrating cause of power outages that affected homes, farms and small businesses — a problem that, remarkably, persists in 2026. An article in *Rural Virginia* spelled out the consequences plainly: "When your electric current stops flowing, you know that your lights go off, or won't turn on; that your washing machine, your cream separator, your shop grill and grindstone are stopped; or — even more 'deadly' — your wife's iron won't warm up."

But there was more to this new publication than just matters related to rural electrification. It included articles on fashion and style, sewing and crochet patterns, cartoons, recipes (for everything from molded salads to biscuits promising to be "the envy of all your friends"), jokes, poems, letters to the editor, youth-centered content and

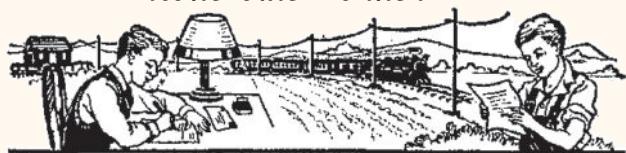


crossword puzzles.

The "Lonesome Corner" was one of the newspaper's most beloved features, connecting young people long before cellphones, text messages and email existed. To find pen pals, young readers submitted brief personal descriptions. Job aspirations reflected the time, with young women expressing interest in becoming housewives, nurses, secretaries or teachers. "Hobbies" painted a vivid picture of rural life, from picking cotton and feeding chickens to ironing and cooking.

In the late 40s, *Rural Virginia* was produced through a gritty process blending craftsmanship and machinery. Articles were typed on manual typewriters and then given to a Linotype operator, who would cast each line of text in hot lead. The metal "slugs" were arranged by hand by a typesetter into page forms along with plates for photographs and illustrations. Once in place, the weighty forms were carried to a rotary press, where massive rolls of newsprint spun through drums and ink met paper.

Lonesome Corner



MUCH ADO ABOUT A TYPO

In *Rural Virginia*'s second issue, McGuire noted an unfortunate typographical error. He wrote, "There are hundreds of thousands of words in one issue of *Rural Virginia*, and in these words millions of letters, and a typesetter dropped just one letter last month, and you never heard so much talk about anything in your life!"



The unfortunate typo was in the "Pa and Ma" column, where unnamed columnists "Pa" and "Ma" alternated writing about everyday life, often focusing on the frustrating or endearing intricacies of marriage.

In the debut column, "Ma" was complaining about "Pa" putting off fixing a hole in the screen door. "Ma" had written, "He won't think that hole is important until one of the flies it lets in gets into his apple pie." But the printer accidentally left out the "f" and made it read "lies."

It opened an opportunity for "Pa" to complain about "Ma" and her "lies" and how she thinks he has more time to fix things now that he has "new gadgets" with the introduction of electricity. "Ma thinks that all I have to do is push a button and all my work is done," he wrote. But he mentioned that she is "fixed up," too, with her new washing machine. He wrote, "She's saved enough time to sew the buttons on my best shirt and darn the holes in my socks, if only she would."



A SIGN OF THE TIMES

In 1947, *Rural Virginia* touted the many benefits of running water, a modern convenience still out of reach for many rural households. Articles explained how a reliable water supply could transform daily life — improving sanitation, easing household and farm tasks, and reducing the physical burden on families who had long relied on hand pumps, creek water or wells. J. C. Calhoun, secretary of the Virginia Farm Electrification Council, described one of the benefits: "[Running water] is a great labor saver. The average family spends about 30 eight-hour days each year carrying 20 to 30 tons of water for kitchen use only. Add to this 20 large buckets on wash-day plus the requirements for livestock and the magnitude of this job can be visualized."

In 1950, around the time *Rural Virginia* was reaching 100,000 readers, 15 of the 16 electric co-ops in the state were members of the statewide association. In an article that year, P. N. L. Bellinger, president of Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative and of Virginia's Rural Electric Administration Association, said, "The idea that in unison there is strength seems to have been the theme for the association's organization — or, perhaps, 'all for one and one for all.'"

Fast forward to 1956 when *Rural Virginia* had already established itself as an integral part of the electric cooperative community. In 1956, the average cost of power to residential customers, including farm and non-farm, dropped under 3 cents per kilowatt-hour. The average monthly electric bill increased from \$6.88 to \$7.21. In 1956, there were 1,026 systems in operation, serving 4,244,000 rural consumers.



By the late 1950s, telephone service was becoming available to rural Virginia households — which prompted *Rural Virginia* to feature articles on telephone etiquette and "telephone personality." In one such article, it read: "Take time to speak distinctly over the telephone. ... Your voice is *you* says the telephone company, and with color and feeling, it can be an asset."

Under the rural telephone program, administered by REA, Virginia's first family to get telephone service made headlines. Gene Dickinson, a Spotsylvania farmer, got the surprise of his life when the first phone call he received on the new line came from President Harry S. Truman. *Rural Virginia* printed a transcript of the exchange in its August 1950 issue, highlighting the national attention given to REA's work to expand rural communications. To Dickinson, Truman said, "Your farm is only the first of hundreds of thousands of farms that will get telephone service through the REA program, which has already helped so many farmers get electricity."

At the end of *Rural Virginia's* first decade, it was one of 26 rural electrification statewide newspapers in the U.S. and had become a trusted source of news and storytelling, laying the foundation for the publication as it evolved in the decades to come. ●



Baby-boom generation (1946-1964); 78 million babies were born.



Jackie Robinson, in 1947, broke color barrier in major league baseball.



The 1950s were the golden age of television; 4.4 million TVs were in U.S. homes.



Willie Wiredhand, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association mascot, was created in 1950.

Agricultural Architecture

Repurposed storage structures turned into livable spaces

by Christina Amano Dolan, Virginia Farm Bureau

From a distance, the rustic exterior of Ryan Kearney's circular, cantilever home in Culpeper, Va., vanishes into the agricultural landscape — appearing as one of three silos nestled in the family's winery, brewery and distillery. "We wanted to add something unique to the property," Kearney explains.

While converting a new silo into a multilevel family home came with inevitable challenges, Kearney succeeded in crafting a charming conversation starter.

A similar concept is gaining traction in the world of sustainable architecture, with metallic giants inspiring innovation. From chic commercial spaces to outdoor gazebos, ambitious designers and innovative farmers are breathing new life into old grain bins — reimagining their form and function in quirky, unexpected and cost-effective ways.

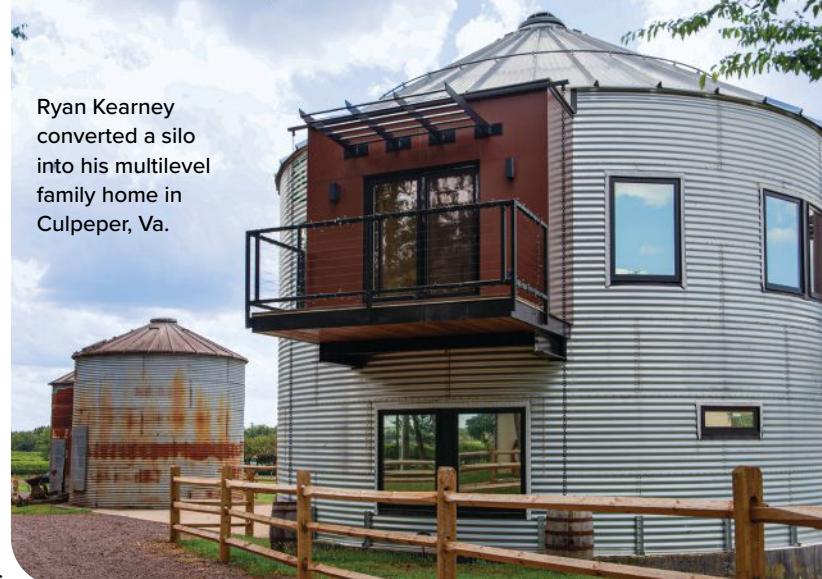
Longtime Virginia Farm Bureau sales agent Mike Barnette fell down the Pinterest "rabbit hole" in 2021 and stumbled upon an idea. Hoping to build a wooden outdoor oasis, he realized that repurposing an old grain bin was a simpler, more budget-friendly solution.

With a slew of online inspiration, he bought a 1959 grain bin from a local producer, picked up jacks and tips from another producer, called up some friends and began building

Mary and Mike Barnette's backyard "binzebo" is their family's "happy place."



Ryan Kearney converted a silo into his multilevel family home in Culpeper, Va.



his backyard "binzebo" — combination grain bin and gazebo.

"The four of us took it down on a Saturday and put it back up on Sunday, and we've just been building on it ever since," he says proudly.

While the 1,000-bushel corn crib didn't have much agricultural use anymore, the bin came in great condition for a low-maintenance outdoor structure — weathering the elements for decades by design, with the exception of some dust and rust.

"This grain bin will last as long as I want it to," Barnette notes.

Although the project presented some unique challenges, it was easier than expected. The crew numbered each part before disassembling the grain bin — a critical step, Barnette emphasizes.

With a team of enthusiastic experts by his side, the old grain bin gradually returned to life. Barnette's neighbor, an engineer, helped navigate the lightly warped, curved structure to incorporate a sliding barn door and custom cedar and red oak bar top.

"The bar took two or three practices until we got our jig right to cut the angles, because the building didn't end up being exactly round," he recalls.

The binzebo evolved to include a concrete slope, brick pavers, cable TV and a picturesque pergola for a shaded seating area — creating an enchanting atmosphere with trailing vines and draping wisteria blooms in the springtime.

Just like the recycled structure, everything finds a home in the binzebo. At every turn, delightful knickknacks, silly signs and quirky collectables harmoniously decorate the Barnettes' "Tin Can," with many items donated by visitors over the years.

