

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

from Richard G. Johnstone Jr. | President & CEO



## COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETINGS

### NOVEC Holds Modified Annual Meeting

Members elect House and Bruno to board of directors

Equipped with facemasks and hand sanitizer, NOVEC members gathered for their annual meeting in an open-air construction bay at the co-op's Gainesville Technical Center on Oct. 14. Approximately 50 people practiced social distancing while hearing about NOVEC's progress in the past year and voting for directors to fill two seats on the co-op's board of directors.



Lisa Hooker, NOVEC vice president of public relations, welcomed members and said NOVEC was adhering to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. "The Co-op annual meeting is a long-standing tradition. The coronavirus required us to rethink how we conduct our annual meeting, but we're proud to carry on the tradition tonight."

#### ELECTION RESULTS



Members elected Mark J. Bruno to represent District 4 on the board of directors. The district includes parts of Fauquier, Prince William and Loudoun counties. Mark brings to NOVEC's board his experience as senior vice president of the Space and Mission Systems Group of Engility Corp. (formerly Northrop Grumman/TASC). Bruno, the lead for more than 2,000 employees, was responsible for 70 programs worldwide.

Members reelected Wade House to represent District 5, which includes parts of Fauquier and Prince William counties. House, who ran unopposed, has served on the board since 1993 as secretary, treasurer, vice chairman and chairman.



#### NOVEC'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As chairman, Wade addressed the assembly. He praised employees for putting NOVEC in the top 10 among the nation's largest energy companies in the J.D. Power Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey for the last decade. He said, "The board is extremely pleased with the results of the co-op."

President and CEO Stan Feuerberg highlighted some of NOVEC's accomplishments:

- NOVEC has been the most reliable electric utility in the region for 21 consecutive years and is on track to make it 22 years. Stan said, "Our outage restoration performance is among the best ever this year."
- Data center and population growth in NOVEC's service territory has increased power load. "We have more load than some small states." The Co-op welcomed its 175,000th metered customer in August.
- NOVEC was one of the first Virginia utilities to completely divest itself from coal-powered electricity. In addition to natural gas-fired generation, it is generating and distributing renewable energy from its 49.9-megawatt biomass power plant, as well as electricity from landfill gas and solar photovoltaic systems. By 2023, NOVEC will distribute the energy output from an additional 300 megawatts of solar capacity created at multiple Virginia sites.
- The co-op has not had a base-rate increase since 1991. NOVEC last reduced its base rates by 4.5% in 2011.
- Power cost adjustment credits on bills, given since 2012, will save customers approximately \$52.4 million, total, in 2020 "due to shrewd power purchasing."
- NOVEC Solutions is selling its patented NS One-net to meet customer demand. This "revolutionary" invention allows data to travel in two directions on one optic fiber, thus reducing data-transport costs by almost 50%.
- The co-op has close to \$1 billion in assets, with little debt.
- NOVEC and NOVEC HELPS are donating thousands of dollars to area food banks this year to assist people struggling with hunger because of COVID-19.

— Report by Priscilla Knight, Senior Communications Specialist, NOVEC.

## Historic First for Prince George Electric

Monday, Sept. 28, was an historic day for Prince George Electric Cooperative. For the first time in PGEC's 80-year tenure, members were absent from the annual meeting. It was a stark contrast to the noisy, jovial atmosphere of meetings past, when members enjoyed a complimentary fried-chicken dinner and children posed for pictures with LED Lucy.

This year, the conference room was quiet and still as Paul Brown, chairman of the board, took to the podium to address the small, in-person audience of board members and PGEC staff, masked and spaced 6 feet apart. Brown then addressed the webcam positioned before him, which was livestreaming the meeting for PGEC's membership of approximately 12,000.

While doing so presented some unique challenges, hosting the meeting virtually was decidedly the necessary course of action for PGEC. In order to adhere to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, they had no choice but to innovate a solution for doing business-as-usual during a most unusual time.

As with so many other challenges presented by the pandemic, PGEC staff, with help from the VMD Association, rose to the occasion and successfully livestreamed the meeting for their members.

