

August 16, 2019

Co-op Annual Meetings

Strong Attendance, Member Engagement Mark DEC Annual Meeting

Take **12,000** pieces of **fried chicken**, down-home **musical entertainment** and a serious discussion about **solar power** and **electric vehicles**, and you have some of the ingredients for another **successful Delaware Electric Cooperative** annual meeting.

The co-op's **83rd annual meeting** brought about **6,000** members, families, guests and dignitaries on **Aug. 13** to the **Delaware State Fairgrounds** in Harrington in an atmosphere of good cheer. "It feels like I've talked to 5,000 people today and not a cross word was said," **President and CEO Bill Andrew** told the meeting. "That's because the **co-ops are a family**."

Attendance was so strong that the co-op generated a **quorum** to conduct official business minutes after the doors opened at **3 p.m.** For the next four hours, members enjoyed a **fried chicken** meal, watched a **pole-climbing** demonstration, and listened to a musical performance by **Junior Wilson**. Multiple displays kept members in the know about the co-op's **electric vehicle** and other **program** offerings, including use of a **hot stick** on a sample unpowered circuit.

The meeting is such a popular event that **top state officials** and representatives circulated through the crowd, including **Delaware Gov. John Carney**, **Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long**, **Delaware Agriculture Secretary Michael Scuse** and **Miss Delaware Hilary May**. As members gathered in the meeting hall, they were treated to a moving video on "**The Inspiring Project**" featuring young DEC member **Chase Marvil**, whose work to **combat bullying** and **youth suicide** has received **national recognition**.



Delaware Lt. Gov. Bethany Hall-Long meets with DEC Board Secretary-Treasurer Laura Phillips prior to the annual meeting.



President and CEO Bill Andrew discusses the co-op's many offerings to members at the Delaware Electric Cooperative annual meeting.

Board Chairman William J. Wells gaveled the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and, with **1,187** members present, complimented the membership, saying, "We are extremely pleased with the member response to the meeting this year and hope you will continue to attend future meetings."

Board Secretary/Treasurer Laura Phillips gave a positive report on the co-op's fiscal condition for 2018, noting that operating revenues stood at **\$168 million**, an increase from **\$157 million** in 2017. "Looking ahead, we expect continued fiscal responsibility and excellent service for our members," Laura said.

In his CEO's address, Bill talked about a variety of ways in which DEC connects with its members. The outreach has paid off, as Delaware Electric received a score of **90** in the recent **American Customer Satisfaction Index**, a Michigan-based survey that tracks consumer preferences. No co-op ranked higher and only one other electric co-op reached the 90 mark. Part of that success has come in the form of the **Beat the Peak** initiative, which Bill said will save members **\$2.5 million** in 2019. Bill also announced **two programs** that will further diversify the co-op's power mix, with a **community solar offering** in the works. Members will be able to buy power from a designated number of panels and that revenue will be used for additional offerings, he said. Bill also promoted the co-op's programs with **electric vehicle chargers** and **Nest thermostats** as ways DEC is keeping in touch with the **changing energy picture**. Bill also commended co-op line crews and staff members for an **outstanding reliability record** and gave a shout-out to a **three-member crew** that captured top co-op honors in the **Gaff-n-Go Lineman's Rodeo** in May and will represent DEC at the **International Lineman's Rodeo** in October.



Delaware Electric Co-op's Josh Ashton helps a young member manipulate a hot stick at an exhibit prior to the co-op's annual meeting.

Three directors were re-elected without opposition — **Charles Towles** of **District 1**, a board member since **2006**; **Patricia Dorey** of **District 4**, a board member since **2004**; and **William W. “Woody” Noel** of **District 7**, a board member since **2008**. The **Jones Boys** and their talented fiddler concluded the meeting with several songs, including “**Orange Blossom Special**,” and several members won **bill credits** in a final drawing. **Congratulations** to the **DEC staff** and **board** on an **outstanding year** and **annual meeting**.

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

Commitment to Community

First Fiber-to-the-Home Broadband Connection Made in Sussex County

Sussex County celebrated its **first fiber-to-the-home broadband internet** connection on **July 16** at **Baxter Road** in **Disputanta, Va.** Residents **Roy and Janine Townsend** mentioned their satisfaction with their new broadband internet service, **RURALBAND**. **Prince George Electric Cooperative** (PGEC) and its subsidiary **RURALBAND** offer last-mile, **fiber-to-the-home broadband**, bringing internet service to these **unserved rural communities**.

