

July 19, 2019

## Co-op Annual Meetings

### Broadband, Community Solar Highlighted at BARC Annual Meeting

On July 17th, **BARC members and special guests** gathered at the **Millboro Fire House** for the co-op's annual meeting. Special guests at this year's meeting included Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) Senior Vice President for Member Engagement, **Kirk Johnson**; Virginia, Maryland, Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) President and CEO, **Richard Johnstone**; Director of Member & Public Relations, **Steven Johnson** and Association Board Chair, **Herbert Patrick**.

Members and guests were welcomed by BARC Board President, **Keith Swisher**, and BARC CEO **Mike Keyser**. Keith spoke to the achievements of both **broadband service** and **solar energy**, this year's major headlines for the co-op. Keith shared highlights of the past year including **BARC Connects** fiber-to-the-home project and installation of broadband services to **over 800 consumers in Rockbridge County**, as well as a future partnership that will **expand community solar** to BARC members. Work on this project is already underway.



*BARC CEO Mike Keyser reports on operational highlights of the year as Board President Keith Swisher looks on.*

BARC CEO, **Mike Keyser**, recognized BARC staff for their dedication to serving members, saying, "They care about treating members, with respect, about always doing the right thing, and are constantly looking for ways to improve the customer experience. It is an honor to work with them on a daily basis."

Board Secretary/Treasurer, **John Quantz**, announced that BARC concluded 2018 with net margins **over \$1 million**, and returned **\$929,527 in patronage capital** to members.

Two director seats were up for election this year. Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, BARC attorney **Creigh Deeds** announced the re-election of directors **C. Michael Sandridge** (District I); and **Gary R. Johnson** (District V) to serve three-year terms.



*VMD Board Chairman Herbert Patrick draws a winning ticket for an electric bill credit. BARC COO Jamie Lowry is at right.*

At the conclusion of the meeting, a drawing was held for a winner of a **\$150 prize towards electric bill credits**. BARC member **Irene Johenning** was the lucky winner at the meeting.

Seven additional members' names were drawn from proxy ballots returned from each district:  
**Wayne Kille** – District 1, **Craig Davis** – District 2, **Kenneth Moore** – District 3, **Windy Cove Presbyterian Church** – District 4, **Irene McAllister** – District 5, **Denny Hansford** – District 6 and **Christopher Byer** – District 7.

BARC Board and staff members were pleased to celebrate the prior year's operational highlights and successful delivery of services at this year's annual meeting. Congratulations to all on a successful year!

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

## Commitment to Community

### CVEC Celebrates Grant to Extend Broadband Access

The **historic Lyles Baptist Church** in southeastern **Fluvanna County** was the site of a thoroughly modern-day experience on **July 11**.

The church, which dates from **1774**, hosted **Gov. Ralph Northam**, **state and local elected officials**, and **cooperative leaders** for the announcement of a **\$641,000 grant** that will help **Central Virginia Electric Cooperative** expand its sweeping broadband project.

"If you're going to have a business come to Virginia, especially rural Virginia, if you're going to help a business grow, there is no way that you can do without access to broadband," Gov. Northam said.

The grant from the **Virginia Telecommunication Initiative**, will bring **570** homes and premises online, including Lyles, the **oldest Baptist church in Fluvanna County**.

It will account for about **25 percent** of the project cost, said **Gary Wood**, president and CEO of CVEC, which operates **Firefly Fiber Broadband** as a subsidiary.

"It's as good as anything you'll find in the world and it'll be right here in these woods," he said.

CVEC is laying the groundwork for **4,500 miles** of fiber to its **37,000 members** across **14 counties** during the next **five years**. The overall project cost is estimated at **\$110 million**.

"For a rural community to grow, it needs infrastructure and this is the place to make it happen," said Fluvanna County Administrator **Eric Dahl**. "Rural communities also need broadband and CVEC has made that commitment to us."