Paul Brown called the meeting to order at 5 p.m., and Donnie Drew, supervisor of PGEC's right-of-way crew, gave the invocation. Robert Hall, CFO and senior vice president of regulatory affairs, delivered promising news in his 2019 treasurer's report, stating that PGEC's operating revenue of \$40.6 million was up from \$38.6 million in 2018, and PGEC's assets had increased by \$8.5 million.

In his opening remarks, CEO Casey Logan highlighted PGEC's key accomplishments during 2019, which was a successful year for both the cooperative and its fiber-to-the-home subsidiary, RURALBAND. He announced PGEC's complete transition to advanced metering infrastructure and reported that RURALBAND has approximately 1,368 connected accounts, with broadband availability at more than 5,061 homes.

Casey also took some time to discuss 2020, namely the ways in which PGEC has adapted to changes throughout the pandemic

From left, Chairman Paul H. Brown delivers the chairman's report. PGEC President & CEO Casey Logan declares resiliency as the theme of the meeting.



and demonstrated concern for community — the 7th cooperative principle — which has recently become the principle of utmost importance.

He cited the adjustments made to in-home installation protocols, the indefinite closure of both PGEC office lobbies, the revised bill repayment programs available to members experiencing financial hardship, and the deployment of eight free Wi-Fi hotspots within the cooperative's service territory to assist the community with remote working and learning.

In his chairman's report, Paul summarized the progress that RURALBAND has made since 2018, and thanked the counties of Prince George, Surry and Sussex for their role in the allocation of state and federal grants which helped make such progress possible.

Paul assured the PGEC membership that despite the uncertainties of the future regarding the pandemic, their cooperative is well prepared and aptly poised for continued success in the days to come, while sustaining its commitment to providing affordable, reliable electricity and high-speed internet.

Proxy ballots were mailed out on Sept. 1, and those completed and received by the deadline were entered into a drawing for 10 bill credits, each worth \$250. The results of the election were announced at the end of the meeting. Four directors were elected by acclamation to three-year terms on the board. Richard B. Scott of District 3, Matthew P. Carden of District 8, and Herbert R. Patrick of District 9 were reelected, and Keith M. Dunn of District 6 was elected to serve the remaining two years of Randolph G. Williams's term, whose vacancy Dunn was appointed to fill in 2019.

— Report by Renee Chapline, Senior Vice President of Community and Member Engagement, Prince George Electric Cooperative.

## Craig-Botetourt Concludes Successful Annual Meeting

Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting on Saturday, Oct. 10, postponing it from its normal June date because of the COVID-19 pandemic. CBEC took all safety measures with masking and social distancing, while discouraging in-person attendance at the meeting in its New Castle headquarters. Despite the limitations, the meeting was very successful.

Frank Garman Jr., vice chairman of the board of directors, started the session with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. CBEC Attorney Steve Yost declared a quorum of co-op members was present in person or by proxy, enough to conduct business.

Board President J.C. Winstead provided an update on the board's responsibilities in overseeing the activities of the cooperative. He said mild temperatures dampened cooperative sales in 2019, compared with projected demand. J.C. also pointed out that the construction of the Ironto substation will provide members with more reliable power, adding that CBEC also is moving ahead with its Bee Online Advantage broadband project.

"Even though the world changes, one thing will never change, and that is your cooperative will work as diligently as possible to continue to serve you into the future," J.C. said.

Secretary-treasurer James Huffman reported 2019 was a



challenging year, though it sold more than \$12 million of electricity. Weather patterns affected the cooperative's bottom line, he added.

CEO Jeff Ahearn welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He said maintenance of distribution lines has increased by stepping up right-of-way work in the last year. Jeff also noted the ways in which improving the infrastructure will help both the co-op's communications network and members who sign up for high-speed internet service.

"We are constantly looking for ways to decrease costs and increase the reliability of our system," he said.

Service awards went to Sheila Switzer (50 years), Pete Birtsch (30 years), Jody Scott (20 years), Troy Duncan (20 years) and director Patrick Ryan (25 years).

