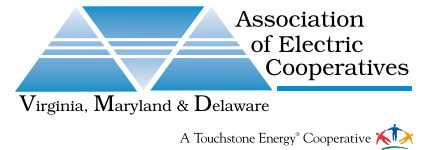


A regular update for leaders, members and friends of
the VA-MD-DE Association of Electric Cooperatives

from Richard G. Johnstone Jr. | President & CEO



PASSING THE TORCH AT REC

Farmer to Retire from REC; Hewa to Become CEO

On June 1, Kent D. Farmer announced his retirement as president and chief executive officer of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, effective Aug. 1.

Kent has served as president and CEO since 2004, and has been with REC for 41 years.

"It has been my honor and privilege to lead REC and to serve REC's membership for the past 16 years," Kent said. "It has been a satisfying career, which was made easier by the support of an extremely talented and dedicated workforce and a forward-looking board.

"Local consumer-owned electric cooperatives are dedicated to a single goal — serving their members. I am proud to have led REC to become one of the largest and most successful cooperatives in the country. Having served two decades in executive leadership, now it is time for me to allow the next generation of leaders to take the helm," he added.

Christopher G. Shipe, chairman of the REC Board of Directors said, "It is with sincere gratitude from the Board and membership that we thank Kent for a career well done. Under his leadership so much has been accomplished to make REC and our communities better — not just because of reliable and affordable electricity, but because of the genuine care and concern he demonstrates for the local citizens, their homes and businesses."

REC's Board of Directors also announced on June 1 the selection of John D. Hewa, current vice president of corporate services and chief operating officer, to succeed Kent as president and CEO.

"On behalf of our Board of Directors, we are pleased to announce John Hewa as our next president and CEO," Chris said. "He is a proven and respected leader who has delivered strong operating results during his time with REC, which began in 2017. We are confident that he will lead our employees and our member-owned cooperative to achieve great success in the years to come."

According to Chris, the announcement is the successful culmination of a multiyear succession plan to select the best leader for the cooperative. John has worked closely with the Board over the past several years.

He has more than 20 years of leadership experience in the electric utility industry, with an emphasis in technology and management of public and cooperative power utilities. His experience spans technical and executive roles managing electric, water, wastewater, and wireless and fiber optic telecommunications systems.



Kent Farmer

John Hewa

John holds a deep appreciation for the cooperative business model. He has served as the CEO of electric cooperatives in Texas and Florida, and as vice president of research, engineering, and technical services at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Arlington, Va.

At NRECA, John and his teams worked to advance the adoption of beneficial smart grid technologies among the nation's electric cooperatives, focusing on reliable, resilient and clean and distributed energy tech adoption. At NRECA, he worked with federal agencies including the RUS and DOE to address co-op technical and regulatory issues.

Prior to his cooperative career, John managed the utilities department for the City of Manassas, Va. and served as director of engineering for BTES, an electricity distributor in the Tennessee Valley region.

Congratulations to Kent on a remarkable career and to John on his new role.

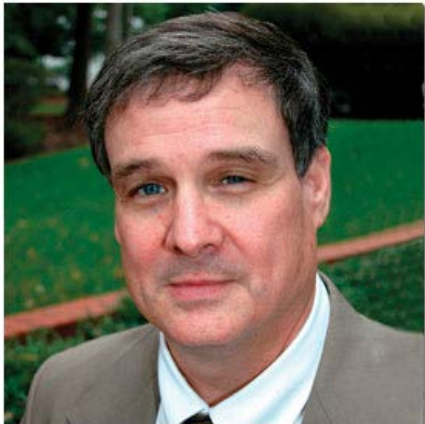
— Report by Casey Hollins, Director of Communications and Public Relations, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.

PERSONALS – NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE VMD COOPERATIVE FAMILY

Character, Courage and Humor

Remembering a true servant leader and good friend

Both in person and online, the cooperative community was moved on Saturday, June 6, by a beautiful ceremony honoring the life and accomplishments of our friend Bill Sherrod, the 26-year VMD Association employee who served for 15 years as editor of *Cooperative Living* and vice president of communications and public relations.



The memorial was held at the First Baptist Church in Ashland, where Bill was an active member, and was livestreamed to a wide audience in addition to about 40 family members and close friends who congregated at the church while respecting social distancing.

Senior Pastor Joshua Hayden gave a moving description of his interactions with Bill, and explained how Bill faced his difficult diagnosis of pancreatic cancer with characteristic courage and good humor, never feeling sorry for himself or asking “Why me?” Pastor Hayden concluded with a memorable passage from T.S. Eliot’s “Little Gidding.”

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

Nockengost, and his brother Jon Sherrod. Jon told a story about a fishing excursion with his brother on a small boat in the James River, and how Bill’s lucky hat fell into the swift currents, with the two frantically and successfully chasing it down and retrieving it. There were few dry eyes in the sanctuary when Jon then donned Bill’s lucky hat.

Richard G. Johnstone Jr., president and CEO of the VMD Association, described how much his old friend meant to him and read a tribute he wrote titled “A Master Storyteller,” which will be featured in the July issue of *Cooperative Living*. Richard noted that “it’s hard to lose a valued co-worker of 26 years; harder still to lose a close colleague of 26 years; and hardest of all is to lose a dear friend of 26 years. I — and many others in this sanctuary and in the cooperative family across this three-state area — lost all three when Bill passed away on June 1.” Richard also quoted a verse from Micah 6:8 that was a shared favorite with Bill: “And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” He added, “Bill did all of those, very well.”

