

October 23, 2019

International Rodeo

VMD Competitors Do Well in 'Super Bowl' of Lineworkers

The annual **International Lineman's Rodeo & Expo** saw some significant contributions from **VMD member cooperatives** this year.



The Delaware Electric Cooperative team gets ready for an event at the International Lineman's Rodeo.

The trio finished **19th** among **248 teams** from **co-ops**, **investor-owned utilities** and **municipal** and **union teams** in the international **Best of the Best**. Their total time for four events, including a pole climb and a hurt man rescue, was 33:46.13 with **no deductions** and **400 points**. Phil, Dave and Mike were **less than 3 minutes** out of a **top 10 finish**. They also placed **sixth** out of **36 co-op teams**.

T.W. Parks and **Rob Clary** from **Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative** participated in the **apprentice division**, which attracted a huge field of **321 competitors**, with T.W. placing 45th overall. **Clint Card** and **Matt Shaw**, both of MEC, **served as judges** at the event.

Held **Oct. 19** in **Bonner Springs, Kansas**, west of Kansas City, Missouri, the rodeo brings together the **top competitors from around the world** to see how they stack up in the "Super Bowl" of lineworkers.

In the **journeyman division**, the three-member team of **Philip Collison**, **Dave Morgan** and **Michael Layton** from **Delaware Electric Cooperative** registered a **strong performance**, following up on May's **Gaff-n-Go Lineman's Rodeo**, where they won the **Jimmy Gardner Award** as the **top co-op team**.



Rob Clary of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative takes part in an apprentice event at the International Rodeo.

Congratulations to all participants. We hope for an even **bigger VMD presence** in 2020!

-Report by Steven Johnson, VMD Association Director of Member & Public Relations.

United We Light

VMD Lineworkers Celebrated for Electrifying Bolivian Villages

Fifteen electric cooperative lineworkers who traveled to **Bolivia** to electrify impoverished villages for the first time have **received recognition** as true pioneers of power.

Crew members representing **United We Light: Project Bolivia** assembled for an **Oct. 18 banquet**, less than a month after they returned from their mission in the **Oruro region** of the **South American nation**.

The evening included **reminiscences** from many of the lineworkers, a moving **video** that showed how they electrified rural Bolivia, and the presentation of a **\$1,000 check** in their honor to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's international unit, which helped sponsor the trip.

"It was almost as surreal as when we went to Bolivia," said **John Medved**, director of safety and compliance at **Rappahannock Electric Cooperative** and team leader for the project. "To see all the guys' faces again, it brought back so many great memories of what we did for the Bolivians and what it did for us."

The **recognition ceremony**, held at **Dominion Raceway** near Fredericksburg, brought together the men who spent **two-and-a-half weeks** electrifying rural communities across the Bolivian countryside. More than **three dozen homes and dwellings** received power for the **first time**, many with a simple, **single fixture** with a CFL bulb.



Cody Lockhart of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and his wife look at a picture book of the trip.

“Our guys are like McGyver,” said **Kent Farmer**, president and CEO of **Rappahannock Electric Cooperative**, who attended a lighting ceremony in Bolivia. “They figured out how to make things work. It was simply amazing to be able to watch these guys come together and do the things that they were doing and seeing the impact they were having on the people there. It’s indescribable.”

Richard said response to the trip has been **overwhelmingly positive** and that the VMD Association will **explore future overseas electrification projects** with NRECA International.

Highlights of the trip are posted on the [Cooperative Living magazine Facebook page](#) and the [United We Light: Project Bolivia Facebook group](#).

-Report by Steven Johnson, VMD Association Director of Member & Public Relations.

Renewable Solutions

NOVEC Sends Members Green Energy Generated at Prince William County Landfill



Prince William Recycles Day included a tour of Prince William County Landfill's five generators that use gas emitted from decaying trash to make electricity for NOVEC members. (Photo by Priscilla Knight.)

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) was a big part of **Prince William Recycles Day** on **Oct. 12**.

Participants learned how generators use **trash gas** to make **green electricity** for homes and businesses served by the cooperative. The event was held at the **Prince William County Landfill** in Manassas.

During the landfill tour, visitors learned how approximately **100 extraction wells** across the landfill capture gas, about **50 percent methane**, from **decomposing trash** and **organic waste**. The gas flows through underground pipes to five engines, which use the gas to generate **renewable energy** for **NOVEC's 170,000 members**, an animal shelter, school bus garage, and fleet-maintenance shop.

“The landfill’s electricity program is just one of many things that amaze and interest Prince William Recycles Day attendees when they take the landfill tour,” said **Deborah Campbell**, communications specialist for the county’s Solid Waste Division. The division has hosted the annual recycling education event since 1995 as part of **America Recycles Day**.

