



CONNECTIONS

November 20, 2020

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 SUSTAINABILITY

REC Going #GreenTogether with Members

As technology advances in all facets of life, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative has positioned itself at the forefront of these developments in the electric utility industry. From an innovative smart grid to a grid-scale battery storage project, REC is taking advantage of innovative opportunities to increase member-owners' ability to be energy efficient.

In an effort to support energy conservation efforts statewide, REC took part in the Virginia Energy Efficiency Council's (VAEEC) Fall 2020 Forum and Virtual Trade Show on Nov. 10.

The VAEEC's annual Fall Forum features learning opportunities focused on the latest topics from industry leaders, with topics including opportunities and challenges for large energy users and how to implement energy efficiency during COVID-19.

In between each discussion, the virtual exhibit hall provides attendees the opportunity to discover new, innovative technology and connect with energy efficiency-focused companies. REC's exhibit focused on the



cooperative's sustainability efforts, and how members can implement their own sustainability practices, as well as information on electric vehicle charging.

Although the 2020 event was virtual, there were plenty of ways for attendees to network with REC, as well as event speakers, professionals and other sponsors. Learn more about innovative technologies and energy solutions from REC at myrec.coop/energysolutions.

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

COOPERATIVE BROADBAND EXPANSION

Firefly to Spread Broadband in Three Counties

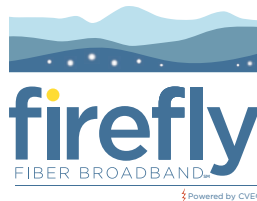
Firefly Fiber Broadband, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, is partnering with three counties to make use of federal economic stimulus funds as a one-time opportunity to expand broadband availability.

In Amherst County, Firefly will tap \$1.37 million of CARES Act funds. In Louisa County, \$340,000 will be used, while \$205,000 in CARES Act funding will be used for broadband in Nelson County.

These additional funds, made available by Gov. Ralph Northam, were awarded to localities based on a first-come, first-serve basis after successfully being selected from the pool of applicants and the projects must be completed within calendar year 2020.

Firefly developed a plan to include construction of a project which, in total, includes 21 miles of fiber-optic cable in Amherst and will make service available to 466 accounts.

Gary Wood, CEO for Firefly and CVEC commented, "Firefly is excited to announce our partnership with Amherst County to help expand broadband in these unserved areas of the county. These projects will connect homes, businesses and community centers plus allow for additional free Wi-Fi hotspots to help schoolchildren and remote workers in the



area. Partnerships with localities such as these are what help Firefly and CVEC offer access to reliable, fiber-to-the-home broadband as quickly as possible in even the most remote areas."

The Louisa plan includes construction on two projects which, in total, include more than 4 miles of fiber-optic cable and make service available to 87 accounts.

In addition to the fiber build, Firefly and Louisa County are partnering to find suitable locations for a free Wi-Fi hotspot in the southwestern part of the county that will provide access at up to 30 mbps with no data caps. "Connectivity is critical to our citizens," said Christian Goodwin, Louisa County Administrator. "Our board is grateful to CVEC for their continued collaboration in this important effort."

For Nelson, Firefly developed a plan to include construction of a project which, in total, includes 5 miles of fiber-optic cable and will make service available to 84 accounts.

Nelson County Administrator Stephen A. Carter said, "With this project, Nelson County is the only locality with fiber available at every location along Route 29. ... This is a definitive business attraction tool, as well as enhances the quality of life for Nelson residents and educational opportunities."

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

COOPERATIVE PEOPLE

Young SVEC Professionals Recognized as Tops in the Valley

Two senior staff members at Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative were pleasantly surprised recently with the news that they had been selected to an area publication’s “10 Under 40” list of rising business leaders.

Vice President of Engineering Jason Burch and Morgan Messer, director of external affairs and communication, are featured in the November issue of the Shenandoah Valley Business Journal, a monthly insert of Harrisonburg’s Daily News-Record. The annual list that began in 2011 highlights some of the area’s young, rising business professionals under the age of 40 in the newspaper’s coverage area of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, southern Shenandoah and Page counties, and northernmost Augusta County. Short profiles of those recognized are published in November’s edition of the Business Journal.

Jason, 37, and Morgan, 30, were informed of their selections during a senior staff meeting at the cooperative. SVEC’s Public Relations team nominated both employees.

“I’m very humbled, and it means even more coming from those you work closely with,” says Jason, who joined SVEC in 2005 and became a vice president earlier this year.

“Those around me know that I do not seek out recognition or try to call attention to myself. I really enjoy my job and getting things done for our members. But I am very, very appreciative that my peers think this highly of me, and that the Business Journal felt the same way.”

Morgan started at SVEC in 2019 and also became a senior staff member by her promotion to the director position earlier this year.



Jason Burch



Morgan Messer

“I knew Jason had made the list, but when I was also told that I also made it, I was shellshocked,” she says. “I’m learning so much every day at the co-op and I’m just blessed to be surrounded by a great team. Any personal recognition can only come because I’ve got talented folks surrounding me. This was literally the shock of my life.”

In addition to their professional accomplishments, Jason’s and Morgan’s selections were also the result of their personal efforts to improve their communities. Jason sits on the board of directors for the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition, an organization he is proud to support for its focus on building a better, healthier and more-connected community. Morgan is a class of 2020 graduate from Virginia Tech’s VALOR (Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results) program, the Commonwealth’s premier agricultural leadership development program. She was recently elected as the Young Farmer Committee Chair for Augusta County Farm Bureau, and is a current class member of the Farm Credit Knowledge Center Ag Biz Planner program, as she and her husband are actively building their beef and sheep farm.

Congratulations to both Jason and Morgan!