*Gov. Ralph Northam speaks at the grant announcement for Central Virginia Electric Cooperative's Firefly service.*



*Sen. Mark Peake (far left), Gov. Ralph Northam (third from left), Del. Lee Ware (fourth from left) and Del. Rob Bell (far right) pose with directors and staff members of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative.*

Gov. Northam and Gary both credited **members of the General Assembly** for their support of broadband expansion. In attendance were **Senator Mark Peake** and **Delegates Lee Ware** and **Rob Bell**, who represent all or parts of Fluvanna County. A **representative** of the office of 5<sup>th</sup> District Congressman **Denver Riggleman** also was present.

CVEC also came in for praise from Gov. Northam and **Evan Feinman**, who is spearheading the governor's bid to bring **high-speed internet** to all Virginians.

"Not only are you helping with broadband, you help with providing reliable and efficient energy to many parts of the commonwealth," Gov. Northam said.

Evan added, "We don't have a better partner than our electric cooperatives. They're working hard."

Gary said the Firefly service will build out in the grant project area and eventually move to the village of **Columbia** and parts of nearby **Cumberland County**.

"This is not just a grant for this area," he said. "It is a grant that **opens doorways** to others."

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

## Commitment to Community

### State Grant Boosts CBEC Broadband Plans

**Gov. Ralph Northam** and **state and local dignitaries** gathered **July 2** for the official announcement of the next step in **Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative's** initiative to **bring broadband** to underserved areas of its service territory.



“Electricity transformed our rural service area in the 1930s. Internet service will transform it in the 2020s,” CEO **Shawn Hildebrand** said at a ceremony at the Greenfield Education and Training Center in **Daleville**.

“Our mission then is our mission today, that these same rural areas will have the services that others have. Just because you live in a rural area should not mean inferior service or no service at all,” he said.

The **\$758,000 grant** is part of a **nearly \$2 million project** with support from the county and the co-op. It will enable the co-op to install **70 miles of fiber optic cable** in parts of **Botetourt County**.

That eventually will mean broadband access for **621 homes and 52 businesses**. Shawn noted that about **one-quarter of the homes** to be served in the new phase of the fiber project have **school-age children**.

“This will help them to be able to further their education and at the same time create a higher quality of life for them and their families,” he said.

Gov. Northam called the broadband project “a team effort” between the **state, local government and Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative**. Among others involved were members of the **General Assembly**, the state **Department of Housing and Community Development**, the **Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority**, and the **CBEC board of directors**.

“We won’t rest till everybody has access to broadband,” said Gov. Northam. “This isn’t a partisan issue. This is something everybody agrees on. We need to move forward.”

Others in attendance included **Billy Martin Sr.**, chairman of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors; **Donald “Mac” Scothorn**, vice chairman of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors; and **James Huffman** and **Patrick Ryan**, who represent Botetourt on the **CBEC board of directors**.

“It’s so nice to have a partner like Craig-Botetourt here in our county,” Martin said.

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

## Co-op Honors

### John Lee Elected President of NCSC Board of Directors

One of our **Virginia electric cooperative leaders** has a new and important role.

**John C. Lee Jr.**, president and CEO of **Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative (MEC)** and **EMPOWER Broadband**, is the new president of the board of directors of the **National Cooperative Services Corporation (NCSC)**.



*Of his election, John Lee noted, "I am honored to be elected by my peers on this very capable and competent board to serve as president of the organization."*

John was elected **July 2** at the organization’s **annual meeting** in **New York**. He was elected to the **Board** by a **vote** of the membership of **430** electric cooperatives across the nation and represents **District 1**. District 1 encompasses the states of **Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia** and includes the **District of Columbia**.

John is currently serving his **third three-year term** on the board of the Dulles, Virginia-based **utility finance corporation**. As one of his new duties, he will chair upcoming meetings of the board.

