

A regular update for leaders, members and friends of  
the VA-MD-DE Association of Electric Cooperatives

from Richard G. Johnstone Jr. | President & CEO



## DISTINGUISHED CO-OP SERVICE



Click above to play video. Visit [co-opliving.com/dsa](https://co-opliving.com/dsa) to view this and more videos about Bill's co-op service.

## Cooperative Living Editor Bill Sherrod Receives Co-op Service Award

Longtime *Cooperative Living* magazine editor Bill Sherrod, known for his quarter-century of dedication to the electric cooperative community, is a 2020 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

As editor, Bill took the association's flagship magazine to new heights, reaching more than 1.2 million readers 10 times a year with compelling stories, columns and essays that celebrated and advanced the cause of electric co-ops and small-town lifestyles.

He also served as vice president for communications and public relations for the VMD Association, developing communications strategies with the association's 15 member co-ops and serving as spokesman on energy-related issues.

In presenting the award, Richard G. Johnstone Jr., president and CEO of the VMD Association, said Bill has embodied the cooperative spirit through his stewardship of *Cooperative Living* and his outreach to the communications teams at VMD member cooperatives.

"All of us involved with the electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware are thrilled that the Awards Committee unanimously felt that Bill's 25-year career has been so exceptional in both achievements and service that it's worthy of being celebrated and honored," Richard said.

"Bill has been a bedrock for the association for a quarter-century, an integral part of every success we've enjoyed in all of our service areas, but most especially for his excellent work on *Cooperative Living* magazine," Richard added. "His record of

distinguished service to the electric cooperatives in our three states is one of the most exemplary I've ever seen or heard of."

Fletcher "Bob" Jones, chairman of the VMD Association's Board of Directors, said Bill has been an invaluable contributor to the cooperative movement.

"Bill's exceptional communications skills have enabled us to tell the cooperative story to millions of readers, who rely on that information to improve their daily lives. He is a trusted friend and adviser, and this award reflects the pride we have in him," Bob said.

A Richmond-area native, Bill attended Henrico High School and graduated from Randolph-Macon College in 1977. He is a past editor of the Times-Virginian in Appomattox, Va., and began his career with a newspaper in Lewes, Del.

He joined the VMD Association in 1994 and has won numerous writing awards. He served as president of the National Electric Cooperative Statewide Editors Association in 2006-07 and as a judge for the annual Virginia Outdoor Writers Association essay contests. Bill is an avid fisherman and outdoorsman. He currently holds the title of senior editor at *Cooperative Living*.



## COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

### Electric Co-ops Award More Than \$60,000 in Scholarships

The Education Scholarship Foundation of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives has awarded more than \$60,000 in college scholarships to deserving students for the 2020-21 school year.

The recipients are students whose parents live in areas served by electric cooperatives in the three states.

"We commend these students on their outstanding academic achievements," said Russell G. "Rusty" Brown, chair of the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation Board and vice chairman of the board of directors at Northern Neck Electric Cooperative. "Our electric cooperatives are delighted to provide support to these worthy students, as they represent a future generation of leaders in their communities."

The Foundation awarded Worth Hudson Scholarships of \$1,000 each to 57 students. They are named in honor of Hudson, the first chairman of the Education Scholarship Foundation Board and former chairman of the board of directors of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative in Chase City, Va.

The Foundation also approved three co-op-specific scholarships. Two Gertrude Winston Memorial Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 were awarded to students in the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative service territory. The program was established in memory of the mother of longtime REC board member Richard Oliver.

The C. D Hypes Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 was awarded to a student in the Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative service territory. Hypes was an educator and a board member at New Castle, Va.-based CBEC.



"Electric cooperatives have a long commitment of supporting education as a way of fostering leadership and enhancing the quality of life in the communities that we serve," said Richard G. Johnstone Jr., president and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We're extremely proud to be able to help these deserving young people from electric cooperative service areas continue their education, whether at a college or university, or in learning a trade."

A Cook Scholarship of \$1,000 was awarded to a student in the Delaware Electric Cooperative service territory, generously donated by DEC members Larry and Leslie Cook.

Since 2001, the Foundation has provided approximately 780 scholarships totaling more than \$740,000 to aspiring college students as well as to the next generation of electric lineworkers.

Scholarship recipients are chosen based on a competitive screening process that considers financial need (40%), academic achievement (40%) and community involvement and personal history (20%). Applicants must be a senior graduating from either high school or home school in the year during which they apply.

They must also provide evidence of their acceptance into a post-high school educational institution or program. These grants can be used to pay for tuition, fees and books.

The Foundation is funded through tax-deductible donations and bequests from individuals, proceeds from fundraising events and CoBank's Sharing Success Program. For information on donating to the Foundation, visit [vmdaec.com/scholarship](http://vmdaec.com/scholarship).

## TRAINING CENTER NOW EV-FRIENDLY

### New EV Charger to Provide Service and Training Opportunities

Visitors to the Electric Cooperative Training Center in Palmyra, Va., don't have to worry about running out of power for their electric vehicles.

A two-vehicle charger recently was placed in service at the center, which serves the training needs of co-op lineworkers and other personnel in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

Accessible from U.S. 15, it is believed to be the only non-residential charging station in Fluvanna County. The nearest stations are located in Zion Crossroads, several miles north of the center in Louisa County.

Installed in late April, the station has a dual purpose, said Alan Scruggs, vice president of safety and training services for the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

"It's good to have because we do get some visitors driving electric cars," he says. "But as fast as the field is growing, it'll also be good to give our trainees some experience in how to handle these devices."