Barnette encourages those interested in tackling a similar grain bin project to take it slow, have patience, lean on the professionals and savor the journey.

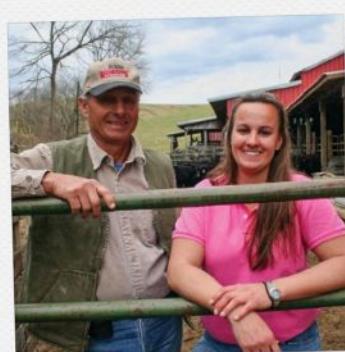
As he retires from a 30-year Farm Bureau career, Barnette looks forward to more quality time around the "Tin Can" with his six children and six grandchildren, tackling binzebo additions and going on long-awaited cross-country adventures with his wife, Mary. ●

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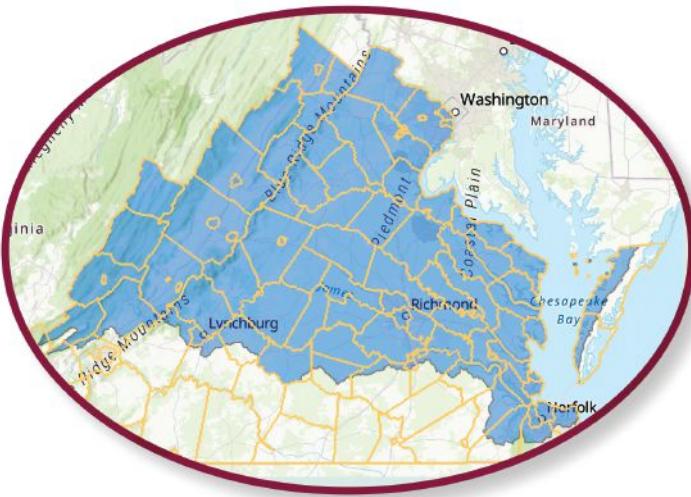
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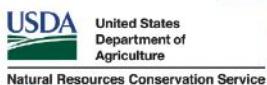
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Walking in a Winter Wonderland

What to know and where to go for wintertime hiking

by Amanda S. Creasey, Outdoors Writer

With the cheer and festivity of the holiday season behind us, it's easy to fall into the winter blahs. Cold weather. Cloudy skies. Shorter daylight hours. Many people find themselves pining away for the longer days and milder temperatures of spring. It can be tempting to tuck ourselves away inside our cozy homes and wait for spring to find us. And many of us will do just that, hunkering down and waiting for warmer weather to beckon us from our lairs into the fresh air and sunshine once again. Contrary to popular belief, though, winter is an excellent time for outdoor adventuring.

BENEFITS OF WINTERTIME HIKING: WHY HIKE IN THE WINTER?

Although people often think of winter as a time to stay indoors and stay warm, the season is an optimal time to get outside. "Colder temperatures usually mean a more comfortable hiking experience. Without the humidity and hot temperatures, there's less sweating," says Sarah King, bay experience educator with Virginia State Parks.

Lori Lawson, communications director for Girls Who Hike Virginia, says, "We often get asked if we hike in the winter. We would rather put on

more layers and trek out when it's cold. You can only shed so many layers in summer. We appreciate nice, crisp winter air."

Dan Hudson has served as the trail planner for Maryland State Parks since 2013. He agrees that winter hiking can prove more comfortable than warm-weather excursions. "We get those hot, hazy, overcast days in summer, but in winter we have bluebird skies and crisp air, and everything seems more in focus."

It's not all about being comfortable, though. Winter weather is good for your health. "If you're motivated to hike for physical activity, you actually burn more calories in colder weather," King says. More calories are burned because your body works harder to stay warm. In response to lower temperatures, thermogenesis increases — causing your metabolism to work harder as muscles contract, blood flow rises and the body produces heat to prevent heat loss. This elevated caloric demand results in greater caloric expenditure.

In addition to weather conditions conducive to hiking and physical fitness, winter offers singular seasonal views. Despite being a lifelong Marylander

PHOTO COURTESY/TIMOTHY HAMILTON



and avid trail user, Hudson says hiking in the winter allows him to discover new things and see a park with new eyes. "Everything seems new in winter," he says. "During the summer months, some of our trails seem like a green tunnel, but once the leaves come down, I'm continually surprised."

Lawson echoes this experience. "In Virginia, we have so many popular hikes in Shenandoah that lead up to a summit, but a lot of the hikes are through the woods, and people say, 'Oh, it was just a walk in the woods and I couldn't really see anything.' Winter solves that problem."

Winter solves a lot of other problems, too. The possibility of crowded trails and parking areas, bugs, snakes, poison ivy and bears abounds during the warmer months but is far less likely when the weather is colder. According to King, there will be virtually no bugs to contend with, and because there are also fewer people, you get a more peaceful experience in nature.

Lawson hikes to feel present in nature. "In winter, you get a sense of stillness in the air. You hear every branch break. You're aware of all the animals around you," she says.

And those shorter days? Even those can be a benefit for wintertime hiking. In summer, sunset is later, so a sunset hike could mean a late night. "In the winter, you can do a sunset hike much earlier. You can also do a sunrise hike, but wake up later because the sun rises later," she says.

SAFETY FIRST: HOW TO DRESS AND WHAT TO PACK

Many of the familiar hiking safety guidelines become even more critical in winter when temperatures are colder, winter weather poses particular hazards and darkness falls earlier. King and Lawson remind hikers to review the ten essentials: navigation, sun protection, insulation, illumination, first aid, fire starter, repair kit and tools, extra food,



extra water and emergency shelter.

With today's technology, it's easy to rely on phones for navigation; however, in many hiking areas, service is limited and phone batteries may not last, especially if service is poor or temperatures are low. Lawson and King both recommend Avenza, a free app that lets users download maps of Virginia State Parks ahead of time, making them accessible even if service is spotty or nonexistent.

"Use your phone to snap a picture of the map at the trailhead sign before you start your adventure," Hudson advises, "but remember, technology can let you down. If there's a hard copy map available, take the map." Lawson also recommends bringing a battery pack along.

In addition, planning a route, hiking with a buddy and telling loved ones where you plan to hike, when you plan to leave and when you plan to return are solid safety practices. This planning all becomes particularly important in winter when fewer fellow hikers are on the trails and the sun sets earlier.

While sun protection, such as sunscreen and sunglasses, may seem more relevant to summer hiking, the light reflects off the snow, making it just as applicable to winter hiking.

Insulation is crucial for winter hiking. Layering is key. "Be bold and start cold," King advises. "You can add layers as needed. You don't want to sweat too much at the beginning, because the sweat will sit next to your skin and you'll be cold the whole time." However, if the idea of starting off cold deters you from starting at all, Lawson says it's okay to wear more layers when you start because you can always take them off. "Just be sure to have dry layers with you



in case you get wet," Lawson says. She recommends merino wool and moisture-wicking synthetic materials. King concurs, recommending wool, synthetics or silk — reminding hikers of the popular adage "cotton kills."

While staying warm is a primary concern in the winter, staying hydrated is easier to forget. Heat often cues thirst, but in the cold, hikers are less likely to feel thirsty. For this reason, Lawson advises, "Add fun to your beverage choice in the winter — warm bone broth, hot cocoa, coffee." King recommends adding electrolyte powders to water to give it some extra flavor.

Aside from cold and dehydration, slippery trail conditions also pose a danger to winter hikers. "The bane of my winter recreating," Hudson says, "is the freeze-thaw cycle. It seems like the perfect time for a hike and then you get to the trail and it's a sloppy, muddy or icy mess." For this reason, Hudson recommends hiking poles. He says, "They raise comfort levels in winter months when footing is a little less sure." Traction devices, such as micro spikes, can also help hikers keep their footing when trail conditions become slick.

(continued on page 12)



PHOTO COURTESY LORI LAWSON

ESSENTIALS FOR HIKING

- NAVIGATION
- SUN PROTECTION
- INSULATION
- ILLUMINATION
- FIRST AID
- FIRE STARTER
- REPAIR KIT AND TOOLS
- EXTRA FOOD AND WATER
- EMERGENCY SHELTER

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

(continued from page 11)



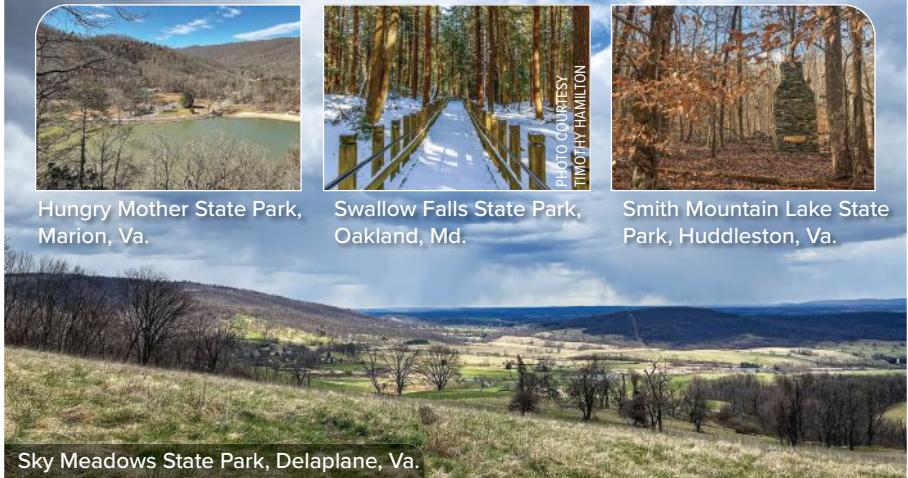
Hudson also recommends a good set of gloves to help keep your hands out of your pockets. "If you lose your footing, you can break your fall more easily and steady yourself," he explains.

