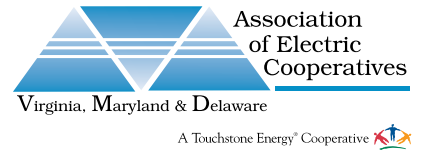


# CONNECTIONS

December 4, 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



We can all agree that 2020 has been a rough year. Let's wrap it up by unwrapping some fun surprises. Join *Cooperative Living* magazine in our Facebook Live event "2020: It's a Wrap!" on Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. We'll have more than \$500 in prizes to give out to those who participate in the live event, including VISA gift cards, magazine subscriptions and other fun prizes! Everyone can participate and win during this special holiday event.

Join us at [facebook.com/cooperativeliving](https://www.facebook.com/cooperativeliving).

## CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

### NOVEC HELPS During the Holidays and Throughout the Year

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative and its employee-led nonprofit organization, NOVEC Hands Engaged in Local Public Service, are giving \$30,000 to area food banks and other nonprofits to provide extra support during the holidays.

In addition, NOVEC's Operation Round Up program provided \$111,700 to local social service agencies in 2020 for emergency energy assistance.

"NOVEC and NOVEC HELPS are making the holidays bright for everyone, but not just with electricity," says Ashley Arnold, NOVEC's community relations representative.

#### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY NEEDS

NOVEC HELPS relies on employee contributions, customer donations, and fundraisers to give back to the community.

"We're helping to keep shelves filled at area food banks, which are feeding people in need, many of whom are struggling with the consequences of COVID-19," Ashley says. "We're supporting a number of nonprofit organizations that are helping with everything from holiday toy distribution to coat collections to suicide prevention."

The public may donate at [novechelps.org](https://novechelps.org) or by mailing checks payable to NOVEC HELPS to: NOVEC HELPS, P.O. Box 2710, Manassas, VA 20108.



NOVEC HELPS President Nan Musick delivers food to area food banks in 2019. Due to COVID-19, the nonprofit and NOVEC are donating money in 2020.

### OPERATION ROUND UP HELPS PEOPLE STAY WARM

More than 18,000 NOVEC customers participate in Operation Round Up (ORU) by rounding up their monthly electric bills.

"Those additional cents go into the ORU fund to assist their neighbors in need of emergency energy assistance. That's especially important in the winter," Ashley says.

NOVEC partners with social service agencies that determine recipients' eligibility and distribute the funds. Participating agencies are:

- The Salvation Army in Loudoun, Fairfax and Fauquier counties;
- Action in Community Through Service, Prince William County;
- Northern Virginia Family Service's SERVE program, Prince William County;
- SERVE Inc., Stafford County; and
- Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, Fairfax County.

— Report by Priscilla Knight, Senior Communications Specialist, Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative.

  
**POWERFUL  
CAREERS**

Celebrating the diverse variety of co-op careers and the people who serve in those roles.

In the January *Cooperative Living*, read about a Southside Electric Cooperative staking technician who joined Co-op Nation more than 20 years ago.

## CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

### SEC, CoBank Donate Combined \$15,000 to Regional Food Pantry

On Nov. 11, Southside Electric Cooperative President and CEO Jeff Edwards presented FACES Food Pantry with a \$7,500 contribution, which was matched by CoBank's Sharing Success program resulting in a \$15,000 donation. CoBank is the national cooperative lender for major improvement projects. Since Sharing Success was established in 2012, CoBank and its customers, like SEC, have together contributed more than \$50 million to nonprofits like volunteer fire departments, local schools and hunger relief programs, such as FACES.

"It is an honor to present an incredible organization, FACES Food Pantry, with two checks — a \$7,500 check from Southside Electric Cooperative, and a matching \$7,500 from CoBank's Sharing Success program," Jeff said during the presentation.

"When SEC learned of the tremendous food volume FACES distributes, we made an earlier donation of \$500 to help offset costs," says Jeff. "Later, we learned that FACES had substantial challenges keeping up with increased food demands due to COVID. When we inquired about an additional donation, and learned of their major needs, we decided to approach CoBank about a sizable matching gift.

"In addition, by presenting these checks to FACES today, we are helping the very members we serve. SEC understands that FACES provides needed food to all of Prince Edward and parts of Cumberland, Buckingham, Nottoway, Lunenburg and Charlotte counties. These are all counties that SEC serves with electricity. Thank you, FACES, for making a significant difference in so many lives. It is a privilege to present you with these two checks," Jeff said while presenting the check.