“NCSC is a valuable resource for our nation’s cooperatives, and I am honored to be elected by my peers on this very capable and competent board to serve as president of the organization. Throughout its history, NCSC has been an agile lender, and able to adapt in meeting the changing needs of its membership, as is its mission...one thing that has not changed, however, is our discipline with regards to risk. And while we continue NCSC’s legacy of offering credit alternatives for more non-traditional electric utility purposes, we do so with a focused eye on maintaining NCSC’s strong balance sheet, so that it can continue to be a viable option for those with unique needs,” John said.



*Gov. Ralph Northam (l) talks broadband with Donald “Mac” Scothorn (c), vice chairman of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors, and Shawn Hildebrand, CEO of Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative.*

He continued, "I am very proud of the meaningful work done by NCSC. I look forward to serving as president, continuing the prudent growth of our loan portfolio, and advancing the organization guided by our proven cooperative principles. The collective efforts of the board and staff over the past few years have made the organization stronger, and we have maintained and enhanced the cooperative's sound fiscal condition. Perhaps most importantly, we have put NCSC in a robust position to continue offering competitive financing opportunities to those it serves, now and into the future."

John added, "NCSC is financially strong, well-grounded but appropriately mobile, and I believe, positively positioned for future success. I am grateful that the cooperative membership across the country has allowed me the privilege of representing them on the governing body of this beneficial organization, and I'll continue to do my best to validate their decision to do so."

NCSC is a privately funded, **member-owned cooperative** that began operation in **1981** to provide **specialized financing** services to utilities. Its portfolio includes in **excess of \$750 million** in outstanding loans to cooperatives, cooperative subsidiaries and investor-owned utilities. The organization has assisted cooperatives in expanding their reach through loans for **telecommunications, non-electric products** and **economic development** by providing competitive financing.

### **Congratulations to John!**

*-Report by Deborah Blue Winn, MEC Member and Public Relations Specialist.*

### **Co-op Education**

#### **VMD Association and Community Continue Training Days Partnership**

On **June 5<sup>th</sup>** and **6<sup>th</sup>**, **Community Electric** and the **VA, MD & DE Association** continued their partnership to provide two days of training for the **Community Electric Cooperative** employees. **Steve Harmon**, president and CEO at Community said, "we find tremendous value in utilizing our VMDAEC team to provide, not only our required team training, but other topics as well."



*VMD Association Counsel Sam Brumberg provides his annual training on ethics, anti-harassment and whistleblower policies.*

ensued between Steve and Sam! **Delegate Emily Brewer** joined the group on day two and fielded questions on local policies and bills.

The days concluded following an interactive session with **Sam Bruce** of Sapient Business Solutions and the University of Richmond on providing the best possible **member experience**. Next was a Q&A session with Steve. Steve shared that the Association's "expertise in cooperative related topics is invaluable. When compared to other training/consulting organizations, the cost benefit proposition stands out significantly! Based on the survey results from ALL members of Team CEC, our 2019 team training days were a HUGE success! Thank you, VMDAEC staff for an outstanding job!"

Thank you to **Steve** and the rest of the **Community Electric family** for their hospitality!

The Association's training covered a variety of topics. **Phil Jarvis**, manager of safety services at the Association, and **Glen Presson**, CEC manager of operations, began the days talking about safety. Phil provided the annual **safety** topic, this year pertaining to bloodborne pathogens. **Sam Brumberg**, association counsel, provided his annual topic on **ethics, anti-harassment** and **whistleblower policies**. Other topics included a **Tidewater Energy Services update** from **Daryl Walls**, VP of business development & special projects at Community. **Brandon Burton**, director of continuing education at the Association, shared the hazards of **credit and debit card fraud**. Lunch brought more than just good food; **ACRE** was discussed, and a friendly wager



*(l-r) Jonathan Powell, Barb Daughtry and Debbie Arrington participate in an activity during the member experience session.*





*"He got a pickle!" Community Electric Cooperative CEO Steve Harmon presents Sam Bruce with a jar of pickles at the end of day two's training session.*

To learn more about how the Association can help plan a training event, or to find out the story behind the jar of pickles, reach out to **Brandon Burton**, director of continuing education at [bburton@vmdaec.com](mailto:bburton@vmdaec.com) or (804) 297-3485.