Richard closed by noting that the Association was making arrangements for a William V. Sherrod Jr. scholarship, with details to be released shortly. Memorial contributions in Bill’s name may be made to First Baptist Church, 800 Thompson St., Ashland, VA 23005, or to the VMDEEC Education Scholarship Foundation, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Glen Allen, VA 23060.

Bill’s full obituary is at dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/ashland-va/william-sherrod-9206352. Bill has received numerous other tributes and plaudits from friends since his passing. The family hopes to be able to host a community celebration of Bill’s life later this year.

Also speaking at the service were Bill’s sister Sandy Sherrod

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

Our offices are reopening June 15!

Association of Electric Cooperatives
Virginia, Maryland & Delaware
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



Firefly Celebrates 2,500 Customers

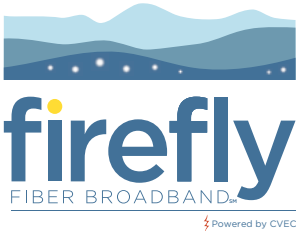
Firefly Fiber Broadband, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, reached the milestone of connecting 2,500 customers to the internet on May 5. A celebration was held with its customers virtually by inviting them to send in a selfie showing how they use their lightning-fast internet. In exchange for the photos, Firefly committed to donating up to \$2,500 to the local food bank. Firefly President and CEO Gary Wood explained, “Firefly wants to celebrate its arrival in the communities by lending a hand and introducing ourselves as a partner and friend. Many families in our region are struggling to keep food on the table, and we want to help remedy that with our contribution.” Little did Gary know that Firefly’s contribution would grow exponentially.

When Firefly’s fiber contractors, S&N Communications and AAP Construction, both based in Louisa County, heard about the challenge, they jumped on board with a match. Firefly invited Conexon, the network design and construction management company for the fiber build, to join the challenge and applied for a matching donation through financing partner CoBank’s Sharing Success program. Firefly’s \$2,500 donation grew quickly to \$12,500 due to these amazing partnerships.

According to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, \$1 provides four meals for those in need. The donation of \$12,500 will supply over 50,000 meals to the local community. Firefly

“Firefly wants to celebrate its arrival in the communities by lending a hand and introducing ourselves as a partner and friend.”

— Gary Wood, Firefly President and CEO



designated BRAFB as the recipient because they provide meals for many of the communities located in Firefly’s current service area across parts of 14 counties. Firefly will prioritize making internet service available to CVEC members and is also making plans to address the lack of broadband in the rural areas throughout central Virginia.

Firefly uses laser light transmitted through glass fiber-optic cable to deliver high-speed internet and phone services, meaning that there are no slowdowns due to weather or number of users online at one time. In addition, the upload and download speeds are symmetrical, and Firefly does not impose data caps or require a contract for residential service. Rural central Virginians will, for the first time ever, have access to gigabit-speed internet for under \$80 a month. More information about Firefly’s offerings can be found at fireflyva.com.

— Report by Melissa Gay, Communications and Member Services Manager, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative.

VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

A Virtual Meeting, But a Real Celebration of Electric Cooperatives

Join us in the Association’s first-ever virtual annual meeting!

Due to the COVID-19 meeting restrictions we are going to bring the meeting directly to our members and national partners. Our theme “A Virtual Meeting, but a Real Celebration of Electric Cooperatives” will embrace these times and celebrate our cooperative culture.

We really appreciate the continued support of our many partners and want to give you every opportunity to participate in our first-ever virtual event. Some of our national partners are working on video presentations while others will have the opportunity to address the meeting via a brief Zoom call. Either way, our partners’ organizations will be recognized, and the annual meeting will be recorded and stored on our website for the rest of 2020. We want to continue promoting our national partnerships and associate members throughout the year. Our relationship with our national partners is more important then ever during these uncertain and challenging times.

As you can see from the schedule below the virtual annual meeting will be a jam-packed, interactive, entertaining and enjoyable event. We will include short videos, polls and surveys between the main sessions to keep everyone involved. Our registration is scheduled to open in the next few weeks, so be on the look-out for an email with more details.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- 9:15 – 9:35 Welcome and Opening Remarks – Richard Johnstone
Invocation – Stan Feuerberg
- 9:40 – 10:15 Celebrating the Electric Cooperative Business Model
Guest Speaker – Curtis Wynn, President, NRECA
- 10:20 – 10:40 Celebrating “Lighting Bolivia” Participants
Video and Testimonials
- 10:45 – 11:05 Celebrating Partnerships
Recognizing our National Partners, Sponsors and Associate Members
- 11:10 – 11:50 Celebrating Leaders
Honoring VMD Distinguished Leadership, Service and Friend Award Winners
- 11:55 – 12:30 Celebrating a World Free from COVID-19
Dynamic Speaker Talking About Lessons Learned from the Pandemic
- 12:35 – 12:45 Celebrating A Successful Virtual Meeting
Wrap-up Session with Door Prizes

— Report by Brian Mosier, Chief Operating Officer, VMDAEC.

CO-OP TRAINING

Training Opportunity: How to Handle Failure

All of us have failed at one time or another. If you can honestly say that you have never failed, then you are either not being truthful or have never tried to do anything.

In the webinar, How to Handle Failure, we will explore:

- How we view failure and what is important to us
- How we deal with failure
- How to use failures as points of wisdom

WHAT: How to Handle Failure Webinar

WHEN: June 24th

TIME: 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

WHERE: via Zoom

FACILITATOR: Sam Bruce, Sapient Business Solutions and the University of Richmond

FEE: \$30 per person (four or more from your co-op, \$25 each)

REGISTER: Email Brandon Burton at bburton@vmdae.com*

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



— Report by Brandon Burton, Director of Continuing Education, VMDAEC.