In accepting the generous donation on behalf of FACES, Board of Directors President Ellery Sedgwick said, "FACES and Southside Electric Cooperative share essentially the same goal: to improve the quality of life in the Southside region by cost-



SEC President & CEO Jeff Edwards (left) presents FACES Food Pantry with two \$7,500 checks from SEC and CoBank.

efficiently providing basic necessities — electricity and food. Southside serves approximately 55,000 households and FACES around 1,500, but both provide crucial services to the public.

"FACES is grateful for Southside's generous support and promises to use it efficiently. The funds will go towards purchasing four large chest freezers and racking to store both frozen and dry goods. They will also go towards upgrading our computer registration system that is critical to ensuring that the food goes to those who really need it. Any remaining funds will go directly to purchasing food for distribution."

FACES was founded in 1981 by a group including ministers, farmers, housewives, teachers and others with the mission of distributing donated food to local families in need. The all-volunteer organization is entirely dependent on donations from the public. They distribute approximately 1.3 million pounds of nutritious food that reaches well over 1,000 low-income individuals weekly.

In addition, FACES provides produce to Piedmont Senior Resources for distribution to the elderly and has recently initiated a new program to supply food to the homeless. Most individuals and families served by FACES live in Prince Edward, Cumberland and Charlotte counties. The Central Virginia Food Bank, FeedMore, has designated FACES as the emergency pantry for the entire region.

— Report by Jennifer Wall, Communications Specialist, Southside Electric Cooperative.

### CEC & RECORE Help 'Elevate Hope' for Those in Need During the Holidays

Two purpose-driven organizations in Windsor, Va., Elevate Church and RECORE, a wholly owned subsidiary of Community Electric Cooperative, are joining together once again to Elevate Hope — an online auction to benefit families in need. This announcement comes at a time when communities across the country are pulling together to reach those with critical needs from an already taxed giving base. For every dollar raised through the online auction, RECORE will match it, up to \$1000. Elevate Church and RECORE have partnered in the past, and this year they felt a strong pull to work through the COVID-19 challenge to support their community's needs.

"Both of our organizations feel a deep sense of responsibility to our local communities, where so many of our employees and their families are based," says Steve Harmon, president and CEO of RECORE. "Just like Elevate Church, we are called during this critical time to do what we can to meet the unique challenges that our neighbors are facing."

"Our Elevate Church team members have been working around the clock to make sure no one is going without this year," says Pastor Thomas-Steele Carr of Elevate Church. "We are grateful to partner with like-minded organizations, like RECORE and the CEC family to bring this auction to life."

Both Elevate Church and RECORE relied heavily on their inside talents, starting back in October. The RECORE team wanted to

look for a "different" way to conduct their holiday community collaboration, while keeping in mind all COVID-19 limitations and zero-contact plans. In November, the online auction plan was confirmed, and both teams hit the ground running to get items for the auction and to keep price points within an optimal range. The community responded with an overwhelming item count — from an initial goal of 20 items to 38 items total — most ranging from \$25 to \$100 for initial bids.

"There are so many families and neighbors in need right now, more than ever, and we at Elevate Church look forward to blessing people in our local community with the funds raised from this auction," says Karla Cobb, a longtime member at Elevate Church. She worked closely with RECORE to get the auction up and running. "We are always blown away at the community response, and this year, despite the challenges, we knew there had to be a way to keep the giving going," says Jessica Parr, manager of communications for CEC and RECORE.

The auction is now live and will go through Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. All proceeds from the auction go directly to Elevate Church and they will work with community partners to disperse the funds to help those in need. All winning bids are tax-deductible. Bidders are encouraged to bring their generosity and giving spirits to the web this year, and help celebrate the season together as a community. The link for the auction can be found here at [32auctions.com/ElevateHOPE](https://32auctions.com/ElevateHOPE).

— Report by Jessica Parr, Communications Manager, Community Electric Cooperative.



## Firefly Celebrates 5,000 Customers, Donates \$5,000 to Food Bank



Firefly board of directors and management team present a \$5,000 check to Karen Ratzlaff, chief philanthropy officer of Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

**F**irefly Fiber Broadband, a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, reached the milestone of connecting 5,000 customers to the internet on Oct. 30. As part of the celebration, Firefly issued a check for \$5,000 to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank to help provide 20,000 meals to neighbors in need this holiday season. Firefly President and CEO Gary Wood explains, "Firefly cares about the communities it serves. Connecting families to the internet so they can continue with education, work and business is important. We also recognize that families are struggling to keep food on the table during the pandemic and we hope that this donation to the food bank will help our neighbors during their time of need."