*-Report by Brandon Burton, VMD Association Director of Continuing Education.*

## Focus on Youth

### BARC Expands Broadband Support for Area Schools

In 2018, **BARC Connects** proudly announced that it was serving the **Rockbridge County Public School** system with **broadband service**.

A year later, BARC has announced that it is serving the **entire public school system** in the **Rockbridge region**. Just recently, its team successfully connected both **Lexington City Schools** and **Buena Vista City Schools** to its network.

With **two Lexington** and **four Buena Vista schools** added to the existing group of Rockbridge schools, BARC is now proudly serving a total of **12 public schools** in the region. BARC has noted that providing better broadband service to assist with educational needs gives greater opportunities for success to children.

With the opportunity to meet the broadband needs of all three school systems in the Rockbridge region, its local schools **have made investments** in updated devices for their students to aid with course work **both at school and at home**.

And as BARC continues to connect more homes throughout its service area, its leaders have noted that BARC is pleased to offer a **seamless Internet** experience allowing students to have information at their fingertips and increase their learning capability both at home and at school. By the conclusion of the first phase, its fiber network will be available to about **5,000 homes and businesses** in **Rockbridge County** and the **City of Lexington**.



*Staffers from BARC Electric Cooperative and Parry McCluer High School in Buena Vista celebrate broadband expansion to a total of a dozen public schools in the co-op's service territory.*

BARC CEO **Mike Keyser** said, "Bringing broadband to our rural communities is about empowerment. We want to empower our communities to thrive and grow with new economic opportunities. New opportunities mean our children can remain in or return to their rural hometowns with good jobs and access to new Internet-based entrepreneurial endeavors. Broadband provides a channel to grow our students into successful career-minded adults, while providing a pathway for small or large businesses to start-up, thrive and grow, or offer opportunities for new Internet-based businesses. We live in a globally connected world and broadband brings that world to us here in the Shenandoah Valley."

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

## Matt Teffeau Joins Choptank Electric as Manager of Government Affairs

**Matt Teffeau** is the new **manager of government affairs** at **Choptank Electric Cooperative**, effective July 1.

Matt is a lifelong **Marylander** and native of **Preston**. After graduating from **Salisbury University** in 2010, he worked for **Congressman Andy Harris** as a legislative assistant, where he handled **agricultural** and **natural resource issues**. Developing a strong relationship with **Maryland farmers**, he then began working for the **Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB)** as their **assistant director of government relations**. At the MFB, he advocated for Maryland farmers in the halls of Annapolis and worked with members from both political parties to pass common sense pieces of legislation.



*Matt Teffeau brings a strong, diverse array of policy and political experience to his new role as Choptank's manager of government affairs.*

Matt later answered the call to become a public servant when he joined the **Maryland Department of Agriculture** under the **Hogan Administration**. For three legislative sessions he had a **100 percent** departmental bill passage rate and worked with leadership in the **House** and **Senate** to mitigate potential harmful pieces of legislation.

He is also a **2017 graduate** of the **LEAD Maryland** program, which is a **two-year leadership development program** that fosters emerging agriculture and natural resource advocates in Maryland.

Most recently, Matt managed the state public affairs for a trade association in Washington D.C. known as the **Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE)**. His responsibilities took him across the country, advocating for **agriculture, public health, and scientific research**.

Matt was inspired to pursue **politics** and **advocacy** when he visited Washington D.C. during the **2005 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour** his junior year of high school. He **interned at NRECA** for two summers, during college, in its government relations department.

"We are very excited that Matt is coming to work at Choptank Electric," said **Mike Malandro**, president and CEO of Choptank Electric Cooperative. "We are looking forward to building solid relationships with our local representatives and political leaders using Matt's experience in Annapolis so that we can work towards the co-op's long-term goals."

Congratulations to Matt on his new position!

*-Report by Elizabeth Hallett, Choptank Electric Cooperative Manager of Marketing & Communications.*

### 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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