

February 14, 2019

Co-op Leaders

Choptank Board Names Mike Malandro as New President and CEO



Mike Malandro

The **Choptank Electric Cooperative Board of Directors** has selected **Mike Malandro** as the next **President and CEO** of Choptank Electric Cooperative. He will succeed **President and CEO Mike Wheatley**, who will retire March 31, 2019, after **25 years of dedicated service to the cooperative**.

Mike Malandro has served as **President and CEO of Prince George Electric Cooperative** in Waverly, Virginia for the last four years, while also **leading** the cooperative's **broadband business, "Ruralband"** for the last two years. The broadband project has been **recognized throughout the nation and state** as an **innovative approach** to a **rural broadband** solution. Mike's ability to work with local governments and utilize partnerships to strengthen economic prosperity for rural Virginia has been highly popular with PGEC members and leaders alike. He has demonstrated leadership and supports regionalism to spur employment and capital investment within the communities that PGEC serves.

Mike is a **professional engineer** licensed in the states of **Virginia** and **Maryland**. He holds a **B.S. in Electrical Engineering** from **West Virginia University**, and completed **NRECA's prestigious Robert I. Kabat Management** program. He is a **veteran** of the **U.S. Army and West Virginia National Guard**. In addition, Mike currently serves as **director** on numerous boards, including the **National Rural Telecommunications**

Cooperative (NRTC), Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC), Virginia Gateway Region EDO, and Girls Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"Executing a strong vision requires leadership, innovative thinking, and relationship skills," said Mike about his leadership style. "My passion for the cooperative business model and serving the rural communities will continue to ensure long-term value for Choptank Electric's membership. I am excited to be coming to Maryland's Eastern Shore and I look forward to working closely with our board, employees and members to lead Choptank Electric into the future."

Mike is slated to start April 1, 2019. "The Board of Directors and I are pleased with our selection and we feel that Choptank Electric is in good hands with Mr. Malandro," said **Jeffrey Rathell, Chairman of the Board at Choptank Electric**. "He has the **experience and leadership** Choptank Electric needs to continue being the local co-op that brings excellent overall service to our communities."

-Report by Beth Gertsch, Choptank Electric Co-op Manager of Marketing, Communications & Member Engagement.

A Milestone Moment

Association Training Center Welcomes First Students This Week

When the Association was founded in the spring of 1944, one of the foundational reasons was the need for coordinated, comprehensive, professional **training of line workers**.

Now in its 75th year, the Association took its founding mission to a **new level on Monday** of this week, when it **opened the doors** of the just-completed **VMD Association Training Center** and **welcomed its first students**. These **nine apprentice line workers from four cooperatives** were the first of what will ultimately be thousands of students who attend classes, workshops and seminars at this state-of-the-art facility on Salem Church Road in **Palmyra**, which is in **Fluvanna County** about 25 miles east of Charlottesville.



In addition to providing a significant amount of training for line workers (both apprentices and journeymen), the **9,600-square-foot facility’s three classrooms**—all of which feature state-of-the-art seating, instructional and sound equipment—will host classes for **other cooperative employees** as well as for **cooperative board members**.

The students who attended on Monday are enrolled in step three of the eight-step, four-year line worker apprentice program that the Association offers, using the curriculum of the nationally recognized Northwest Lineman College. These nine students were **Christopher Brown, Andrew Clements, Joseph Darr and Blake Sparling** of NOVEC; **Alister Pollard and Cody Studds** of Rappahannock; **Doug Napier and Joseph Kenney** of Shenandoah Valley; and **Daniel Hobson** of Community Electric Cooperative.

The training center is located on a nine-acre site that was provided to the Association on very generous terms by **Central Virginia Electric Cooperative**, whose Palmyra district office is located directly across Salem Church Road. **CVEC also donated** and installed a **100-kw standby generator for the training center**, which will allow it to be utilized during major storm events to house crews and other personnel.

In addition to the three classrooms, the training center also has a **large garage bay** that will provide an ideal space for equipment displays and training during inclement weather. There is also a **reception area with three offices** and a **small conference room**; and a **large catering kitchen** and adjoining **break room**.