Other must-haves include a warm hat, a waterproof outer layer and appropriate footwear. Hikers who want to learn more about winter hiking can look into the Virginia State Parks' Let's Go Adventures Program. This outdoor recreation series is free and open to the public and takes place at various state parks. "In the wintertime, we tailor it to winter hiking," King says. The program schedule — which includes multiple sessions focused on hiking, camping, backpacking, kayaking, archery, fly fishing and orienteering — is available at dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/lets-go-adventures.

WINTERTIME WANDERING: WHERE TO GO

In Maryland, Hudson heads west, where he can dependably find some winter "to go play in" and get the chance to break first tracks on a snowy trail. He recalls a stretch of weeks several years ago in Garrett County by Deep Creek Lake when it seemed to snow or precipitate a little bit every day. He says, "The snow, the ice and the sleet just kept building up until it was this winter wonderland. The freezing fog put a thin layer of ice on the trees along all the ridges, and it was as close to walking through a snow globe as I've ever experienced. You just looked around out in the woods and laughed; it was so pretty."

In Virginia, King recommends heading east. "I love being on the coast near the beach in wintertime," she says. Hikers who visit First Landing State Park and explore Bald Cypress Trail



Hungry Mother State Park, Marion, Va.

Swallow Falls State Park, Oakland, Md.

Smith Mountain Lake State Park, Huddleston, Va.

PHOTO COURTESY
TIMOTHY HAMILTON

Sky Meadows State Park, Delaplane, Va.

are likely to experience a phenomenon singular to winter: rainbow water. The prismatic effect is caused by decomposing bald cypress leaves that fall into the water. "The best time to see it is when it hasn't rained in a while. It creates a really breathtaking rainbow effect. You'll know it when you see it. You can go any other time of year and you're not going to see it. It's only in winter."

The western part of Virginia has its wintertime charm for King too. "Douthat State Park is fabulous in winter," she says, recommending hikers visit Tuscarora Overlook, which can be reached via Blue Suck Falls Trail. "It's a challenging hike that ends at this sweet little waterfall, and the nice thing about doing it in winter is you won't sweat through your clothes."

"Everyone loves Shenandoah for hiking," Lawson says, "but you need Skyline Drive to access it, and that often closes in winter due to dangerous driving conditions resulting from ice or snow." When this happens, Lawson recommends Shenandoah River State Park, Sky Meadows State Park and Mary's Rock. In Shenandoah River State Park, she says, winter hiking offers clearer views of the river than in the summer months. "I've done Sky Meadows in the snow. It was gorgeous."

As for Mary's Rock, "it still feels like Shenandoah because it is," but the lower panorama parking area is accessible without Skyline Drive. "It's gorgeous. It's steep. You get a summit with great views when the trees don't have a lot of leaves." Lawson recalls a particular

hike on Mary's Rock with her husband.

"We got to the summit and the wind was howling and little flecks of snow were flying. The wind was blowing the snow around and it looked like we were in a snow globe," she says.

The winter months don't have to be a slog to spring. Hit the trails for an invigorating walk in the woods and enjoy the cool air, winter sunshine and maybe even some snow. "Even though you want to hibernate and cozy up," King says, "hiking is reenergizing and gets you out of that winter slump." Still tempted to hibernate all winter? Consider Lawson's advice: "Going out in the winter makes you appreciate being cozy so much more. You feel accomplished because you got out there and did the thing. You earned your couch time." ●



For more information about winter hiking nearest you, contact the parks mentioned in this article.

- Deep Creek Lake State Park
301-387-5563
- First Landing State Park
757-412-2300
- Douthat State Park
540-862-8100
- Shenandoah River State Park
540-622-6840
- Sky Meadows State Park
540-592-3556
- Mary's Rock
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Submitted by Vicky Blosser

Submitted by Rob Pellicot

Submitted by Daniel Bertorelli

DISCOVER HOPEWELL

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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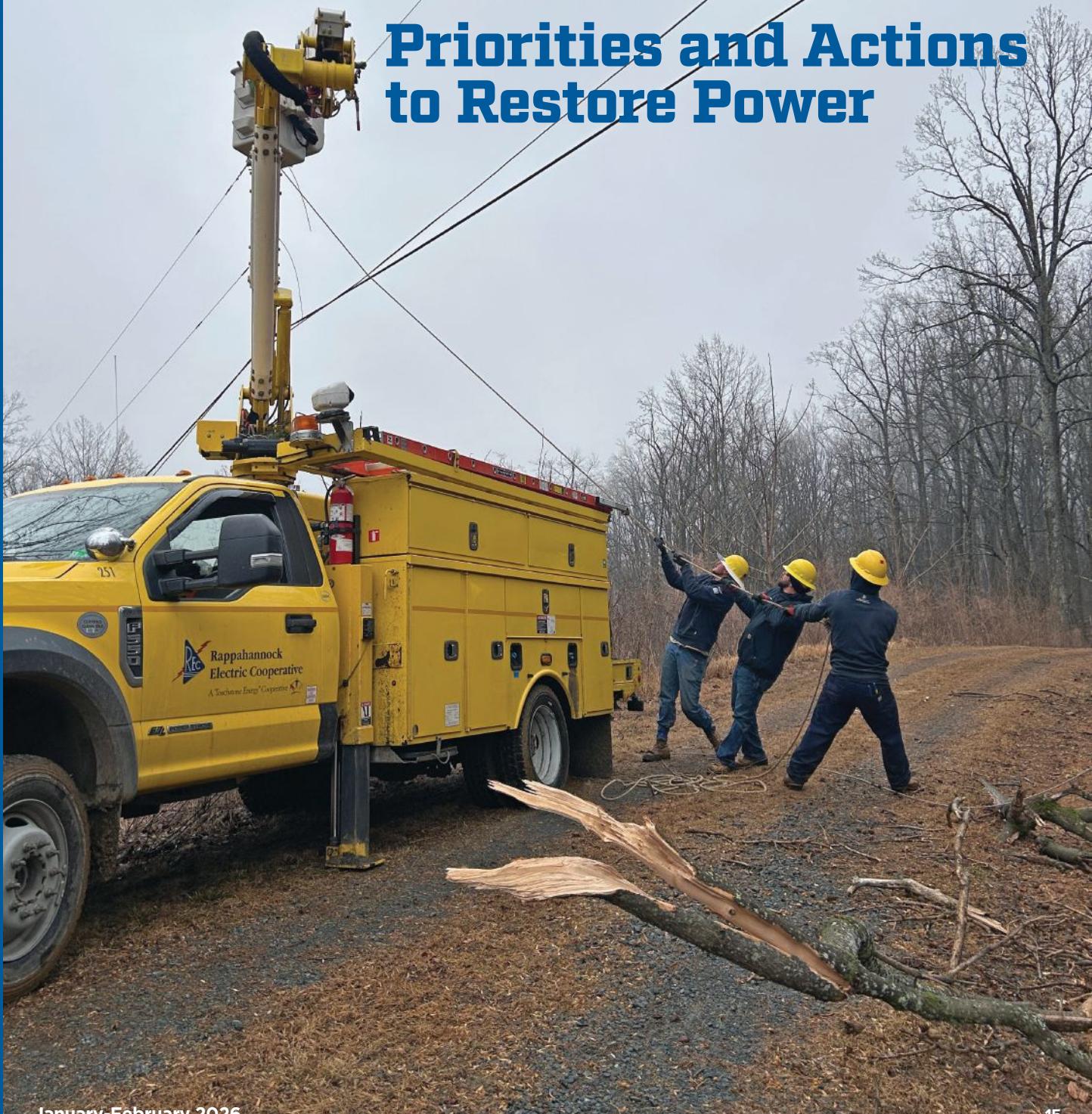
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RAPPAHANNOCK
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

After the Storm

Priorities and Actions to Restore Power





After the Storm — REC's Outage Restoration Process



Drone inspections detect needed repairs.

No matter the season, REC is always ready to restore power safely and quickly. It's a key part of our commitment to reliability.

In outage events, safety comes first. "Protecting crews, members and the public is the top priority," says Kevin Pories, senior director of operations & construction for the Culpeper region. This starts with de-energizing lines before repairs, then using proper protective equipment and following strict protocols.

The big question everyone has when they lose power is "for how long"? With our outage text-messaging service, members can get texts on:

- The cause of an outage, when available.
- The expected time we'll restore power.
- When we've dispatched a crew or they're on site.

Getting the Power Back On

In a large-scale outage, REC teams across the affected area evaluate the extent and type of damage, like broken poles, transformers, wires and other infrastructure.

"Restoration can take time depending on damage severity," Pories says. "Based on the assessment, REC prioritizes repairs that restore power to the largest number of members first, then moves to smaller outages and individual service lines."

REC field crews, drones and sensors identify the locations of the damage. Then we prioritize restoring power to:

- Hospitals
- Emergency services
- Water treatment plants



Line crews put in long hours fixing damage to ensure safe and reliable power.

- Schools
- Circuits that serve the largest number of members

Another key part of our effort is communication between operations, dispatch and field crews. REC will reroute power through alternate sources when they are available to restore power to members.

Here are the steps our crews follow after a storm outage:

Step 1

Crews inspect distribution substations. Our substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of REC members, receive high-voltage power from transmission lines and then distribute it to lower-voltage main distribution lines. (See How the Power Grid Works infographic on page 20.)

When we have a major outage, REC substation technicians inspect the substations to learn if the problem is from transmission lines feeding into the substation, within the substation or further down the line.

Step 2

If they can't isolate the problem at a substation, the crews first check the main distribution lines. These lines carry power to large groups of members in the REC service territory. Crews work on outage repairs, moving out from the substation to your home or business.