Since the dawn of the internet, rural areas of the United States have had **less internet access** than urban areas. Even as rural America’s wired-internet speeds and mobile-phone service have improved, the overall problem remains. “With **RURALBAND’s** 'future proof' fiber-to-the-home, broadband internet service, our rural communities now can be connected,” according to **PGEC President and CEO Casey Logan**.

The Townsends said their life has changed in many ways since receiving broadband access, including getting to spend **more time** with their **grandchildren** now that their home is **the place to be** with **high-speed internet**.



(L-R) Alfred Futrell, Vandy Jones, Susan Seward, PGEC President & CEO Casey Logan, Evander Lloyd, Jessica Lloyd, Roy Townsend, Janine Townsend, Kyleigh Lloyd, Gabriel Lloyd, Keith Blowe, John Stringfield, and PGEC VP of Communications and Government Affairs Renee Chapline, celebrate Sussex County's first broadband connection.



PGEC President and CEO Casey Logan shakes hands with homeowners Janine and Roy Townsend.

Janine Townsend said that before being connected to **RURALBAND**, they were paying **higher prices** for **lower quality** service. Janine added that the lack of internet access has affected her children’s and grandchildren's lives too. Without internet access at home, the Townsends’ grandchildren, and likely many others attending **Sussex County Public Schools**, would have to **stay after school** to complete assignments. "The bus ride from the schools is about 30 minutes, so even just staying at school for an extra hour or two, kids don't even get home until dark,” she said. With **RURALBAND**, schoolwork can now be **completed at home**.

“We wanted to make sure our **members** have the **same opportunities** living in **rural America** as they would in **larger cities**,” Casey added. **Congratulations** to **PGEC** on its continued **RURALBAND** deployment!

-Report by Renee Chapline, Prince George Electric Cooperative Vice President of Communications and Government Affairs.

MEC CEO John Lee Elected Board Chairman of VCU Health CMH

John C. Lee Jr., President and CEO of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative and EMPOWER Broadband, has been elected **chairman** of the VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital (VCU-CMH) **Board of Directors**.

John, who represents Mecklenburg County on the board, was elected along with **Vice Chairman William E. “Billy” Wells Jr.**, also representing **Mecklenburg**, at the hospital’s annual organizational meeting on **June 25**. Also elected were **Treasurer Cindy H. Pecht** representing **Brunswick**, and **Secretary Paul Neimeyer** with **VCU Health**.

The **hospital**, located in **South Hill**, Va., is governed by **ten** citizens from its service area and **four** representatives of VCU Health. The **14-member board of directors** is composed of **medical** and **non-medical** representatives from a **wide array** of **businesses** and **professions**.

These dedicated volunteers, along with VCU Health and CMH Administration, share a fundamental belief that local communities are in the best position to **identify and meet** local health care needs.

The CMH Board of Directors represents the primary service areas of the hospital including **Brunswick, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg** counties. In general, each member serves **three consecutive three-year terms**. However, there is a provision for them to serve longer if deemed necessary. The board establishes **policy**, oversees the **financial well-being** of the hospital and is responsible for **long-range planning**.

“I am honored to have been elected by my fellow directors to serve as the VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital board chairman and I look forward to working with the board and staff to continue the great work currently being done there,” John said. “Since the affiliation with VCU Health, and our subsequent move into the new hospital, we have seen consistent improvement in the numbers and statistics we associate with the hospital’s success and, more importantly, in the feedback we receive from those who are treated there.”

John added: “I’m also **very honored** to be associated with the hospital, **privileged** to serve alongside a very capable and dedicated board of directors and hospital staff, and **proud** to have **chaired the affiliation committee** whose efforts resulted in the relationship with **VCU Health**, and the **new hospital** and **health care facility**. Our community deserves **high-quality health care** delivered, with desirable options, at a contemporary, state-of-the-art facility, and VCU Health CMH is moving progressively, and aggressively, toward that end. And while we are pleased with the current state of affairs there, rest assured, the capable and professional people who work in that beautiful new facility every day, along with the CEO and board of directors, are committed to being the best. We’ll not rest on past laurels and will diligently continue to seek out opportunities for improvement, make every effort to meet the changing health care needs of the region, and be a corporate citizen that takes a back seat to no one.”

-Report by Debbie Blue Winn, Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative Member and Public Relations Specialist.



Mecklenburg Electric CEO John Lee said that VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital in South Hill is "committed to being the best."

Renewable Energy

ODEC Announces Solar Project Initiative

Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) and **EDF Renewables North America** have entered into a **partnership** to develop and build a **30-megawatt** portfolio of **distributed solar projects** across ODEC member service territories in **Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware**.