Reelected for three-year terms as board members were Winstead of District 2 (Craig and Roanoke counties) and Huffman of District 3 (Botetourt and Montgomery counties).

CBEC had a door prize drawing for members who sent in their proxies prior. Prizes were awarded in the form of bill credits.

— Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living.



COMMITMENT TO **COMMUNITY**



REC lineworkers set one of three flagpoles at the Stephens City Moose Lodge.

# Setting Patriotic Poles: An Eagle Scout Project

**"It definitely gives me a sense of pride to know that not only did we help this young man out, but that we were also able to honor our country."**

**- Travis See**  
*Sr. Distribution Designer and Surveyor*

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Aaron Metz, a senior at Sherando High School in Frederick County, has been working with the Stephens City Moose Lodge to install three large flagpoles along with lighting on the lodge property. The Virginia Department of Transportation donated the metal poles, and Aaron's next step was to reach out to Rappahannock Electric Cooperative for help installing the poles.

To help Aaron complete his project, REC worked with him to donate the time, equipment and manpower to install the flagpoles to their proper depth. Travis See, senior distribution designer and surveyor, worked to design the project and Tim Campbell, lead lineman, and David Annalora, lineman, worked to set the flagpoles on The Moose Lodge property.

"REC strives to be active in the community and we try to give back as much as we can," said See. "I live in Stephens City, so I drive by the flagpoles often, and it definitely gives me a sense of pride to know that not only did we help this young man out, but that we were also able to honor our country."

## REC Cares: Giving to Local Education Foundations

From attending career days and giving electrical safety demos, to providing scholarships to students and grants to educational programs, REC supports local schools, teachers and students in a variety of ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every aspect of life, especially schools. Finding new ways to continue providing support, REC has donated resources and provided funding to different nonprofit groups across the cooperative's service area. Recently, REC made a \$2,000 donation to both the Frederick County Educational Foundation and the Clarke County Education Foundation.

The Frederick County Educational Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides financial resources to Frederick County Public Schools, awarding classroom and STEM grants to fund innovative programs for the more than 13,000 students in the Frederick County Public School system.

"As teachers worked through their reimagined COVID-19 classrooms, they were faced with expenses they paid out of their own pockets," explained Brian Wolfe, REC's senior public relations specialist, who helped coordinate the donation. "The FCEF's grant will help teachers offset those expenses, and REC's donation will directly support four Frederick County teachers."

Likewise, the Clarke County Education Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing private support to Clarke County Schools to enhance its tax-supported programs. Since its inception, the CCEF has provided student scholarships, teacher grants, system demonstration grants and donor-defined projects.

"The donation REC made to CCEF will be broken down to support three different initiatives, from supporting individual teachers to providing assistance with school-wide services," Brian said.

To help offset the expenses that teachers experienced while purchasing materials, supplies and learning tools, \$1,000 will go towards supporting numerous teachers whose expenses range anywhere from \$20 to over \$100.

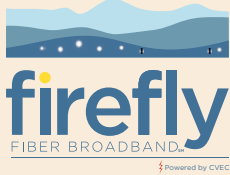
The other half of the donation will be split evenly between two services — the development and logistical cost of creating virtual field trips for Clarke County Schools to the Discovery Museum in Winchester and the Internet Kajeets service, which is a subscription service that provides 36 mobile hotspots for students without internet access.

*- Reports by Rachel Conrad, Communications Specialist, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.*

COOPERATIVE BROADBAND

# Firefly, Fluvanna County Partner to Expand Rural Broadband

Firefly Fiber Broadband, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, is partnering with Fluvanna County to make use of the funds that are available for non-CVEC areas in the county as a one-time opportunity to quickly expand broadband availability in response to COVID issues. The CARES Act funds have a requirement that the projects be completed within calendar year 2020.



Firefly developed a plan to include construction of over 7 miles of fiber optic cable and make service available to 150 accounts. Gary Wood, CEO for Firefly and CVEC, commented, "Firefly is excited to announce our partnership with Fluvanna County to help expand broadband in this area of the county. This project will connect homes and businesses plus allow for additional free Wi-Fi hotspots to help school children and remote workers in an underserved area of the county. The project will fit into our schedule without diverting attention from the system-wide CVEC fiber build, which is speeding up to get as many people access to broadband as fast as possible."