Step 3

Crews check the tap lines. Sometimes damage occurs on these service lines between the nearest transformer and homes, businesses or schools. REC line



The operations team is vital to coordinating repair efforts.

crews then correct the trouble in areas that serve the greatest numbers of members and work until all power is restored.

Living and Working Through the Outage

When a major outage occurs, REC calls all hands to respond, and employees often work 16-hour shifts during major storm events. "They know how important it is to have power restored because they're living it, too. It's very tough on them because they can't take care of tasks at home," says Darrell Potter, senior director of operations & construction for the Blue Ridge region.

Be Safe During a Power Outage

If you lose power at your house or in your neighborhood, please:

- Stay clear of downed power lines. Contact with these lines could be life threatening.
- Report the outage as soon as possible.
- Tell REC if you see damage. This could be a fallen tree or broken pole.

Visit myrec.coop/storm-safety to learn more about staying safe in storms.

Understanding Today's Energy Costs

By John Hewa, President & CEO, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative



At Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), we know how important affordable energy is to your household budget, and that's why we're working hard

every day to keep costs down.

I want to share with you what's driving today's energy costs and, more importantly, what your Cooperative is doing to protect you from additional financial strain.

How REC Is Keeping Your Costs Down

It's important to understand that about 65% of a member's power bill reflects the pass through of wholesale power costs; REC works diligently to control the remaining 35% of your bill. As a not-for-profit, member-owned Cooperative, our members' best interests are top of mind for every dollar we spend. Here are just a few ways REC is working to safeguard affordability:

- **Strengthening efficiency across the Cooperative**

We continually evaluate operations to reduce costs, streamline processes and ensure we are using member dollars wisely.

- **Investing in grid modernization the right way**

New meter technology, installing robust fiber connectivity, improved switching and other automation tools all help reduce outage times and lower our long-term operational costs.

- **Pursuing smart energy solutions**

REC is implementing new technologies that help us monitor the grid in real

time, integrate distributed energy resources (like solar and battery storage) and better manage peak demand — our biggest driver of wholesale power costs.

- **Pursuing grant dollars**

REC looks for federal and state grant opportunities to provide funds for grid improvements and new technologies that help us lower costs. For example, REC has applied for a grant to install two 4-megawatt battery storage systems that would enable REC to significantly reduce energy demand at peak hours when power costs the most.

Why Energy Costs Are Increasing

Several factors are influencing the price of electricity nationwide, and particularly here in Virginia. Among the most significant:

- **Higher wholesale power costs**

The cost of generating and transmitting electricity has risen sharply, driven by fuel prices, supply constraints and increased demand on the grid, especially during extreme temperatures. This January, your bill will show an increase tied to higher transmission costs. These rising charges reflect the greater costs of wholesale power and are passed directly through to members without markup.

- **The need for a more resilient grid**

Aging infrastructure across the nation requires investment to ensure reliability. Modernization is essential to strengthen the grid, counter cybersecurity threats and address the stress of more volatile weather.

- **Rapid growth in electricity demand**

Electric vehicles, data centers and new businesses are bringing important

economic opportunities to Virginia, but they also increase the demand for electricity. Meeting this growing demand for electricity requires investments in generation, transmission and distribution.

Tools to Help Manage Your Bill

These challenges are real. Yet REC remains committed to keeping energy as affordable as possible while maintaining the reliability you depend on. While many cost drivers happen upstream, REC offers tools and programs to help members manage their energy use:

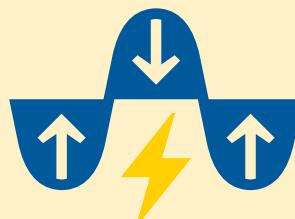
- **MyREC SmartHub** to track use by the hour.
- **High-use alerts** to let you know of anything out of the ordinary that could be causing higher than normal energy use (such as a malfunctioning HVAC system).
- **Budget billing** for predictable monthly payments.
- **Summer Savings Plan** to help manage future costs of electricity, and earn rebates.
- **Energy-efficiency programs** to help reduce use and improve home performance.

Rising costs are challenging, and I want you to know that REC is working every day to deliver safe, **reliable** and **affordable** electricity. We understand the impact every price increase has on your household, and we take that responsibility seriously.

Thank you for placing your trust in us. We will continue to communicate openly, act responsibly and put our members first today, and every day.



37,500+
members participated in 7 REC
demand response programs



\$3.32 million
avoided in wholesale power cost
increases by reducing peak demand



\$400,000
in project costs reduced
by grant funding

Girl Power Camp Brings Co-op Careers to Life for Teens



Jaylin Margerum is a high school senior who plans to make trades a career. Girl Power Camp practically sold her on it.

Margerum was one of 49 young women who spent Oct. 30 at the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives' fifth annual Girl Power™ Camp in Palmyra, Va. Girl Power broadens job horizons for teen girls who may not have considered making a career out of working for an energy cooperative.

"It's definitely given me more of a path of what I want to do," Margerum said. "It's given me a lot more options to explore. I really love that they do this because it creates a lot of opportunities and opens a lot of doors for people who want to go into the electrical field."

Margerum is from Fluvanna, one of 13 counties across Virginia represented at the camp.

The Next Gen

For REC and other co-ops, it was a chance to inspire the next generation of workers. And open their eyes to a great career at an electric co-op.

Girl Power participants learned key industry skills, such as:

- Job safety.
- Climbing a utility pole.
- Operating a bucket truck.

The girls met with experts in human resources and got tips on writing resumes and coaching for interviews. Advisors from community colleges answered their questions about career paths and the required classes.

Many of the girls may choose a different career path. But they learned things about the power industry and co-ops that will be valuable wherever their career takes them.

REC Communications & Public Relations Generalist Keli Hughes said volunteering at Girl Power for the first time was truly inspiring.

"I watched these girls take on tasks usually done by men with curiosity, confidence and fearlessness," she said. "It reminded me that anything a man can do, a woman can do and oftentimes do better. I hope more girls get the chance to experience this event, especially those still discovering their path after high school."

'Do What You Love'

Alyssa Flevarakis, from Greene County, said her first career choice revolves around photography. But after Girl Power, she can see working at a cooperative. Most importantly, she left inspired.

"Do what you love," she said. "Don't be too scared to do what you want just because it's a traditionally male industry, or this



doesn't fit with me. If you like it, that's all that matters."

Margerum is now a Girl Power proponent. "I would definitely suggest to anyone to come to this event," she said. "It's great for people that have no idea about line crew work or electrical careers in general."



Meet the CARE Charity Board

Anne Mitchell

Anne Mitchell prefers the slow pace, peace of nature and quality of life of the rural “Rivah Country” of King and Queen County.

It’s where the languid Rappahannock River eases through the place she’s called home the last 50 years. The lifestyle is slow, the garden beckons, the twin grandsons are nearby. But there’s no slowing Mitchell down in the core of her being: she helps.

She spent her career helping people as a social worker. Now she serves on the board of directors for the Community Awareness of Rappahannock Electric Charity (CARE). Mitchell represents Region 9, the counties of Essex, King and Queen, and King William.

Each month, thousands of REC members voluntarily give to The Power of Change (TPOC), a member-supported initiative that supports local nonprofits. Gifts can be a set monthly amount, a one-time donation or members can round up their bill to the next whole dollar.

Through TPOC, more than 36,000 REC members contribute directly to community projects by rounding up their electric bill each month, averaging just 51 cents. Together, these contributions make a powerful difference for those in need.

Mitchell is a native of Chatham, Va., moving to the river region in 1975 after working for several years in Richmond. She enjoys tending to her plants and sitting outside to catch a golden hour sunrise or sunset and wildlife. She also likes that she hears nature instead of the sounds of the city — crickets over cars, songbirds over sirens.

It's Easy to Help

Working for the CARE Board aligns with Mitchell’s career in social services, in which she retired as director for King William County Department of Social Services. Mitchell said it’s also a natural fit to enroll in the Power of Change.

“Everybody should take part in helping individuals who need help and rounding up is not a big deal,” she said. “I think it’s important to help other people if you are able to. It’s satisfying and a good thing to do.”

It’s easy to take part in the Power of Change, Mitchell said.

“It’s not like you’re writing a check at the end of the year for a contribution,” she said. “With my contribution, I am helping somebody do something worthwhile. It’s so easy just to check the box and round your bill up. If everyone did it, there would be more money to give out.”



A small gift with lots of juice: The Power of Change

Can you give **51 cents** a month?

That's the average amount that more than **36,000** Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) members give each month by rounding up their electric bill to the next whole dollar.



And that's all it takes to help people in your community. Join us in helping support food insecurity, housing and shelter assistance, health and education programs, and other needs in our communities.

Since 2005, REC has awarded **\$1.7 million** to our communities.



Learn more and enroll today at thepowerofchange.org.

The CARE Charity Board

On the CARE Charity Board, Mitchell reviews applications and helps make decisions on awards. Many people need help but don’t ask for it.

“Making the community aware of these programs is important so we can receive applications from people with a wide range of needs.”

Other nonprofits in the communities do the same thing, but they are not always able to help, she explained..