The projects are intended to bring **local solar energy** to ODEC **member communities** while at the same time providing regional and energy diversification to its generation portfolio.

ODEC will purchase power from the projects at a **fixed rate** through a power purchase agreement (PPA), thus providing energy cost surety for its members. EDF Renewables was chosen as ODEC’s partner through a competitive process led and managed by the **National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO)** in Carmel, Indiana.

Under the PPA, EDF Renewables will be responsible for the development of **10-12 prospective sites**, including all permitting requirements and approvals as well as the **design, engineering** and **commissioning** of the solar projects. The projects are expected to become operational in **mid-2020 through 2021**.

“EDF Renewables is excited about our partnership with ODEC. We applaud ODEC and NRCO on pursuing a large distributed generation portfolio for ODEC’s members. EDF Renewables is a strong advocate of local solar energy and we continue to show that distributed generation portfolios can be a competitive option for cooperatives and utilities to consider when choosing to go solar,” said **Myles Burnsed, Vice President of Strategic Developments** with EDF Renewables Distributed Solutions.

“ODEC looks forward to this partnership and the opportunity to continue to grow our solar generation,” said **Marcus Harris, President and CEO of ODEC**. “Our cooperative is dedicated to expanding renewable energy generation as part of our commitment to providing our member-owners with affordable, reliable, and sustainable power.”

“NRCO is pleased to work with ODEC and EDF Renewables to help facilitate the purchase of competitively priced solar energy for ODEC’s members. These distributed solar projects demonstrate ODEC’s strategic goal of bringing locally sourced renewable energy to its cooperative members. NRCO applauds ODEC’s leadership in working with its member distribution cooperatives to deploy these distributed solar facilities,” said **Amadou L. Fall**, CEO of NRCO.

Shenandoah Valley is among the ODEC member cooperatives that will **participate** in the program. “We are excited by the opportunity to work with ODEC and EDF to develop opportunities for our member-owners,” said **Greg Rogers, SVEC’s Vice President of Engineering and Operations**. “We’ve been working hard to find ways to make the use of solar power acceptable to all parties involved. This new partnership at the ODEC level will greatly supplement our continued efforts at the local level.”

-Report by Shena Crittendon, ODEC Director of Communications and Public Relations.

Co-op News

Choptank Electric to Participate in Co-op Living

We are pleased to announce that **Choptank Electric Cooperative** will be joining the **Cooperative Living family**, effective with the **October 2019** issue. We will be adding approximately **48,000** member-consumers to our magazine’s circulation, bringing total circulation to **more than 580,000**. With this addition, Choptank will be able to use its local pages for a variety of important purposes. In addition, this will give CL readers **more access** to information, sights and sounds emanating from **Maryland’s beautiful Eastern Shore**, while enabling us to **convey the co-op message** to an **even larger audience**. The VMD and Choptank staffs are working on a smooth rollout and we look forward to welcoming Choptank as a member of **Cooperative Living's** award-winning family.

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

Legislative Engagement

Delegate VanValkenburg Pays a Visit



Delegate VanValkenburg of Henrico County (c) poses with ODEC CEO Marcus Harris (l) and VMD Association CEO Richard Johnstone.

The **VMD Association** and **Old Dominion Electric Cooperative** always look forward to visits from members of the **Virginia General Assembly** who want to learn more about **energy issues** and the **cooperative model**. **Delegate Schuyler VanValkenburg (D) of Henrico County** visited the Glen Allen offices on **July 24**. The lawmaker won election in **2017** from the **72nd District**, which includes the Electric Cooperative Building in Glen Allen. He met with ODEC officials, including President and **CEO Marcus Harris**, as well as **Andrew Vehorn, Vice President of Governmental Affairs** for the VMD Association, and **Richard G. Johnstone Jr., VMD President and CEO**.

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

Tech Authority Joins Choptank Electric Cooperative

Choptank Electric recently hired **Tim McGaha** as the **new Vice President of Technical Services**. He began his duties on **July 30**.

Tim brings **more than 20 years** of experience in **information technology, cybersecurity and systems management** to Choptank Electric, including protecting company assets and developing and implementing enterprise-wide solutions. He was previously **Vice President of Information Technology at Prince George Electric Cooperative (PGE)**, where he was responsible for the technical leadership of the award-winning and nationally recognized fiber-to-the-home subsidiary **“RURALBAND.”**

Prior to PGE, Tim was Director of Information Technology at **Wabash Valley Power Alliance**, an **Indiana generation-and-transmission cooperative**, where he served as the primary technical architect and manager of technical operations, including all information and operational technologies at the organization.