Firefly will construct and operate a fiber-to-the-home internet access beginning at Carysbrook Road and then extending

south along James Madison Highway (U.S. Route 15). The project area includes homes and businesses along James Madison Highway south to an area at or near 4985 James Madison Highway as its southern border. From the James Madison Highway and River Road (State Route 6) intersection at Dixie, the project area will also continue east along River Road and Gravel Hill Road at or near the address of 1476 East River Road. The project area includes construction along Gravel Hill Road. In addition to the fiber build, Firefly and Fluvanna County are partnering to offer free Wi-Fi hotspots at the Carysbrook Elementary School and the Fluvanna Community Center. By spring, a third Wi-Fi hotspot will be added at the Carysbrook Complex youth sports fields.

Eric Dahl, Fluvanna County Administrator commented, "The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that for the education, safety, health, welfare, convenience, or prosperity of our residents, having access to broadband is a needed utility. The Board of Supervisors will continue to advocate for broadband access for every home and business in Fluvanna County."

Updates on the project, including details of the expansion and a map of the project area, can be found on the Firefly website at [fireflyva.com](http://fireflyva.com).

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

COOPERATIVE LEADERS

## Co-ops Introduce New Leaders

### SHOCKLEY APPOINTED TO ANEC BOARD

William E. "Ted" Shockley has been appointed by the A&N Electric Cooperative Board of Directors to fill a vacancy in District 3.

Ted is the owner and publisher of Eastern Shore First, a monthly news magazine dedicated to telling the stories of Eastern Shore residents in Northampton and Accomack counties. He is the former managing editor of the Delmarva Media Group and former editor of the Eastern Shore News.



Ted Shockley

The appointment fills the District 3 vacancy left by long-time board member R. Wayne Browning's passing this spring.

Ted resides in the Belle Haven area with his wife, Amy. The couple have two children.

The appointment does not fill the seat's full term. Ted must run for reelection at the cooperative's next annual meeting.

— Report by Jay Diem, Communications and Public Relations Coordinator, A&N Electric Cooperative.

### REC PLACES JOHNSON OVER PROCUREMENT & FACILITIES

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative has named Josh Johnson as the new director of procurement and facilities management. Josh is a 20-year electric cooperative professional with experiences spanning various functional areas of distribution cooperatives in South Carolina and Virginia.



Josh Johnson

Since 2018, he served as one of REC's two key accounts executives. In this role, he acted as the direct point of contact for large-scale industrial and commercial members, as well as non-jurisdictional members like county governments and local school systems. His career accomplishments include managing large-scale design and construction projects, several with Virginia Department of Transportation road projects.

Josh earned his Master of Business Administration, with a concentration in finance, from Strayer University in 2015. Prior to that, he completed undergraduate studies in 2010, earning his Bachelor of Science in business administration from Strayer University. In addition, Josh holds an associate degree in occupational technology and an electrical/maintenance certificate. Josh lives in Frederick County with his wife, Emily, and their son, Colton, and daughter, Kylie.

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



RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

Muhoro Recognized by Energy Storage Association

Peter Muhoro, vice president of strategy and technology at Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, was recently honored with the Diversity & Inclusion Award by the U.S. Energy Storage Association.

“The new Diversity & Inclusion Award was developed this year to recognize those who have worked to nurture and encourage diversity and inclusion in the energy storage industry and paved the way for the success of women, people of color and LGBTQ professionals,” according to a news release from the association.

“Peter Muhoro is the inaugural recipient this year for his dedication to initiating, supporting and integrating programs for diversity and inclusion both within and outside of the energy industry.”

The ESA is a national trade association dedicated to energy storage, working toward a more resilient, sustainable and affordable electricity grid.

“I am honored and humbled to be selected for the inaugural U.S. Energy Storage Association diversity and inclusion award,” Peter said. “I urge the energy industry to continue to promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and to celebrate the diversity of people, ideas, cultures and educational backgrounds.”