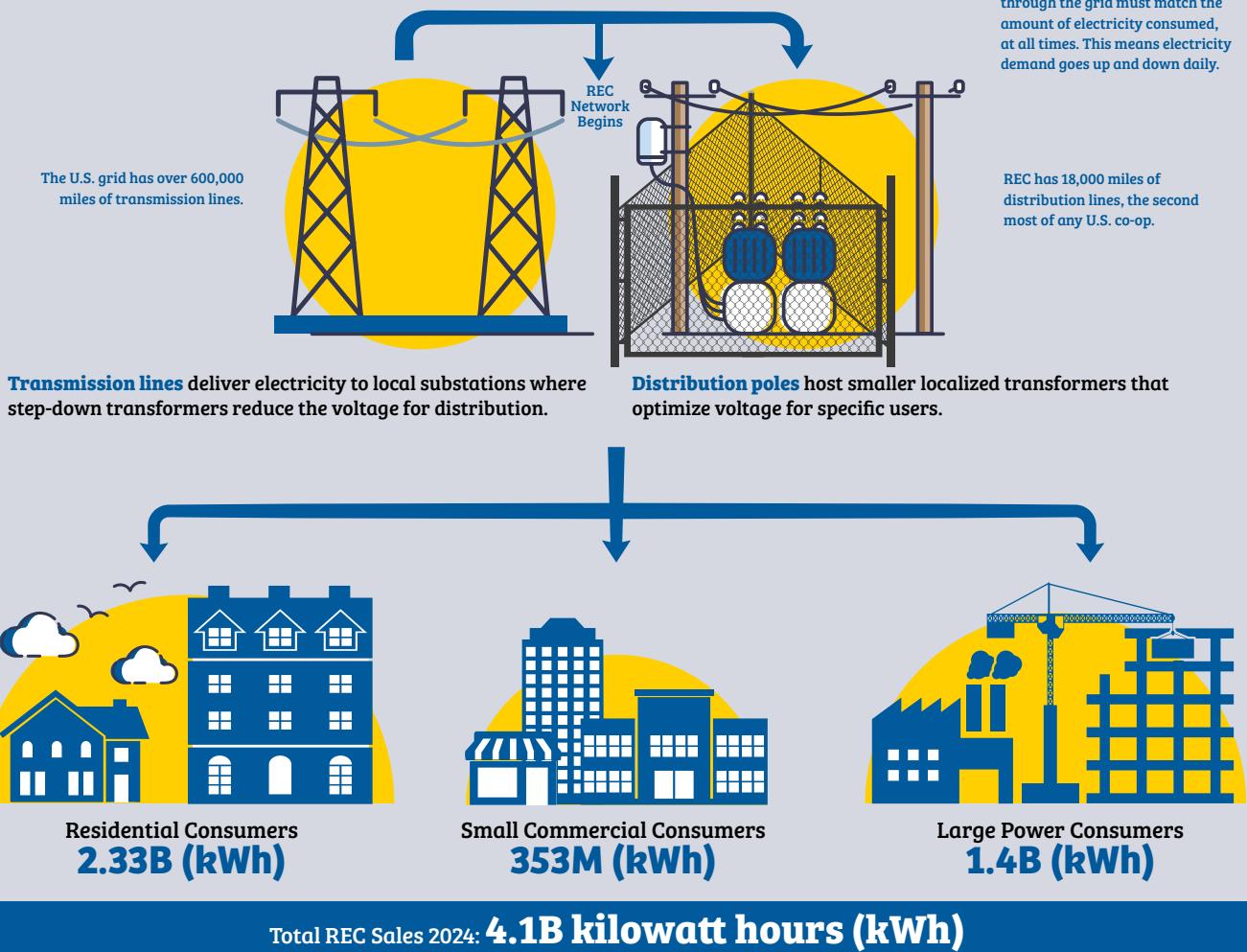
“This is another opportunity if they get turned down by that board, they can apply here (TPOC),” Mitchell said.

Mitchell is determined to make a difference in the lives of people around her.

“I think that there are a lot of people who have needs that are not seen,” she said. “It’s important that we have something in place to help folks who are in need.”

How the Power Grid Works

The U.S. power grid is made up of three main elements: generation, transmission and distribution.
REC is a distribution cooperative.



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RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Tips to Prepare for a Winter Storm

Things we like in winter: snow, sledding, building a snowman, drinking hot chocolate and snuggling up to a warm fire. Things we don't like: blizzards, ice, sleet and sub-freezing temperatures when they lead to power outages. We're in the depths of the winter, when what we love about the season can also be what we hate. Are you prepared for an outage — especially one that could last for days?

Storm Prep List

- Have **flashlights** and **fresh batteries** in your storm prep kit.
- Have a good supply of **bottled water**. Typically for an outage, you need one gallon per person per day for drinking. Also, for homes with well water, you won't have a supply of water because your well won't have power. Fill your bathtub and use the water for cleaning, to flush the toilets, etc.
- Have **nonperishable foods** that you don't have to heat up. Have a hand-operated can opener for canned goods.
- Have **extra blankets** or bedding.
- Have a **first-aid kit** with extra medications you may need.
- Have a variety of **hand tools** — no power tools.
- Have **cash**. You will not likely be able to use a credit or debit card during a power outage.

Tips for Children, Elderly Relatives

If you have elderly relatives, make sure you have items they need. If you have young children or babies at home, have extra formula, diapers or any supplies you'll need.

Before a storm, charge devices, such as mobile phones, so they have a full charge. If you have a landline phone, remember that cordless phones still require electricity, so add a traditional cored phone to your prep kit.

For a storm prep checklist you can print, and more information on prepping for an outage, visit myrec.coop/stormprep.

Keeping Cozy for Less

With strategic adjustments and smart habits, you can maintain a cozy home while managing your energy use and costs.



The Thermostat

Everyone's comfort level is different, but we recommend setting your thermostat at 68 degrees to strike a balance between comfort and efficiency, and lowering the temperature at night. If you have a heat pump, adjust your thermostat one degree at a time to avoid costly auxiliary heat.



Maintenance is Key

Your heating system works hard all winter. Taking care of it will pay off in efficiency and longevity.

You should clean or change air filters every one to three months. A dirty air filter forces your system to work harder.



Seal Air Leaks

Sealing air leaks can help save 10-20% on your heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around:

- Windows
- Doors
- Electrical Wiring
- Plumbing



Use Technology — and the Sun

Let the sun help heat your home. Open blinds and curtains on south-facing windows on sunny days.

Check out monitoring and use tools in the MyREC SmartHub app. Get energy use insights to make strategic adjustments that add up to significant savings over the winter months.

Consider a thermostat that lets you program settings when you're away from home and overnight.

Have a professional inspect your heating system annually. A trained technician can identify potential problems before they become expensive emergencies.

Another tip is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs.

For more tips on saving energy and lowering your bills, visit myrec.coop/save.



Apply Now for Community Scholarships for Students and Youth Tour

Scholarships

Any student whose parent or guardian is a member-owner of REC can apply for the Co-op's annual scholarships. REC awards \$20,000 in scholarships to 17 students who are enrolling in, or are already enrolled in, a higher educational institution or trade school.

Two scholarships for \$2,500 and 15 for \$1,000 will be awarded.

Those eligible to apply include:

- High school seniors who plan to attend a college, university or trade school.
- Anyone attending or seeking to attend a career or technical school.
- Students currently enrolled in a college or university.

Scholarship Questions

community@myrec.coop
540-891-5912



myrec.coop/scholarships

Apply by: Feb. 27, 2026

Youth Tour

The application period for the 2026 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., is open until Jan. 31, 2026. Each year, REC selects students from its service territory to be part of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Participants will stand where our nation's great leaders have stood, see history up close, and make lifelong connections and friendships.

In 2026, 1,500 students and 250 chaperones from across the U.S. will attend.

For questions

email community@myrec.coop.



myrec.coop/youthtour

Apply by: Jan. 31, 2026

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

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



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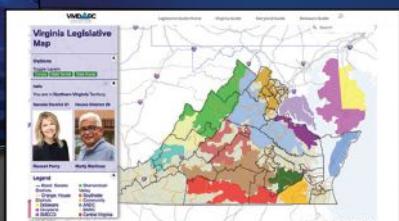


LEGISLATIVE GUIDE | 2026

The comprehensive guide to information on lawmakers, representatives and governing officials involved in our cooperative communities.

leg.vmdaec.com

- Searchable database of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware legislators.
- Detailed listing of each legislator, including contact information.
- Interactive map showing senate and house districts, and co-op territories.



Unraveling the Wires



Virginia is the largest energy importer in the U.S.

Examining the complex issues impacting reliable and affordable power

by Jeff Caldwell, Staff Writer

Electrons are not political. They are not tied to any nationality, agenda or viewpoint. They are not concerned with where they come from or how they are made. All electrons care about is flowing from where they are generated to where they are needed.

Unfortunately, the business of ensuring that we can flip a switch and the lights will come on involves a much more complex conglomeration of policy, economic and technological considerations. While electrons do not have to think about these things, as a member-owner of an electric cooperative, you need to be aware of them.

Some of these issues date back to the early 20th century when electrifying rural communities necessitated a cooperative approach. Private utility companies focused on powering cities and industrial centers because that was the profitable market for their service. Electric cooperatives stood up to ensure rural America had the same access to electric lights and appliances — and associated economic development opportunities.

Other issues are newer, such as the explosive growth of data centers, development of emerging technologies and concerns about our environment.

The electric grid that carries electricity from power plants to homes is a web of engineering, political, business and regulatory interests requiring local, state and national cooperation. Balancing traditional forms of power generation, such as natural gas and hydropower, with emerging technologies like small modular nuclear reactors and improved storage batteries (fed by wind and solar projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels) adds complexity.

Rising demand to power our increasingly plugged-in lifestyle and global web-based economy, combined with constraints on power generation and transmission, are placing stress on our power grid and increasing costs for all electric consumers.

One thing is for certain — the simple movement of electrons from where they are generated to where they are

needed includes a complex tangle of challenges, issues and uncertainty about future demand and technology.

In upcoming issues of *Cooperative Living*, we will unwind some of these topics facing the electric industry and explain how these issues impact you — electric cooperative member-owners.

We will look at challenges to reliability — what we are doing to ensure that you can count on the lights always coming on when you flip the switch, and the threats to that standard.

We will explore why power bills have increased with the heightened demand for electricity and higher costs to move electrons from where they are generated to where they are needed.

