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NEWS RELEASE

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Mecklenburg County resident receives the Electric Cooperatives' Good Samaritan Award

Ron Sickles, a member of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, has received the 2017 Good Samaritan Award presented by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC).

Given to individuals whose body of good work has been so selfless and life-changing to others that it is held up as a “gold standard” of community service, this award was presented April 5 during the monthly Optimists Club meeting in Bracey, Va.

“Ron has helped young and old, mentoring youth within the local public school, organizing the ‘Ray of Hope’ food pantry and volunteering at the Mecklenburg Home for the Elderly in South Hill,” wrote Keith and Lynn Ellis in their nomination letter. “He helped a couple stranded on Interstate 85 late one cold winter night when no one else answered the call, and led the effort to gather furniture and other necessities for a family who lost their home in a fire.”

Sickles is a founding member of the local chapter of Optimist International, a service organization whose mission is “Bringing out the best in youth, our communities and in ourselves.” As its current president, he lives its credo and invites those interested in learning more to attend an Optimist Club meeting. The Bracey chapter meets the first Wednesday of each month at Bracey Meadows Senior Center.

Each holiday season, Sickles, a real-life Santa and decorated Army veteran, collects gifts and Christmas trees to donate to needy families in Mecklenburg and Brunswick counties. The rest of the year, Sickles cuts grass and maintains the yards of elderly and disabled neighbors at no charge.

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative President and CEO John C. Lee, Jr. applauded Sickles’ wide-ranging and dedicated community service. “I commend Ron for his service during the Vietnam conflict. The sacrifices made by him and all of our military personnel and their families throughout our nation’s history have ensured freedom for all of us.”

Lee added, “Those who served in Vietnam and followed the orders of their nation were treated very poorly when they came home. Ron, however, never stopped giving back. He has continued his lifetime of service to others and his inspiring passion to make a difference for local children, and the elderly, and helping people in need, denote the true definition of a Good Samaritan. His selflessness, commitment to community and country, and unconditional drive to be a gracious and giving person sets a high bar to which we should all aspire. We are very, very proud to count him amongst MEC’s members.”

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In presenting Sickles with the award, VMDAEC Board Chairman Larry Howdysshell noted, “Ron is a living example of a Good Samaritan, and exemplifies the 7th cooperative principle of ‘concern for community.’ We are proud to recognize his inspirational leadership that has made such a difference for Southside Virginia residents.”

Award nominations were solicited from the members of the 13 electric cooperatives that serve Virginia through promotion in *Cooperative Living* magazine.

Headquartered in Chase City with district offices in Emporia and Gretna, Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit member-owned energy provider that serves more than 31,000 homes, farms and businesses throughout nine Central and Southside Virginia counties. For more information, go to www.meckelec.org.

Founded in 1944, VMDAEC is the trade association for 15 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric distribution cooperatives that serve Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The Glen Allen, Va.-based Association provides its member cooperatives with employee, director, and safety education and training, government relations and legislative support, and communications services, including the publishing of *Cooperative Living* magazine. For more information, visit www.vmdaec.com and www.co-opliving.com.



Caption: Larry Howdysshell, Chairman of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (at right) presents Ron Sickles with the 2017 Good Samaritan Award as Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative President & CEO John Lee leads the assembled friends and guests in a round of applause.