In celebrating award winners this year, the association also noted: “This year’s class of winners includes trailblazers from all sectors of the industry who have dedicated their careers to advancing the adoption of energy storage and accelerating the resiliency and reliability of the power grid.”

– Report by Rachel Conrad, Communications Specialist, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.



Peter Muhoro

“I urge the energy industry to continue to promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and to celebrate the diversity of people, ideas, cultures and educational backgrounds.”

– Peter Muhoro

COMMUNITY HOT SPOTS

RURALBAND Adds Hotspots

As the digital demands of living and working during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to pose challenges for rural communities underserved by major internet providers, Prince George Electric’s RURALBAND is working diligently to adapt to this unprecedented situation. To further support and assist those who are working and learning virtually, RURALBAND plans to deploy additional wireless hotspots throughout the PGEC service territory, further providing free internet access for community members to use from the safety of their own vehicles.

There are currently eight wireless hotspots serving the counties of Prince George, Surry and Sussex, which RURALBAND deployed in April 2020. Like the existing hotspots, the new ones will not require any login information or passwords for connection and use. “We have made accessing the wireless service simple. When a user first connects their device, the user will see a splash screen with our logo and the name “Ruralband\_HotSpot”. Once the user accepts the terms and conditions of service, it is ready to go,” says Casey Logan, PGEC president and CEO.

PGEC’s leaders, in coordination with the community’s leaders, are working to identify and confirm new locations for the additional access points. The details for these locations will be announced once finalized. All partners expect users of this public WIFI to adhere to state guidelines and practice social distancing and not congregate.

– Report by Noelle Abrahams, Marketing Specialist, Prince George Electric Cooperative.



For information regarding the existing community Wi-Fi access hotspots currently available for use, see below.

**Waverly Headquarters** parking lot, from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Address: 7103 General Mahone Highway, Waverly, Va.

**Rocky Hock Church** parking lot, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Address: 2745 White Marsh Road, Wakefield, Va.

**Moores Swamp Church** parking lot, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Address: 2300 Runnymede Road, Elberon, Va.

**South Elementary School** parking lot, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Address: 13400 Prince George Drive, Prince George, Va.

**J. E. J. Moore Middle School** parking lot, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Address: 11455 Prince George Drive Prince George, Va.

**N. B. Clements Junior High School** parking lot, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. Address: 7800 Laurel Springs Road Prince George, Va. (in the parking lot beside the football field)

**Newville Baptist Church** parking lot, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Address: 7710 Beef Steak Road, Waverly, Va.

**Prince George Central Wellness Center** parking lot, from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Address: 11023 Prince George Drive, Disputanta, Va.

CONGRATULATIONS

REC Communications Team Nationally Recognized

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative’s Communications and Public Relations Department received national recognition for their communication efforts from the Cooperative Communicators Association (CCA).



REC was presented with two first place awards for projects related to the cooperative’s involvement in the NRECA International’s Project Bolivia. Ryan White, digital media specialist, won first place for the Project Bolivia video he produced. Likewise, the team won first place for their use of social media in creating the Project Bolivia Facebook Blog that kept family, friends and the community-at-large updated while the crew was working in Bolivia.

The team also won second place in advertising for the #WeAreREC Community ad.

“REC’s Communications and Public Relations department is dedicated to keeping member-owners informed and engaged with our Cooperative,” said Casey Hollins, director of communications and public relations. “Member feedback shows that our member-owners recognize and appreciate our communication efforts. We work hard to ensure that our messages are clear and effective, and that we go beyond our member-owners’ expectations.”

The CCA is an organization of 300 professionals who communicate for cooperatives. The organization is unique in both its mission and membership as it works towards helping members excel in communications. CCA emphasizes ideas and strategies aimed at making communications more successful for cooperatives.

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



**POWERFUL  
CAREERS**



**October 19-23 is Careers in Energy Week.**  
Follow the Virginia’s Electric Cooperatives Facebook page for daily mentions about the variety of Powerful Careers at the nation’s electric cooperatives.



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