He also spent more than **15 years** as president and CEO of a **technical consulting firm**, working with a **diverse group of clients** in industries including radio, television, publishing, healthcare, electric utilities, utility construction, logistics and property management, with a focus on large-scale, cross-functional **enterprise level projects**.

Tim was awarded the status of “Fellow” at **Indiana University’s Randall L. Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence** for successful completion of the **leadership program**, and has a degree in **Accounting and Computer Science** from **ITT**.

“Tim will be an excellent addition to Choptank Electric,” said **Mike Malandro, President and CEO**. “With his extensive experience, he will allow us to explore system enhancements that better align with our members in the digital age.”

Tim has been married to his wife, Bee, for 15 years and they enjoy spending time with their rescue dog, Sky. **Congratulations to Tim** in his new position!

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



Tim McGaha is Choptank Electric's new Vice President of Technical Services, with over 20 years of experience in IT, cybersecurity and systems management.

SVEC Hires New Manager of PR

Morgan Slaven has been selected to fill the role as **Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative’s manager of public relations**. Morgan grew up on her family’s generational beef cattle operation in **Weyers Cave, Virginia**, and was an active member of **4-H and FFA** throughout her childhood. After a year of service as the **2009-2010 State FFA President**, she attended **Virginia Tech** and graduated in **2014**, with a double major in **agricultural sciences and communications**.



Morgan Slaven is SVEC's new Manager of PR, and has a passion for agricultural education, leadership development and serving rural community needs.

“We are excited to welcome Morgan to our **member services team** and look forward to her contributions to the cooperative and our member-owners,” said **Mike Aulgur, VP of Member Services**.

Morgan has a passion for **agricultural education, leadership development and serving rural community needs**. She has put those skills to use as a staff member for the **Virginia FFA Association, American Farm Bureau Federation**, and the **Virginia Farm Bureau Federation**. In her free time, Morgan enjoys supporting local 4-H and FFA programs, spending time with her family, and international travel.

Jeff Ahearn Named Interim GM at Craig-Botetourt

As of **August 9**, **Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative’s (CBEC) Board of Directors** has named **Jeff Ahearn** as **interim General Manager**. Jeff joined CBEC in **2017** as **District Engineer** and was promoted to **Manager of Electric Distribution Services** shortly after. He’s worked for cooperatives for **more than 21 years** and is very familiar with the cooperative business model.

“Our members are the ones every CBEC employee is ultimately accountable to and that is a huge part of our daily approach to business,” Jeff said.

Jeff and his wife, Nanci, reside in the **Salem** area with their sons Michael, 15, and Alex, 13. Prior to CBEC, Jeff worked for **13 years** at **Tidewater EMC**, one of the **largest electric cooperatives** in the state of **North Carolina**.

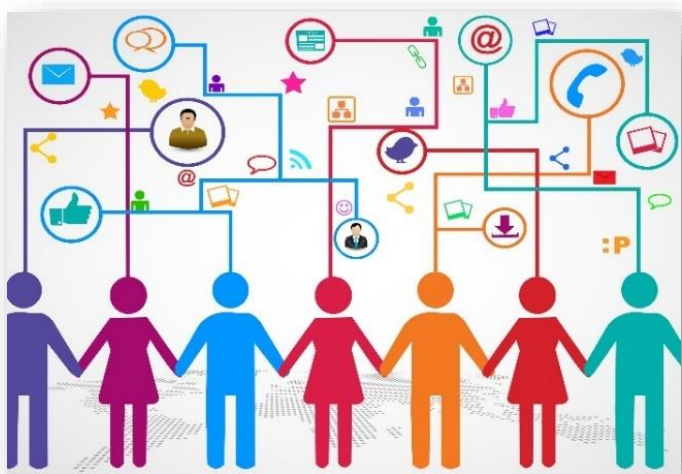
“I’m looking forward to serving our membership in this new role. There are a lot of things that **Shawn Hildebrand**, CBEC’s departing **CEO**, has done during his tenure and I want to keep those going and, if possible, expand some of those things. We’re always looking at ways we can reduce costs and still give our members the product that they need and the reliability that they require,” Jeff explained.

Meanwhile, **Shawn has accepted a new employment opportunity in Richmond**. “I’d like to thank the board of directors of CBEC for allowing me to serve as CEO of this tremendous organization for the last **11 years**. I’d also like to thank the **employees** of the co-op for their **hard work** and **dedication** to our board and to our members. And to our members, thank you for your **support** over the years. It’s the directors, employees and members that make CBEC such a successful organization,” Shawn said.



Interim CBEC General Manager Jeff Ahearn says, "I'm looking forward to serving our membership in this new role."

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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