With Virginia maintaining its standing as the largest energy importer in the country and the crossroads of the worldwide internet and AI infrastructure, with roughly 70% of internet traffic passing through Virginia data centers, we will look at how our regional power needs have national and international implications.

More than 2 million people who live in homes and work on farms and in businesses in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware are served by electric cooperatives. We will explain how your electric co-op is working to keep electricity affordable and reliable for its member-owners.

Some may wonder why these articles are in a magazine that focuses on celebrating rural living. *Cooperative Living* has always connected our readers to their cooperatives. As electric cooperative member-owners, you are part of the critical business decisions your cooperative will have to make to address these challenges.

We plan to provide you with important information that can help you better understand the issues facing the electric industry. We will provide insights into the decision-making process your electric cooperative is using to grapple with our current and future energy needs. We will also deliver the knowledge you need to discuss these issues in your community and with the board members and elected officials who represent you when these policy decisions are made. ●

A Dockside Delight

Relaxed, Southern-style fare with a coastal flair

by Peggy Hyland, Contributing Columnist

A reader recommendation sent me to Bridgewater Bar & Grill in Clarksville, Va., a casual, family-owned eatery along Buggs Island Lake. If driving through the picturesque countryside does not float your boat, you can arrive by actual boat. The local dock is just a few feet away from the restaurant.

The friendly service impressed us from the moment we arrived. The brisk lunch crowd was a promising sign that we were in for a delicious meal. Our server was incredibly knowledgeable and enthusiastically endorsed our choices.

My companion opted for the chili, one of the restaurant's most popular items from its rotating selection of daily specials. It was meaty, with a generous amount of sharp cheddar. The spices were the perfect blend of deep warmth without being too hot.

I chose the crab and corn chowder. It was chunky, creamy and rich. The potatoes, green onions and corn with cracked black pepper perfectly rounded out the chowder without overpowering the heavenly crab.

With all the incredible options on the menu, we were not starved for choice. We decided to split a crab cake, which blew us both away. It had glorious chunks of lump crab and just enough fillers to



hold it together. The exterior was crisp, the interior was silky and there was the proper amount of Old Bay to make my heart sing.

My friend chose Tank's Pimento Burger, a half-pound burger with house-made pimento cheese, bacon and jalapeños braised in honey and beer. The jalapeños were slightly sweet, with a slow heat. The burger was perfectly juicy, and the pimento cheese was an incredible creamy delight.

My love of catfish drew me to the New Orleans blackened catfish. It featured two blackened catfish fillets topped with grilled shrimp and served over Parmesan mashed potatoes. The fish was exquisitely flaky and impeccably seasoned with a balanced blend of spices. The tang of the Parmesan

complemented the potatoes, and the shrimp were cooked just right. The burst tomatoes were an absolute triumph, and I would happily chow down on a bowl of them on their own.

The dessert options are a mix of some made in-house, others from a local bakery, and some from the suppliers. Even the ones from elsewhere had special in-house touches. The crème brûlée topping on the cheesecake is a house specialty, as is the strawberry sauce on the side.

Having grown up along coastal waterways, I am continually amazed at the incredible seafood available in Virginia's inland and mountain towns. Bridgewater Bar & Grill absolutely surpassed all my expectations. ●



Bridgewater Bar & Grill
201 Virginia Ave., Clarksville, VA 23927
Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.,
Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.,
Sunday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
434-362-2222
Bridgewaterbargrill.com

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. FSTH100 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)

(Continued from previous page)

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

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

The only device that makes you look important, not old

The problem with medical alert devices is, nobody wants to wear them because it makes them look old. Well, that's not the case with FastHelp. That's because it's the first 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, 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 1964 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 1964 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's publication before the 21 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered. ■

ADVERTISEMENT

Doctor urges seniors to get new medical alert device

Instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever

Comes with new cellular embedded technology that works at home or anywhere you go so you are never alone

All seniors born before 1964 are getting a \$150 rebate and cover just \$149 making this deal too good to pass up

Nothing to hook up. You don't need a land line or cell phone. It's ready to use right out of the box

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 fam-

ily 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 systems 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.

\$299
FastHelp™
One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere.
With no monthly bills ever.

FastHelp™
One-touch help.
Anytime. Anywhere.



old," Dr. Howren said.

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

Five Star Customer Reviews

Hurricane Help

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

LIFESAVER

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

Very appreciative of having FastHelp

"I did have an emergency. Help RESPONDED quickly and came in a few minutes." - Irving, PA

WE LOVE THE PRODUCT

"We bought it outright with no bills ever." - Rosemary, NY

Safe anywhere

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

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

HOW TO GET IT

BORN BEFORE 1964:

Use the rebate coupon to the right and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-221-2809 EXT. FSTH100

BORN AFTER 1964:

You cannot use the rebate coupon to the right and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-221-9773 EXT. FSTH100

BOTTOM LINE:

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

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

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

REBATE COUPON



PLEASE USE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER WITH NO TRANSACTION FEE. ALL OTHER PAYMENT FORMS HAVE A THREE PERCENT TRANSACTION FEE. FASTHELP IS COVERED BY A 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE LESS SHIPPING AND A 1 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY. FASTHELP IS A 4G CELLULAR DEVICE. FASTHELP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE 911 CALLS WHEN CELLULAR SERVICE IS NOT AVAILABLE SUCH AS IN REMOTE AREAS. FASTHELP USES GPS TRIANGULATION TO APPROXIMATE YOUR LOCATION WHEN YOUR DEVICE IS TURNED ON. DR. HOWREN IS A COMPENSATED MEDICAL ADVISOR. OH RESIDENTS ADD 6.5% SALES TAX. UNIVERSAL PHYSICIANS 7747 SUPREME AVE, NORTH CANTON, OH 44720. P7484 OF24215R-1

From Plant to Plug: Understanding the Electric Grid

How does the electricity you rely on get to you?

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

To reach your home, electricity travels a long path through the electric grid, which connects power plants and transmission and distribution lines to homes and businesses across multiple states.

Let's take a closer look at how your home fits into that grid.

THE GRID: CLOSE TO HOME

Your home receives power from your local electric cooperative, which delivers electricity to your neighbors and surrounding counties.

That electricity often comes from a generation and transmission cooperative, or the commercial electric power market that is fed by power plants and renewable energy sources in multiple states. Old Dominion Electric Cooperative is an example of a G&T. It generates power for its 11 member distribution cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

G&Ts use a mix of energy sources to maximize reliability and affordability, and when power is cheaper on the market than they can produce it, they purchase it instead. Like your local cooperative, G&Ts are not-for-profit, meaning they answer only to the people they serve — including you.

THE GRID: BEYOND YOUR COOPERATIVE

Beyond G&Ts and your local electric cooperative, the electricity network gets bigger. Virginia, Maryland and Delaware are states served by PJM interconnection, a regional transmission organization. PJM acts much like an air traffic controller, coordinating power generation

and movement across 13 states and Washington, D.C., including more than 67 million customers and 1,400 power generators.

PJM doesn't own power generation. Instead, it directs which power generators are used and when, telling them when to turn on and helping support the flow and affordability of electricity across its region. When one generator can produce electricity at a lower cost than others, the entire region benefits. During periods of high demand, such as extreme weather, PJM also redirects power within its region to ensure electricity is available where it's needed most.

INCREASING DEMAND AND INCREASING RISK

More electricity is being used every year. As demand for power rises at an unprecedented rate, maintaining a reliable and affordable supply of power is more important than ever.

In recent years, our lives — our homes, cars, devices and technology, and businesses — have become more dependent on electricity, placing even more strain on the grid.

Imagine the electrical grid as a large reservoir. The inflow pipes represent electricity generation, and the outflow pipes represent homes and businesses that consume electricity. Demand is rising so quickly that more water is flowing out than flowing in. If the imbalance continues, the reservoir drops to dangerously low levels, threatening reliability for everyone downstream.

While demand increases, many traditional fossil-fuel power plants across our nation have been retired, or are slated to retire, as the nation



Maintaining a reliable and affordable supply of power is more important than ever.

looks to reduce its reliance on coal and natural gas. State policies that are disincentivizing new dispatchable generation resources compound the problem, as plants are being shut down faster than replacement resources are being built.

Adding new generation has challenges, including siting and permitting, regulatory requirements, rising material costs, construction time and a long queue of projects waiting to be approved and connected to the grid. Decisions between always-available baseload power and renewable resources also involve political and economic considerations, along with reliability, affordability and environmental responsibility concerns.