-Report by Priscilla Knight, NOVEC Senior Communications Specialist.

“These lineworkers are a shining example of the cooperative principle of commitment to community,” said **Richard G. Johnstone Jr.**, president and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. “Their sacrifice and their caring will make a difference in the lives of these villagers for generations to come.”

Richard presented John and team members with the check made out to **NRECA International**, which has organized overseas electrification missions **since 1962**. **United We Light: Project Bolivia** was the **first such effort** by the **Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives**. Support came from the National Rural Utilities **Cooperative Finance Corp.** and the **National Cooperative Services Corp.**



Richard G. Johnstone Jr., president and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, presents a \$1,000 check designated for NRECA International, made in honor of the VMD lineworkers.

BARC Receives \$1 Million for Broadband from Appalachian Regional Commission

BARC Electric Cooperative has received a **\$1 million award** from the **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** to assist with funding for deployment of **gigabit, last-mile fiber-to-the-premises (FTTP) broadband** in and around **Goshen, Virginia, in Rockbridge County**.

BARC’s grant submission was selected through a competitive grant award process spanning **420 jurisdictions** in **13 states** covered by ARC, a federal-state partnership that promotes **economic development**.

“Access to high-speed internet is the foundation for vibrant communities creating opportunities for **economic growth, education and technology** advancements. BARC is committed to bringing reliable broadband services to our entire rural community,” said BARC CEO **Michael Keyser**.

The funds will be used for **fiber construction costs**. The project will take approximately **12 to 16 months** for completion from the start date in order to install services to eligible consumers in the area. The **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)** will oversee the project and ensure all criteria are met as outlined in the ARC award agreement.

According to **Gov. Ralph Northam’s** office, the **eight-mile fiber network** will make FTTP available for **301 households** and **eight businesses**. ARC’s announcement of BARC’s grant award is one of **54 investments** totaling **\$44.4 million** through ARC’s **POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization)** initiative.

“These grants will help us leverage every available resource as we work to strengthen the economy in areas that were once dependent on the coal industry and enhance the quality of life throughout the Appalachian region,” **Gov. Northam** said in a statement.

BARC worked with **Rockbridge County government**, the **Rockbridge County Economic Development Authority**, and the town of **Goshen** on the grant application. The **Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)** will be the **administering agent** for this grant.

“I **congratulate** BARC for being a **FY 2019 POWER grantee** and commend them on the **leadership** they have shown in their **community**,” said ARC Federal Co-Chairman **Tim Thomas**. “POWER grants are playing a critical role as they **diversify economies**, invest in growth-oriented infrastructure, train a next-generation workforce, and ingrain resiliency and hope into their local fabric. Projects like this help ensure a **prosperous future for Appalachia**.”

-Report by Tish Blackwell, BARC Electric Cooperative Communications Specialist.

Commitment to Community

NOVEC, NOVEC HELPS and CFC Improve Local Homes

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC) and **National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. (CFC)** employees worked together on **Oct. 10** to refurbish **two homes** for residents with **disabilities** in **Manassas and Woodbridge**.

The **50 co-op employees** painted, stained, power washed, mowed grass and mulched garden beds at the homes operated by **CRi -- Choice. Respect. independence**.

“We **worked together** inside and outside to make **two CRi homes** look bright and cheerful for people who truly needed our help on our **Day of Caring**,” said **Ashley Arnold, NOVEC HELPS** executive director. “The best reward for us was seeing the **transformation** of these **houses**. It’s amazing what cleaning, painting, and yard work can do. CRi staff members told us how **happy residents** would be when they returned home and saw the work we did.”



NOVEC and CFC employees hang a painting at a CRi home in Manassas after staining the wheelchair ramp. (NOVEC photo.)

CRi is the **fourth local community** organization NOVEC employees and members of **NOVEC HELPS — Hands Engaged in Local Public Service** — have helped on the Day of Caring event. **CFC employees** joined the effort this year.

“NOVEC has always **supported the communities we serve**,” noted **Stan Feuerberg, NOVEC president and CEO**, who participated in the volunteer effort on Oct. 10. “By **joining forces** with **CFC employees**, we accomplished a lot in a day.”

Sheldon Petersen, CFC chief executive officer, said, “I couldn’t be more pleased that CFC collaborated with volunteers from NOVEC to **give back to the community** for the **2019 Day of Caring**. This **partnership of working together** to help others exemplifies **two** of the **seven cooperative principles** -- **Cooperation among Cooperatives** and **Concern for the Community**. The Day of Caring is a wonderful opportunity for volunteers from our organizations to demonstrate our cooperative commitment to empowering local communities.”

-Report by Priscilla Knight, NOVEC Senior Communications Specialist.