According to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, one dollar provides four meals for those in need. The donation of \$5,000 provides about 20,000 meals to the local community. Firefly designated BRAFB as the recipient because they provide meals for many of the communities that are located in Firefly's current service area across parts of 14 counties. Firefly is committed to making internet service available to CVEC members while making plans to address the lack of broadband in the rural areas throughout central Virginia through the CARES Act funds and other grant programs.

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

## REC Showcases Energy Solutions, Economic Development at Biz Expo



**R**appahannock Electric Cooperative is primed for economic growth. Connected by various major interstates, railroads, airports and state roads, REC is well poised for success. To support the businesses that REC serves, the cooperative works with a variety of partners to grow the region's economy.

One way REC takes an active role in supporting local businesses is by participating in events hosted by local chambers of commerce. On Nov. 10, REC participated in the Louisa County Chamber of Commerce's first Louisa Biz Expo & Developer's Showcase.

REC's human resources personnel set up a table with information for the job fair, while John Hewa, president and CEO, and Felicia Ainsa, director of economic development, provided a virtual presentation during the Developer's Showcase.

Titled "We Are REC: Meeting the Needs of a Growing & Diverse Membership," John and Felicia shared highlights of energy solutions underway by the cooperative that are beneficial to the Louisa community. From topics on reliability and system improvements to clean energy and technology, initiatives are designed to benefit business owners and consumers. With REC's renewed focus in the economic development arena, the cooperative will strengthen relationships across the area now and well into the future.

Find more information about REC's economic development efforts at [myrec.coop/economic-development](http://myrec.coop/economic-development).

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

## SEASONS GREETINGS

### 'Santa Bill' Returns to Spread Cheer During the Holidays

Delaware Electric Cooperative President & CEO Bill Andrew ("Santa Bill") brings seasonal cheer to DEC members with the good news regarding the co-op's retirement of \$8 million in capital credits in a spirited holiday video.

Click on the image to the right to view the video or go to [youtu.be/P1nUZa5Y5QQ](https://youtu.be/P1nUZa5Y5QQ).



CO-OP PEOPLE

REC Names John Arp VP of Engineering, Operations and Power Supply



John Arp joins REC's executive leadership team.

John Arp, P.E., has been promoted to Rappahannock Electric Cooperative's executive leadership team as vice president of engineering, operations and power supply. In this role, he will oversee system planning, engineering and technical services, ensuring the successful implementation of the cooperative's strategic plan.

"Mr. Arp is a talented and accomplished engineer who brings more than 21 years of diverse utility, engineering and leadership experience," said John Hewa, president and CEO. "His expertise in engineering, design, and operations and construction will be a strong addition to REC's executive team."

Joining REC in 2012 as an engineering supervisor, John has since served as director of system planning and engineering,

and, most recently, as Western Region manager. In his most recent position, John has promoted REC's safety-first culture and service to members. During his time at REC, John has led several system-wide projects:

- A multi-year, high-value project that improved circuit efficiency and reduced operating costs;
- Developed distribution and sub-transmission automation schemes that have improved reliability for members;
- Worked with industry experts to design and implement a customized system-wide over-voltage protection scheme.


John holds a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from Tennessee Technological University and is a licensed professional engineer in Virginia and Pennsylvania. He completed REC's Leadership Development Program in 2018, has completed NRECA's Cooperative Financial Professional Certification program, and is currently completing NRECA's Management Internship Program. John began his new role Dec. 1.

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

CO-OP PERSONALS

Thoughts and Prayers are with the Edwards Family

We are sad to report the recent passing of Palmer John Edwards, father of Southside Electric Cooperative CEO Jeff Edwards. Please send condolences and notes of sympathy to Jeff at his home address, 11581 Granary Hills Drive, Amelia, VA 23002.



## Making a Year-End Donation?

Consider the **VMDAEC Scholarship Foundation**

These include tax-deductible contributions to the Foundation and are always welcomed. Your donation can be a gift, done anonymously, or in honor or memory of a specific individual.


For more information, visit [vmdaec.com/scholarship](https://vmdaec.com/scholarship).





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