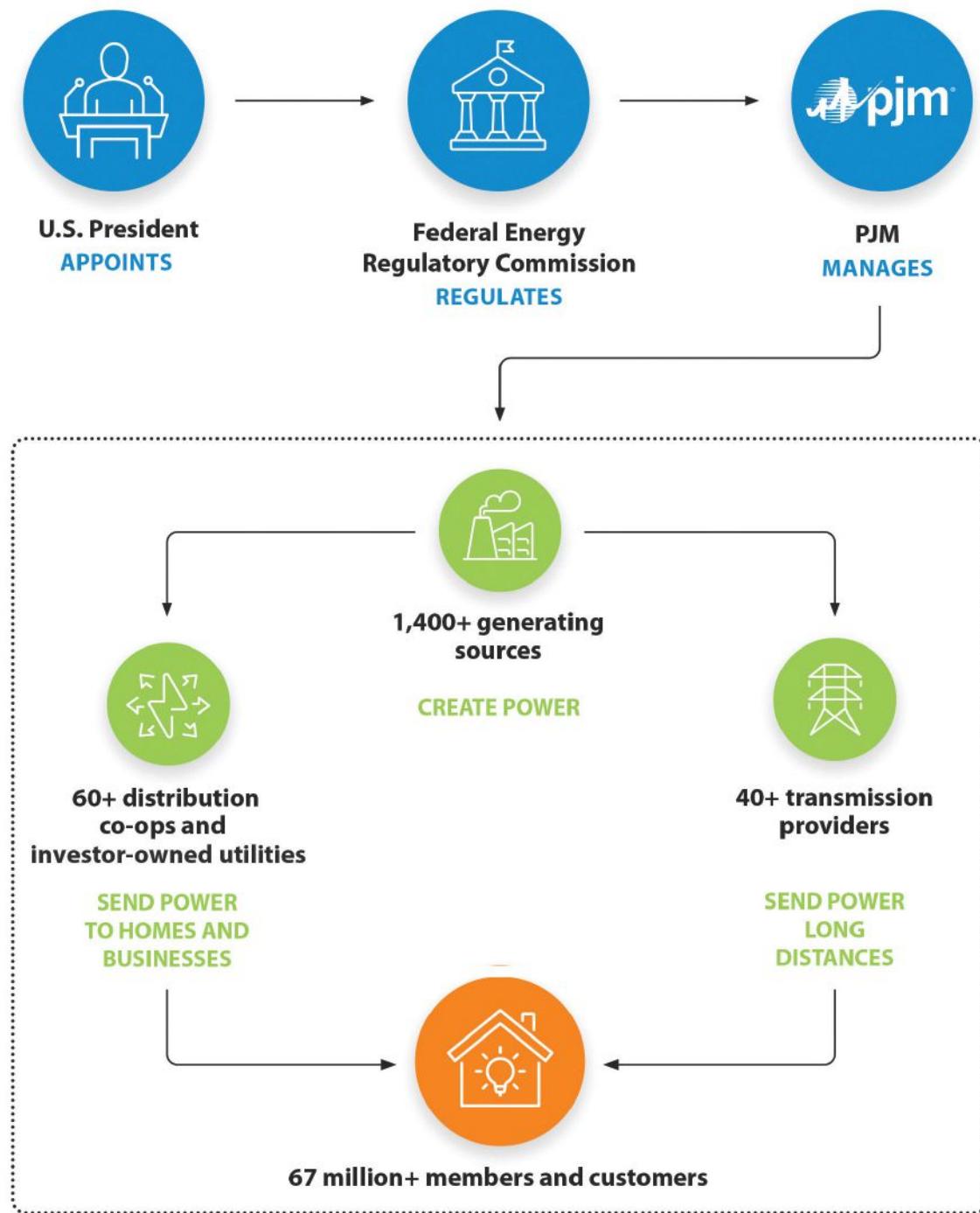
Finally, the electric grid itself needs upgrades to handle growing transmission demands as more electricity moves through the system — just like internet and water supply systems must be upgraded to handle more volume.

If PJM can't meet increasing demands, the reliability we all depend on is at risk. It's a challenge G&Ts, grid operators and distribution cooperatives, like yours, are working together to navigate.

Electricity isn't just important, it's critical — and essential for our future. G&Ts and local electric cooperatives are continually evaluating new strategies and emerging technologies to meet growing power needs.

Though the grid, the industry and demand have changed, one thing hasn't: Electric cooperatives remain committed to ensuring reliable, responsible, affordable power is there when you need it, every hour of every day. ●

Our Regional Power Grid



Stir It Up!

Easy soups and crockpot meals for chilly days



Sausage Lentil Soup

recipe courtesy of Gloria Andree

Ingredients:

1 lb. breakfast sausage roll
1 medium onion, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
1/2 cup grated carrots
1 lb. bag dried lentils, presoaked for 1-2 hours
1 box chicken stock
olive/vegetable oil and 2 tablespoons butter
for sautéing
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste

Directions:

Break up sausage roll in preheated soup pot. Add chopped/grated vegetables and sauté until veggies are softened and sausage has begun to brown.

Add drained lentils to pot and stir. Season liberally with salt and pepper. Add chicken stock and bring to a boil. Immediately reduce to low heat, adding more broth or water as needed. Partially cover, and taste and season as it cooks. Simmer on low for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Refrigerated leftovers may thicken. Add an additional can of chicken stock or water when reheating.

Meatball Tortellini Soup

recipe courtesy of Family Features/Cookin' Savvy

Ingredients:

4 cups beef broth
1 can (14-oz.) diced tomatoes
16-oz. frozen meatballs
19-oz. tortellini
6-oz. frozen spinach
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
3/4 cup Parmesan cheese,
plus additional for serving
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste
1/4 cup heavy cream
bread, for serving

Directions:

In a Dutch oven, pour in beef broth and diced tomatoes. Fill empty diced tomatoes can with water and add to pot. Stir in meatballs, tortellini and spinach.

Cook over medium heat and then add onion powder, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

Cook 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add heavy cream and cook 5 minutes. Serve with bread and additional Parmesan cheese.



PHOTO COURTESY
FAMILY FEATURES

Crockpot Meatball Subs

recipe courtesy of Shelby Jean Walker

Ingredients:

2 cans/jars four-cheese spaghetti sauce
1 can crushed pineapple
1 bag, family-size, frozen meatballs

any type of sub rolls or hot dog buns
mushrooms (optional)
provolone cheese slices

Directions:

Put all ingredients, except cheese slices and buns, in crockpot on high for 6 hours. Serve on buns and top with cheese slices. You can put the prepared sub in oven on broil for a few minutes to melt the cheese if you like.



GOT A TASTY TREAT TO SHARE?

Email your favorite **stew** 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.

Love At First Write

A love story started with a secret note and kept alive with a single red rose

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

A good love story often begins with a little mystery. This one started with a handwritten note taped to a door, signed only "Your Secret Admirer."

When Gary Moore, of Hopewell, Va., found the note, it piqued his curiosity. At Prince Paving, where he worked, he proudly showed the note off to his coworkers. What he didn't know is that his secret admirer was much closer than he thought — his coworker's sister, Shirley Hedrick. Gary sometimes drove her brother home after their shifts, and that's how the two had crossed paths.

Shirley eventually confessed to penning the mysterious love note, and the two went on their first date. What followed was a whirlwind of dancing, handwritten notes and countless hours of laughter.

Before long, two hearts merged into one.

A VALENTINE'S DAY WEDDING

Shirley and Gary decided to get married on the quintessential day for love: Valentine's Day, in 1986. But, as is often the case with a good love story, there was an unexpected bump in the road.

Their wedding day dawned with a thick blanket of snow across Central Virginia. On his way home from work to prepare for the ceremony, Gary's car lost traction and slid off the road. After trudging through the snow to find a pay phone and arrange for a tow, he rushed to be with his bride. Despite arriving two hours late, the two were married that snowy Valentine's Day.

The couple started a family together and raised four sons and three daughters.

Gary showed his affection not with extravagance, but with the timeless simplicity of a single red rose. Over the years, he brought many roses to the woman he adored.

In 2016, the family was heartbroken when Gary died of a heart attack at age 65. For Shirley, Valentine's Day has never been the same.

"It's been a hard nine years," their daughter, Tammy Moore-Edwards, says, her voice trembling with emotion.



"Lots of late-night phone calls just to talk about my dad and cry together."

Tammy and her husband, Chad, and their three children — Eric, 19; Kyle, 17; and Summer, 14 — live in Dewitt, Va., and are members of Southside Electric Cooperative.

To fill the void her father left, Tammy created a Valentine's Day tradition that means a lot to her mother. "One at a time,

I have each grandchild hand my mom a single red rose," she says. Tammy also prepares her mom's favorite meal.

"After my dad passed, my mom shared a lot of stories with me. My mom told me about their first date, where they saw a drive-in movie. My dad reclined his seat to get comfortable, but he did not know he had laid his hair in the ash tray — which was full of ashes and bubblegum. My mom said she laughed and laughed. The remainder of the date was spent helping him get gum out of his hair," Tammy says.

Her parents loved to dance, even if Gary's moves were memorable for all the

wrong reasons. Tammy laughs at the thought. "He was an awful dancer. Those were my mother's exact words," she says. "He dances like he's boxing. But that's what my mother loved about him — his goofy self. He made her laugh all the time."

According to Tammy, her parents were quick to forgive each other. She says, "My mom is always quoting Bible verses, and I think [her faith] got them through a lot of things."

Gary even had his own brand of romance. "He'd tell my mom he'd wine and dine her," Tammy says, "and then take her to Long John Silver's. It still makes her laugh to this day."

It's those moments that Tammy says she wants her mother to remember fondly on Valentine's Day, which is why she wrote *Cooperative Living* and shared her mother's love story.

Feb. 14 will mark 40 years since that memorable day when two hearts became one. She says, "It's a hard day for my mom, but I know it would mean so much to her — and me — to be able to share their love story." •

Rural Winter Fun

Snow, hot chocolate and apologies to Billy Graham

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



If there's one thing to be said about winter, it's this: It can be fun. As they say, fun is where you find it.

As a kid, I think most of us found our fun atop a sled flying down a hill — and maybe even falling off and being pitched into a pile of beautiful white snow.

While my father was no kid, he was always up for sledding. Once, he and a bunch of his buddies from the Lions Club decided to have a sledding party on the newly built ski slopes at The Homestead. The slopes weren't officially operating yet, but there was surely a wonderful, long expanse of hilly snow to enjoy. Even Daddy enjoyed it, despite coming home with two broken ribs.

Whenever there was a big, deep snow, he would organize a sledding party for us and the kids who lived up the hill.

Mom, who never sledded in her life, would fill a big percolator with hot chocolate. She set that on the bonfire

Daddy built at the end of the driveway, and the gang of us had a delightful time sledding down our steep, hilly rural road, then hauling our sleds back up so we could have a glug of cocoa and then hop aboard our Flexible Flyer sleds for another run.

All of that happened at least 50 years ago, but just the other day, one of those now-grown-and-gray "kids" reminisced with me and we talked about all the fun we had.