– Report by Preston Knight, Public Relations Coordinator, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

VETS POWER US

REC Joins Forces to Provide Vets with Resources

The Fredericksburg area is home to one of the largest populations of veterans on the East Coast. On Nov. 10, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative joined forces with the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce for its Veterans Resources Fair.

REC recognizes that veterans have critical skills and talents that will enable the Cooperative to accomplish its mission of empowering communities. The Veterans Resources Fair, held virtually this year, invited businesses, nonprofits and other organizations to share their services, jobs and resources that are available for veterans.

REC honors each employee as an individual, recognizing the value of a diverse workforce. REC is engaged with The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s “Vets Power Us” initiative, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services’ Virginia Values Veterans (V3) program and the Virginia Energy Workforce Consortium.

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



Deondra Jackson, REC Human Resource Talent Coordinator



NRECA strongly believes that hiring and caring for veterans and military spouses strengthens our cooperatives and our communities.

WELCOME TO THE COOPERATIVE FAMILY



VMDAEC Welcomes Sadie Gary

The Association's Director of Legislative Affairs

Sadie Gary has joined VMDAEC's Governmental Affairs Department as Director of Legislative Affairs. In this position, Sadie will work with the Governmental Affairs team and legislative liaisons, assisting with political and legislative matters. Prior to joining VMDAEC, she served as chief of staff to Del. Chris Hurst and deputy director of scheduling to Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

"Sadie's energy and passion for service combined with her policy experience will enable VMDAEC to better serve and advocate for our members in Annapolis, Dover, Richmond and Washington," says Andrew Vehorn, Association vice president of governmental affairs.

"I'm thrilled to join the VMDAEC Governmental Affairs team. I'm looking forward to living out the cooperative principles while learning and growing in this new role."

– Sadie Gary,
VMDAEC Director of
Legislative Affairs

"I'm thrilled to join the VMDAEC Governmental Affairs team. I'm looking forward to living out the cooperative principles while learning and growing in this new role," says Sadie.

A native of Henrico County, Va., Sadie attended Freeman High School and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a 2017 summa cum laude graduate of Virginia Tech. Sadie maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout her entire college career. She is a member of three honor societies at Virginia Tech. She has previously served as women's caucus chair and college caucus chair of the Virginia Young Democrats as well as serving as the president and vice president of the Young Democrats at Virginia Tech.

– Report by Andrew Vehorn, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, VMDAEC.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

The Power of Change at Work

Local Organizations Receive Funding from REC

Due to the generosity of over 27,000 Rappahannock Electric Cooperative member-owners, 11 local organizations were recently awarded grants totaling more than \$74,200. These awards were made possible because of the contributions made to The Power of Change, REC's member-funded charitable program.

Through The Power of Change, REC member-owners either round up their bill to the next whole dollar, make a one-time donation or give a set monthly amount. Those donations are then awarded twice each year to nonprofits and charitable organizations throughout the communities REC serves.

Local recipients of The Power of Change funding awards for fall 2020 include:

Blue Ridge Center for Therapeutic Horsemanship, Clarke County, received \$2,570 to help replace two saddles and a damaged informational bulletin board, as well as purchase sturdy storage cabinets for veterinary, grooming and other supplies.

Earthquest Inc., Rapidan, received \$11,332 to help the second phase of building mews, safe and comfortable homes for birds of prey.

Gwyneth's Gift Foundation, Fredericksburg area, received \$9,240 to purchase 240 hands-on CPR training kits.

John H. Enders Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company, Clarke County, received \$2,000 to assist in the implementation of a Junior Firefighters Program.

LOWLINC, Orange County, received \$760 to purchase COVID-19 safety kits for volunteers and members.

Our Health Inc., Frederick County, received \$5,000 to replace 10 outdated computers, add a teacher workstation and download updated software for training programs.



Piedmont Environmental Council, Fauquier County, received \$5,000 to purchase 1,366 gallons of milk to be donated to those struggling with food insecurity.

Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center, Fredericksburg area, received \$5,000 to go towards phone interpretation services, updating their website, providing information in both Spanish and English and transportation vouchers; as well as training costs, child protective services, prosecutor fees and medical care.

Stafford Hospital Foundation, Stafford County, received \$12,475 to purchase 25 iPads for the Stafford Hospital women's and pediatrics unit.

St. George's Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg area, received \$15,000, to assist in the delivery of fresh produce to nine sites for 14 weeks.

Wings of Hope Ranch Inc., Hanover County, received \$5,850 for the purchase of laptops and software to increase operational efficiency and their capacity to assist the community.

"Whether members make a one-time donation or round up their electric bill each month, together their donations add up and make a huge difference for local organizations," said Matt Faulconer, manager of external affairs. "Enrolling in The Power of Change only takes a few minutes, but the impact is monumental."

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

COOPERATIVE TRAINING



SAVE
THE
DATE!

Coming Soon to VMDAEC: The Newest NRECA Director Class!

**BLC 971.1 Governance Challenges of
Evolving Distribution Cooperatives**

Spring RoundUp | March 29-30, 2021

NRECA will begin offering this class in December, but you can save money by taking it through the Association. One of NRECA's most highly rated instructors, Bryan Singletary, will facilitate the class, so be sure to wait and sign up for the VMDAEC Director Spring RoundUp in March!

Contact Brandon Burton at bburton@vmdaec.com or 804-297-3485 for more information.



HAPPY
Thanksgiving

"Showing gratitude is one of the simplest yet most powerful things humans can do for each other." – *Randy Pausch*

On this Thanksgiving, let us remember that for which we are thankful. For Thanksgiving is a time we gather to be thankful for what we have, for the family we love, the friends we cherish, and for the blessings that will come. Have a happy and blessed Thanksgiving.



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