The charger is rated at 7.2 kilowatts, which will provide about 30 miles of added range per hour of charging for many vehicles. Details and fees were being worked out at press time, but Alan said the charging station will be available soon to co-op visitors and members of the public.

— Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living magazine.



ONLINE TRAINING



**May 6 - 2 p.m.      Time Management in a Time of Isolation**

This presentation is designed to help us understand the challenges we face when managing our daily work routines from a now very familiar environment, home. We will focus a bit on the psychology and physiological responses we naturally have while working from home and address them using constructive time management methods. A bit tongue-in-cheek and we will have fun learning! – Facilitator: Sam Bruce

**May 14 - 10 a.m.      Harnessing the Power of Positive Thinking**

Negative self-talk, which often impedes our everyday lives, can be extremely harmful to our personal relationships, productivity, performance, and overall quality of life. This is why learning to change how we think is crucial to our happiness. It takes time and a conscious effort, but if we can change our “faulty” thinking and replace it with more rational, realistic and positive thinking, then we will be able to approach the challenges in our daily lives from a more confident, rational and optimistic perspective. – Facilitator: Optima EAP

**May 19 - 10 a.m.      Stay Motivated: Tips for Leveraging Your Superpower**

It’s easy enough to set a goal. But when it comes to habit changes like improving your diet, exercising more, or trying harder to meet new people, sustaining change can feel impossible. This session will teach the 3-part theory of human motivation. You’ll identify your motivational style (e.g. your “superpower!”) and learn strategies that will keep you motivated so you can achieve any goal. – Facilitator: Optima EAP

**May 27 - 2 p.m.      Strategies for Stress Relief**

Everyone is stressed. The responsibilities of modern living can be overwhelming. But is it possible to learn techniques and strategies to manage and relieve stress? Yes! In this session, we will talk about the symptoms of stress, how they manifest in day-to-day life and ways to effectively manage stress. The goal of this session is to help every participant develop a willingness to employ at least one new strategy towards feeling less stressed. – Facilitator: Optima EAP

Join us for any or all of the webinars. Each webinar is 60-75 minutes and \$50 per person.

To register\*: Email your selections to Brandon Burton, Director of Continuing Education at VMDAEC, at [bburton@vmdaec.com](mailto:bburton@vmdaec.com). Co-ops will be billed following the webinars.

*\*Please follow your co-op’s protocol before registering.*



Not-for-profit electric cooperatives are responding to COVID-19 by taking steps to protect employees, maintain reliable and affordable services, and support their communities. Electric cooperatives are built by, and belong to, the communities they serve. That community ownership and focus drives co-ops as they respond to evolving COVID-19 challenges and local concerns.

CLICK HERE TO  
**TAKE ACTION**  
Or visit [action.coop/covidrelief](http://action.coop/covidrelief)

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

**Kansas Co-op Shares Designs for Social-Distancing Floor Stickers**

In preparation for opening our co-op lobby doors to members, consider using some social distancing floor stickers to encourage members to stay 6 feet apart when waiting in line to pay their bill.

Three different print-ready designs for both 8.5x11 and 11x17 in English and Spanish are available in the NRECA Communicators professional community at [tinyurl.com/ybn2vs3u](http://tinyurl.com/ybn2vs3u) (access through this link may be limited to members of this community).

For co-ops on a budget, you can order full sheets of white sticker paper/labels and print your own. You can buy 20 sheets of 8.5x11 for \$9 and a pack of 10 sheets of 11x17 for \$27 on Amazon. Kansas-based Victory Electric Cooperative’s purchasing department quoted it would cost \$16 each to buy (not a custom design). “I have a 36-inch roll of sticker paper for my large format printer, so I’ll print them three across at 12-inches diameter each,” says Vice President of Communications Jerri A. Imgarten-Whitley, who also designed the stickers.

The inexpensive stickers are intended for temporary, indoor use only and are easy to replace.



Anyone interested in receiving the original Illustrator design file or having something customized can email [jrobertson@vmdaec.com](mailto:jrobertson@vmdaec.com). Lobby posters and other signs are also in the works. We appreciate Jerri’s willingness to share this great resource with our local co-ops.

Other precautions Victory Electric plans to implement upon re-opening their lobby to the public include extended lobby hours for the first couple weeks, requiring everyone who enters to wear a mask and all visitors must stay 6 feet apart while in line. Members will also be asked to bring no more than one person with them to the co-op.

CO-OPS FOR CONSERVATION

Monarch Conservation Agreement Ready for Co-ops Wishing to Enroll

Electric cooperatives have a new avenue toward regulatory certainty as an endangerment listing on the monarch butterfly is decided this year.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized a voluntary agreement for conservation action that guarantees participants no additional measures will be required of them if the species is later listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Co-ops may enroll in the CCAA until the monarch is listed but early enrollments through the end of June will be factored into the agency's listing decision. Read the full story by Cathy Cash on Cooperative.com at [tinyurl.com/ydefq4g8](https://tinyurl.com/ydefq4g8)



USFWS offers a final conservation agreement for the monarch butterfly that co-ops can enroll in to attain regulatory certainty prior to a listing decision about the species in December. (Photo by: Denny Gainer/NRECA)

SOCIAL MEDIA STARS

Cooperative Living magazine has taken full advantage of the power of social media during this time of self-isolation and quarantine. People are seeking positive entertainment and are finding it on the magazine's Facebook, Instagram and YouTube pages. The Facebook posts below reached nearly 7,000 followers combined. Are you following Cooperative Living?