I don't know why I've always loved to shovel snow, but I do. For a while, I had a very long, steep driveway with a sharp curve. I'd tromp out there in the morning and commence my happy chore. I'd always pride myself with the number of calories I was burning.

Nowadays, I don't have a driveway that's "shovel-able," and no sidewalk, so I must be content with sweeping off my deck and creating a narrow path to the car.

I think the only thing I never liked about the snow was the "snowsuit" that my parents insisted on encasing me in when I was small. It was very thick, scratchy wool. There were

leggings, as well as a coat, and a hood that required a zipper to close. I'd squirm and sigh and cry, especially when Daddy would accidentally catch my bare neck with that dang zipper.

Time quickly marched on from those snowsuit days and, finally, the ski area opened. Since The Homestead is a resort area, visitors flock there for their winter fun. They come to ski, snowboard and rocket down the slopes in big rubber tubes. I will be doing none of those things.

When the ski area opened, I was a teenager and, like most teens, thought myself invincible. The first time I went to ski, I got to the top, gazed down and thought, "I am certainly not ready to tackle this!" I bent over to remove my skis and walk down, but a "friend" gave me a big push. Off I flew. I plowed down a competent skier — who turned out to be Billy Graham. He uttered something that was definitely not a prayer. I came home on crutches that day, and I haven't been to the ski area since, except to drink delicious hot chocolate in the lodge. Just like old times! Here's hoping you can find some sort of fun activities to enjoy this winter. •

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, Sylvia Kyger!



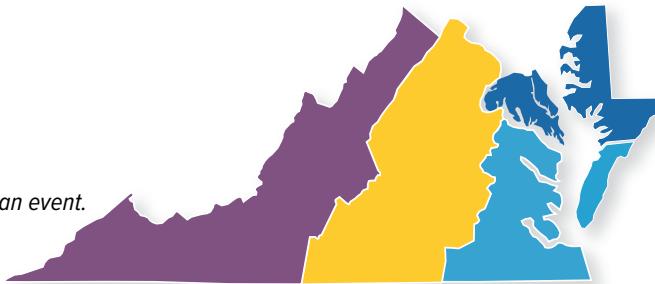
Sylvia Kyger, of Mount Crawford, Va., joins *Cooperative Living* in turning 80 this year (on Feb. 14)! She is best known as "Mamaw Sylvy" by her two sons, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Kyger, a Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative member, cherishes every moment she can with her family. She also loves watching the birds, tending to her flowers, caring for her animals and reading *Cooperative Living*.

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 Feb. 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

JANUARY

30 HARRISONBURG. **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Stella Chen: "Seasons of Change."** Forbes Center for the Performing Arts. 147 Warsaw Ave. 7:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY

18 FAUQUIER. **Fauquier VA Tech Alumni Trivia Night.** Old Bust Head Brewery. 5:30 p.m.

MARCH

14-15 HIGHLAND CO. **Maple Festival.** Highlandcounty.org

PIEDMONT

JANUARY

16-18, 23-25 MANASSAS. **ARTfactory's "Grease."** 9419 Battle St. Times vary. Info@virginiaartfactory.org.

FEBRUARY

13-15, 20-22 RUTHER GLEN. **The Second-to-Last Chance Ladies League.** Caroline Community Theater. 7 p.m. Matinee Sunday 1 p.m. 540-938-0877. Carolinetheater.org

13-15 MANASSAS. **ARTfactory's Murder Mystery Dinner Theater: Trouble in Deadwood.** 9419 Battle St. 7:30 p.m. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Virginiaartfactory.org

20, 27 MINERAL. **Fish Fry.** St. Jude Catholic Church. 4:30-7 p.m. Louisacatholics.org

27-28 MANASSAS. **ARTfactory's "Visiting Mr. Green."** 9419 Battle St. 7:30 p.m. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Virginiaartfactory.org

MARCH

1, 6-8 MANASSAS. **ARTfactory's "Visiting Mr. Green."** 9419 Battle St. Times vary. Info@virginiaartfactory.org. Virginiaartfactory.org

6, 13 MINERAL. **Fish Fry.** St. Jude Catholic Church. 4:30-7 p.m. Louisacatholics.org

MARYLAND

MARCH

14 RHODESDALE. **1776 Delmarva: Defending Delmarva during the American Revolution.** 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Cokesbury Church. 5952 Cokesbury Road. 443-523-4115.

PRINT DEADLINES: Feb. 1 for March 15-April 15
March 1 for April 15-May 15

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

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BUSINESS

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

FREE

STAY INFORMED ON CHURCH/STATE ISSUES – Like religious liberty, a National Sunday Law coming soon. Send mailing address to tbsmads@yahoo.com or TBSM, P.O. Box 374, Ellijay, GA 30540. 888-211-1715.

REAL ESTATE

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

WANTED

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

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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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- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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

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5 ways to save energy while staying warm all season long.



Layer up instead of turning up the heat.

Wear thermal clothing, thick socks, and sweatshirts or sweaters while indoors, and use blankets or throws. Body heat retention is much more efficient than heating the entire room.



Seal drafts and insulate your home.

Check doors and windows for air leaks and use weatherstripping or draft stoppers. Close curtains at night to keep heat in your home, and open during the day to let natural sunlight warm the place up!



Optimize your thermostat.

Lower the temperature a few degrees. Each degree can save roughly 1-3% on heating costs. Consider using a programmable thermostat to reduce heating when you're away or asleep.



Use space heaters wisely!

Choose an energy-efficient model with a thermostat and automatic shutoff. Only heat the room you're in instead of the whole house.



Make better use of kitchen appliances.

Bake or roast multiple dishes at once. Prepare larger portions and divide them into individual servings to reheat later, reducing overall cooking time.

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The Snuggle IS REAL

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

THE CUDDLE COMMITTEE ▶

Roxie and Ranger are siblings by birth but snuggle buddies by choice.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KIMBERLY PERRI



◀ PURR-FECTLY PAIRED

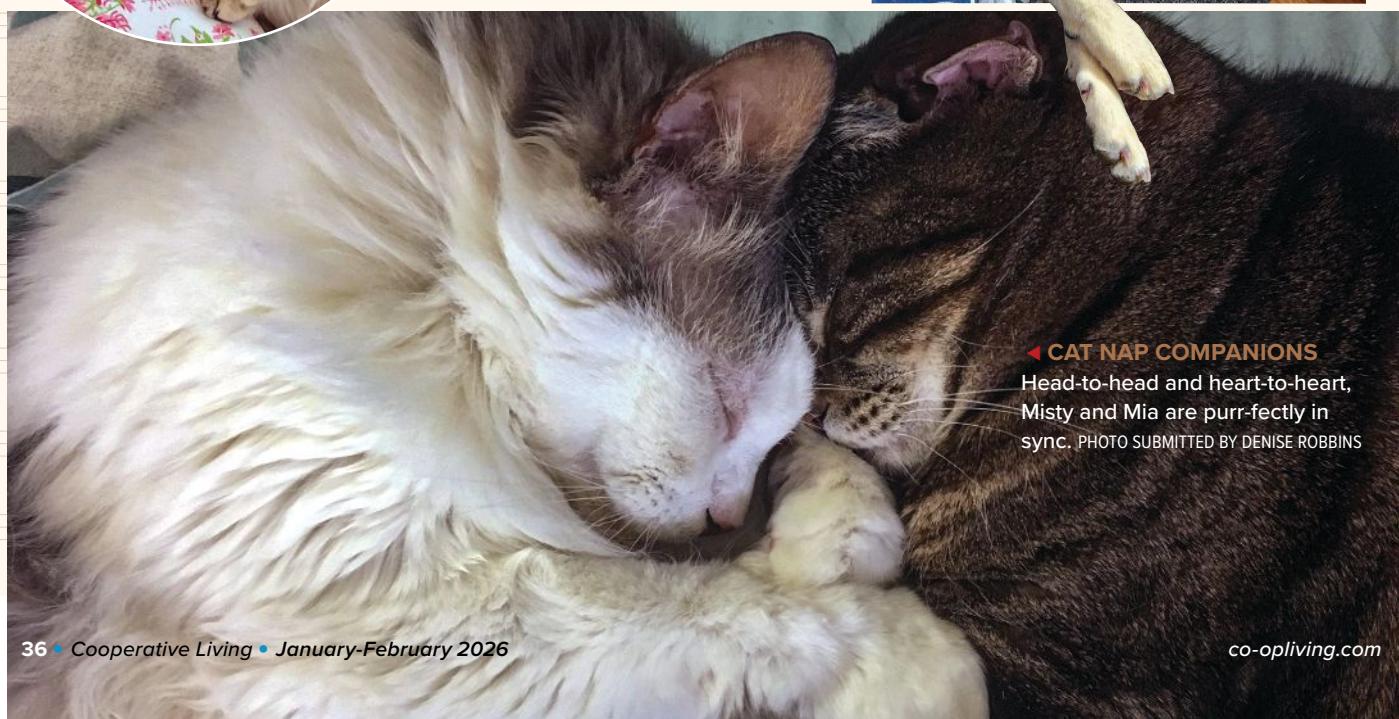
Mabel and Benjamin are proof that cuddle season is the cat's meow.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY GLORIA FITZWATER



FUR-EVER BESTIES ▶

When the world feels ruff, hug your pug. Winnie and Hank are best friends. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JESSICA AND JAMES SHEHAN



◀ CAT NAP COMPANIONS

Head-to-head and heart-to-heart, Misty and Mia are purr-fectly in sync. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY DENISE ROBBINS

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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.



◀ BIG DOG, BIG LOVE

Fur-get the blankets — Blue, the Great Dane, has got Caynen covered. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LAUREN SAMPSON



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