

December 20, 2019

## Spirit of the Season

### Mecklenburg Donates to Toys for Tots



*Surrounded by toys they donated or collected for less-fortunate children, MEC employees are seen with Libbey and David Keim (far right).*

**Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative** serves as a drop-off location for **Toys For Tots**, and this year its employees and the community donated over **100 toys** to be given to less-fortunate children in **Mecklenburg County**.

“We can always count on Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative employees to make a big impact in this worthwhile endeavor,” said **David Keim** of the Marine Corps League Lake Country Detachment 1085.

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

### CVEC and Firefly Support Area Food Bank

**Central Virginia Electric Cooperative** and its **Firefly Fiber Broadband** subsidiary are thanking employees who **donated food or funds** to the **2019 Thanksgiving food drive**.

The project benefitted the **Blue Ridge Area Food Bank**, which serves **several counties** in and out of CVEC’s large service territory.

**CVEC and Firefly** donated **\$1,000** and donated **72.2 pounds of food**, which means the food bank can provide a total of **4,061 meals** to those in need. The bank provides food to 105,100 people across its network each month through **200 food pantries, soup kitchens, schools, churches** and other **nonprofit groups**.



*The generosity of CVEC and Firefly will help to provide over 4,000 meals to those in need.*

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank expressed its gratitude for support from **CVEC and Firefly Broadband** in helping to accomplish the goal to nourish our neighbors.

*-Report by Melissa Gay, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative Communications & Member Services Manager.*

### REC Employees Help Restock Local Food Pantry

The holiday season is a time when food pantries **need donations the most**. To help restock, **Rappahannock Electric Cooperative’s Culpeper office** recently donated canned foods to the **Wilderness Food Pantry** in the **Locust Grove** area of **Orange County**.

**Tim Ashby**, member services field representative, **Oliver Price**, director of member services and community relations in Culpeper, and **Terri Bevers**, member engagement specialist, packed up REC’s **Power of Community van** with **canned foods** and **nonperishable box food items**.



*REC employees Tim Ashby (l) and Oliver Price help with the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative food drive.*

“When we got there, it was bustling with people getting food for the weekend,” Terri said. “It was a great reminder of why we do community gives — it has a big impact on the communities REC serves.”

*-Report by Casey Hollins, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative Director of Communications and Public Relations.*

## Concern for Community

### REC Launches Fiber Utility Network

**Rappahannock Electric Cooperative** has kicked off a **six-year project** that will bring benefits to its member-owners for decades.

Known as the **Fiber Utility Network**, the **\$30 million investment** will not only **revolutionize REC’s communications network**, but also represents a **significant investment** in the communities REC serves.

Once complete, the network will add **over 800 miles of optical fiber** to connect REC’s offices, substations and towers. The first phase included installing **25 miles of fiber** in the **Culpeper region**.

REC’s fiber network will pave the way for the continued modernization of the electric grid. Enhanced communications will allow REC to operate the electric system **more rapidly** and **detect outages faster**.

Also, of great interest to many rural member-owners, REC is **installing extra fiber** that will **potentially allow** third parties to **lease capacity** on the REC network that could **enable the extension of high-speed internet** and **other broadband solutions** directly to homes.

“This technology has the potential to make a positive difference for so many of REC’s member-owners, and we couldn’t be more excited to launch this project,” said **John Hewa**, chief operating officer and vice president of corporate services.

The fiber project will **upgrade many aspects** of REC’s infrastructure. The fiber network will be able **to transfer increased bandwidth** of information to support **electric system operations**.

“REC recently celebrated 80 years of providing electric service to its member-owners,” John said. “With this fiber project, we’re well-prepared to serve members for another 80 years and beyond.”

*-Report by Casey Hollins, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative Director of Communications and Public Relations.*



*Rappahannock Electric Cooperative has announced a \$30 million investment in its fiber network to improve communications and modernize the grid.*

## Co-op Innovation

### BARC Announces a Complete Solution of Solar Options

**BARC Electric Cooperative**, through its subsidiary **Reliable Energy (REL)**, has announced **Solarize BARC**, a new program starting in 2020 to bring a complete solution of solar-related options to BARC consumers. The program will include **rooftop, utility scale and community solar**, as well as **electric vehicle charging** and **battery storage** options.

“Like our broadband project, Solarize BARC fills another need for our electric consumers while also staying true to our mission to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve,” said BARC CEO **Mike Keyser**.

“Our consumers want affordable and reliable renewable energy options and we want to contribute to environmental sustainability as an organization. We were the first in Virginia to launch community solar, and we are excited to soon offer more options to our electric consumers,” Mike added.

**Solarize BARC** will feature a **new turnkey solar loan program** enabling BARC electric consumers to purchase onsite **solar photovoltaic systems, electric vehicle charging stations and battery storage solutions** without any upfront costs.

The **REL subsidiary** will provide **low-interest loans** and **facilitate engineering, procurement and construction services**. Participating consumers will **repay loans over time** and have an **operation and maintenance agreement** to maintain the equipment.

The program promises to make **solar PV systems, electric vehicle charging stations and battery storage solutions accessible to consumers** who do not have the means or desire to make a significant upfront financial investment.

In addition to onsite PV system options, **Solarize BARC** also features **new expansion phases** of the co-op’s popular subscription-based **community solar program**, which is **currently sold out**.

BARC consumers interested in Solarize BARC, including the turnkey solar loan program, electric vehicle charging, battery storage or community solar, will need to **meet eligibility requirements** that will be **forthcoming in 2020**. BARC plans to release **additional details** of the program to its electric consumers in the **first quarter of 2020**.

*-Report by Tish Blackwell, BARC Electric Cooperative 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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*This is our last issue of 2019...*



*...See you in early 2020!*