The Association’s new training center is complete, and landscaping and paving will be done soon.



Supervisor of Safety Training John Medved instructs the nine apprentice linemen who constitute the first students to take classes at the Association’s new training center.

Outside the classrooms at the back of the building is a **sizeable patio with a “sitting wall”** that students can enjoy at lunchtime and during breaks. The nine-acre site also includes a significant amount of **outside training areas**, designed and built for line worker training. These include areas for instruction in **overhead and underground** line construction and repair; a **ring of poles** to teach basic climbing skills; **“smurf lines”** featuring pole-tops and cross-arms at eye level to teach and learn line worker skills from the ground; and a **substation training area**.

Please be sure to **mark your calendars now** to attend the **“official” dedication** of the training center this spring. The VMD Association staff is currently planning an **open house on Wednesday, May 22, from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m.** Plans call for a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a light lunch, **tours of the facility**, and a chance to meet the **Association safety instructors** who’ll serve as faculty for many of the classes

there. **Look for more information soon** in future issues of *Connections*. Each VMD member system will be provided with full details on the open house in the next couple of weeks.

One of the highlights of the open house will be the dedication of a **larger-than-life-size line worker statue** that has been commissioned and will be delivered and installed on its base in front of the training center in late March. This statue is being made possible through **the generosity of all 15 VMD member systems, plus ODEC**. The bronze statue will serve as a symbol of the training center’s core purpose of **providing high-quality training to line workers**, as well as serving as a **monument to the bravery and dedication** of these special individuals.

--Report by Richard G. Johnstone, Jr., VMD Association CEO.

General Assembly Update

Electric Co-op Legislation Continues Journey Toward Adoption

The Association’s **Government Affairs team** has had a successful week in the **Virginia General Assembly**.

Our **net metering reform legislation** (HB2547 and SB1769) has passed **both Senate and House Commerce and Labor Committees** this week, and both versions are on the floor of those respective chambers for final approval – before making their way to **Governor Ralph Northam** for his signature. These **historic reforms** enable our member-consumers who want **increased access to renewable energy options** to have them, while **protecting non-participating ratepayers**

from cross-subsidization. In a true effort of coalition-building, this legislation garnered support from **Solar United Neighbors (VA-SUN)**, **The Sierra Club**, and the **League of Conservation Voters**.

Our **cooperative reform legislation** (SB1346) is before the **House Commerce and Labor Committee** on **Thursday, Feb. 14**. This legislation has **unanimous support** and provides **significant cost-savings** for cooperatives through a **streamlined State Corporation Commission process** for adopting programs **already approved for another cooperative**.

The **General Assembly** is scheduled to conclude its **2019 session** on **Saturday, Feb. 23**.

-Report by Andrew Vehorn, VMD Association Director of Government Affairs.

Co-op People

REC Names Director of Member Services

David Johnson has recently been promoted to **Director of Member Services** for **Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC)**.

David now directs the cooperative’s contact center, billing and payments department, debt-recovery services, the advanced metering infrastructure, member information system, and member services training.

David has **nearly 10 years of experience** in the utility industry. In his most recent role, David served as the **key accounts executive** where he helped existing businesses with energy management and worked to attract new economic development into the REC service territory. Prior to that role, David was the **demand response administrator** and early in his career at REC, he served as the research analyst compiling, analyzing, and maintaining research data for the cooperative.

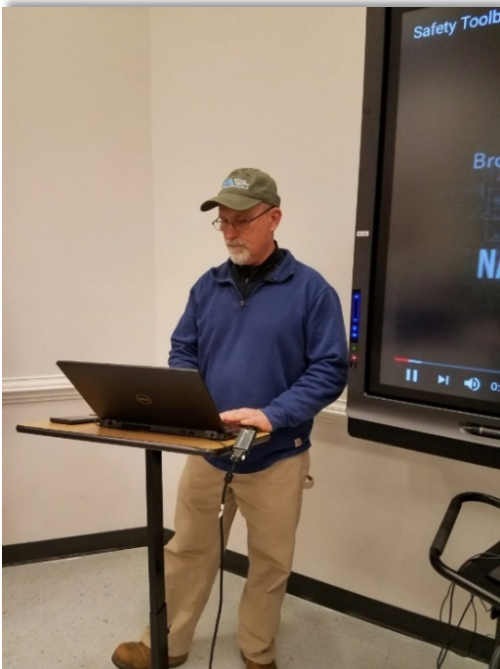
David received a master’s degree in business administration from **Liberty University** and a bachelor's degree in business administration from **James Madison University**. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Essex County.