NOVEC’s Jessica DiMaio adjusts painter’s tape. Refurbishing the two CRI homes marks the fourth community organization that NOVEC employees and members of NOVEC HELPS have assisted on the Day of Caring.

Co-op Month

Cooperative Council Breakfast Enlivens Annual Celebration

More than 50 representatives of cooperative businesses, the VMD association, government agencies and educational institutions from across Virginia gathered Oct. 3 to celebrate **National Cooperative Month**.

Hosted by the **Virginia Cooperative Council (VCC)**, the **annual breakfast** event gave participants a chance to mingle and hear from a national speaker with Virginia roots — **Bette Brand, administrator of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Business Service agency**, who was formerly with **Farm Credit of the Virginias**.

Bette said cooperatives are **key in helping rural America reach its potential**, since U.S. co-ops have some **350 million memberships** — some people belong to more than one — and account for about **two million jobs**.

“It is important to support **nonprofit organizations** that are working in our **communities**,” Bette emphasized. She said the **cooperative business model** is **growing** by leaps and bounds in areas such as **home health care businesses** and **mobile home communities** because they give **stakeholders** an important sense of **ownership**.

“I challenge all of you to find new and unique ways to use your cooperatives in your community,” she said during the breakfast, which was held at **The Place** in **Glen Allen**. “Forming co-ops is **empowering** and **democratic**.”



Bette Brand, administrator of USDA's Rural Business Service agency, accepts a leadership award from Kyle Shreve, executive director of the Virginia Agribusiness Council.



Allen Melton (r) receives the 2019 VCC Leadership Award from VCC Board President Richard G. Johnstone Jr. Richard said that Allen is a "servant- leader in every sense of the word."

For her contributions, Bette, who has served on the **VCC board**, received the **2019 Distinguished Service Award** from **Kyle Shreve**, executive director of the **Virginia Agribusiness Council**, another group with which Bette has been affiliated. Kyle said Bette’s long service represents the epitome of cooperative commitment to community.

A **second award**, the **VCC’s 2019 Leadership Award**, went to **Allen Melton**, a retired **Southern States** employee, **former board member** and **executive secretary of the council** from **2016 to 2019**. **Richard G. Johnstone Jr.**, president of the **VCC board**, called Allen “probably the most **indispensable person** for the **VCC** over a very long period of time.”

Richard, president and CEO of the VMD

Association, noted that the recently retired Melton has been the driving force behind student attendance at the **Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education (VICE)**, **VCC’s three-day leadership conference** for students **ages 16-19**.

“He has been a **servant-leader** in every sense of the word,” Richard said, adding that Allen has played a key role with the VCC since the 1970s, when he began working for Southern States and became active in VCC programs.

Following the meeting, an auction of various goods and services brought in enough money to underwrite a **VICE scholarship**.

-Report by Steven Johnson, VMD Association Director of Member & Public Relations.

Co-op People

Shelia Bradley Joins NOVEC’s Public Relations Division

Shelia C. Bradley has joined [Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative's](#) public relations division. The former legislative aide to two delegates in the Virginia House of Delegates will handle **public relations in Halifax County**, where she lives and where **NOVEC operates its biomass power plant**.

“Shelia will serve as a **liaison** between NOVEC and the **Southern Virginia** community,” said **Lisa Hooker**, NOVEC vice president of public relations. "As a Halifax County native, she will identify opportunities where the Co-op can support the work of charities, community organizations, and schools. She will also convey the environmental and economic benefits of NOVEC’s carbon-neutral biomass power plant in South Boston, Virginia.”

“I’m thrilled to join forces with such a well-respected company as **Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative**,” Shelia said. “As one of the **top 10 electric utilities** in the country in **customer satisfaction** and **reliability**, NOVEC has a **stellar reputation** in Northern Virginia. I welcome the opportunity to **spread news** about NOVEC’s good works in Southern Virginia.”

As a **legislative aide to two delegates**, Shelia worked closely for **17 years** with constituents in the **60th district**. “I had the privilege of meeting and working with state and local leaders, as well as the citizens of four Southern Virginia counties,” she said.



Shelia Bradley is now working for NOVEC in Halifax County, where NOVEC operates its biomass power plant. (NOVEC photo.)

Prior to working for the delegates, she owned and operated a **travel agency** in **South Boston**. She worked for what is now the **Virginia Economic Development Partnership** in a district that covered **18 counties**, and **five towns and cities** in **Southern Virginia**.

Shelia has served as a **board member** of the **Virginia Tourism Corporation**, **Halifax County Chamber of Commerce**, **Tri-County Community Action Agency**, and **Halifax County Tourism Board**.

-Report by Priscilla Knight, NOVEC Senior Communications Specialist.

Help Us Keep You Informed!



If you have story ideas, news or information of interest and benefit to other members of the electric cooperative community in our three-state area, please contact:

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