David Johnson

Congratulations on your promotion David!

VMD Association Hires Two Safety Instructors



Jerone Mabe brings line work experience with AEP and the City of Danville.

Jerone Mabe joined the Association on January 21 as a **safety and training instructor**. He lives at **Smith Mountain Lake** with his wife Lynn and black lab Sailor. Jerone and Lynn have two grown children and one grandson. He has **10 years’** experience as a lineman for **American Electric Power** and continued his power experience with the **City of Danville**, working in **compliance, engineering**, and as the **electric distribution superintendent**. Jerone enjoys hiking and working outside.

Brad Ashwell joined the Association on January 28 as **safety and training instructor**, and has been in the cooperative family for **20 years**. He started his career with **Southside Electric Cooperative** as a meter reader, and moved into the lineman field. He was a **line tech supervisor** for almost **10 years**, and also served on **SEC’s Safety Committee**. He enjoys sharing his knowledge

of line work with others. Brad has a special passion for **Lineman Rodeos** and has competed and placed at the top of many throughout his career. Brad lives in Altavista with his wife Christy and three children, Iris, Lila and Levi.



Brad Ashwell joins the Association team after 20 years with Southside Electric Co-op.

Safety and Training Services VP **Alan Scruggs** also recently announced that Instructor **Matt Shaw** had accepted the position of **safety and security coordinator with Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative**. Alan noted that Matt “has been a great safety instructor for the Association and our members since 2014. We are excited that he will continue to be a part of the VMD family and continue to work with all of us on a regular basis.” Matt began his new position at MEC on Jan. 16.

Alan also recently announced that Association Supervisor of Safety Training **John Medved** and Safety Instructor **Dirrick Simmons** will form the Association’s “**dynamic duo**” in staffing and handling the **planning, training and logistical duties** at the new training center in Palmyra.

Congratulations to all of these gentlemen on their new positions, opportunities and duties!

Cooperation among Cooperatives

Adam Schwartz to Speak at VCC Annual Meeting on March 6



Adam Schwartz

Noted **cooperative advocate Adam Schwartz, founder of the Cooperative Way**, will be **keynote speaker** for the March 6 annual meeting of the **Virginia Cooperative Council (VCC)**.

In his presentation “**Why & How Co-ops Create Community**,” Adam will discuss how to proactively manage the cooperative culture, including methods for meaningful member engagement, being strategic with philanthropy and positioning co-ops to be competitive for the next generation and beyond.

Both member cooperatives and their guests are invited to this free event at the **Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton**, which starts at 9 a.m. and concludes with a hot buffet lunch.

RSVPs are requested by February 22 by calling (804) 281-1211 or by email to mary.howell@sscoop.com.

Founded in 1962 as the Virginia Council of Farmer Cooperatives and renamed in 2009, the Council has for nearly **60 years** worked to **educate Virginians** young and old about the **value** of the **cooperative business model**.

“Each spring, the council hosts the Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education (VICE) for high school students at Graves Mountain Lodge,” said VCC President **J.T. Anderson** of Farm Credit of the Virginias. “This year’s application deadline is March 15 and we welcome donations to cover the \$175 cost per participant to attend,” added J.T. To learn more, visit the Youth tab at www.virginia.coop.

-Report by Mary Howell, Virginia Cooperative Council Executive Secretary.

Personals

News About Members of the VMD Cooperative Family

Congratulations to **Amanda and Tyler Cunningham** on the birth of their second child, **Vivien Chase Cunningham**, this past Sunday, Feb. 10, in Richmond. **Mother and baby are doing well**. Amanda is the advertising account representative for *Cooperative Living* magazine, as well as a designer for a variety of Association print projects. Notes of congratulations and well-wishes may be sent to Amanda at **4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060**.

