



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

from Richard G. Johnstone Jr. | President & CEO



## LEGISLATIVE DAY 2021

### Virtual Legislative Day Is a Real Success

The annual Legislative Day went virtual this year, and cooperatives in Virginia reported great success in reaching out to members of the General Assembly by remote means.

Usually, representatives of Virginia electric cooperatives travel to Richmond at the start of the annual General Assembly session, but on January 25, more than 100 co-op leaders joined a videoconference to hear from speakers and get their key talking points on issues of importance.

Dr. Robert Holsworth, managing partner of the DecideSmart consultancy, and former dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University, kicked off the event with an overview of the current national and statewide political environment.

Dr. Holsworth said the 2020 elections show the ongoing political divide in Virginia, as Democrats hold a strong edge in urban areas and an increasing edge in suburbia, while Republicans have a stronghold in rural areas, many of which are losing population.



Dr. Robert Holsworth

The GOP will need to perform better in suburban Virginia in order to break the Democrats' grip on statewide offices, which are up in 2021, he said.

Delegate Rip Sullivan (D-Arlington), chair of the House Democratic Caucus, who has been a good friend to electric co-ops, told conference participants that electrification of the transportation network will be a topic of the 2021 General Assembly Session.



Del. Rip Sullivan

Ensuring a proper vehicle charging infrastructure and providing incentives for buyers will be among key issues, he noted.



The VMDAEC Governmental Affairs Committee meets via Zoom.

As Virginia explores ways to encourage electric vehicle use, co-ops will have a seat at the table because of their involvement and interest in the issue, he said.

Del. Sullivan, a leader in energy efficiency in the legislature, praised the work of the VMD Association Government Affairs team, saying, "You all are really well represented in Richmond."

Also, as part of Legislative Day, several co-ops were honored for their growth and participation in ACRE, the political action committee serving electric co-op employees and member-consumers. Rappahannock Electric Cooperative received recognition as the top co-op contributor while A&N Electric Cooperative was recognized as the fastest-growing ACRE member.

Earning the coveted 2020 Co-op ACRE Cup was Community Electric Cooperative. Its President and CEO, Steve Harmon, said ACRE has been effective in informing legislators about co-ops and that CEC was proud to play a role in that.

"By the very nature of this award, it's a team commitment," Steve said. "We make a tremendous impact with our ACRE program."

The 2021 legislative briefing was conducted by Andrew Vehorn, Association Vice President of Governmental Affairs and Sam Brumberg, Vice President of Regulatory Affairs and Counsel.

One of the key bills that electric cooperatives are supporting this year is HB 1994, which expands the definition of small agricultural generators to include wineries, breweries and distilleries. The change will expand a 2017 program, to allow more farmers to become involved in this fast-growing agricultural sector.

Following the videoconference, co-op representatives met virtually with their lawmakers, hoping these get-togethers will move from remote virtual meetings to in-person visits in 2022.

- Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living.

## DISTINGUISHED FRIEND

### Sen. Lynwood Lewis Honored as Distinguished Friend of Co-ops



Sen. Lynwood Lewis

State Sen. Lynwood W. Lewis Jr. has been named the recipient of the 2021 Distinguished Friend of Electric Cooperatives Award by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Sen. Lewis, who represents the 6th Senate District, was cited for his leadership last year in passage of landmark legislation that will improve the ability of electric cooperatives and their

subsidiaries to deploy high-speed internet in the state's rural communities.

"Thanks to the work of Sen. Lewis, electric cooperatives will be able to provide and expand broadband services at a time when access to the internet is more important than ever," said Richard G. Johnstone Jr., President and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

"Sen. Lewis has truly distinguished himself as a friend of electric cooperatives and the member-owners we serve," Richard added.

The Distinguished Friend of Electric Cooperatives Award honors legislators, regulators and others in public service who have strongly supported the best interests of electric cooperative member-owners.

The award was announced Jan. 25 as part of the VMD Association's annual Legislative Day, which was conducted remotely this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has previously been given out just 13 times since its creation in 2004.

Sen. Lewis sponsored Senate legislation in the 2020 General Assembly regular session enabling co-ops to use existing utility easements for routing of fiber-optic cable. That change prevented potentially costly and protracted negotiations involving broadband projects.

"This new law will help to accelerate the deployment of broadband in those areas of Virginia that need it most," said Andrew Vehorn, VMD Association Vice President of Governmental Affairs.

The 6th Senate district includes the Eastern Shore counties of Accomack and Northampton, plus Mathews County and parts of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Sen. Lewis has represented the district since 2014; he previously represented the 100th House District in the General Assembly for a decade. An Eastern Shore native, he resides in the Town of Accomac.

– Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living.

## COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP

### Tom Brown Joins Delaware Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors



Tom Brown

Former Nanticoke Healthcare executive Tom Brown has joined Delaware Electric Cooperative's board of directors. He was appointed to the board in December to serve out the remaining term of former director Woody Noel, who passed away in the spring of 2020 after serving co-op members on the board since 2008. Tom will represent members in District 7 — his term will end in August 2021.

Tom is a former educator and community leader. DEC's newest board director most recently worked as a senior vice president at Nanticoke Memorial Hospital where he was also president of the Nanticoke Physician's Network. He retired in June of 2020 and is looking forward to representing Delaware Electric Cooperative members serving on the board.

"As a proud co-op member, I have always been impressed with the cooperative's service and its dedication to improving lives in the communities it serves. I am humbled to have been appointed to this important position and will work hard to help the co-op fulfill its mission to provide affordable, reliable and sustainable power," said Tom.

Tom has an extensive history of volunteering in Sussex County. He is a past president of the boards for the Seaford Chamber of Commerce and Delaware Hospice and has served on numerous other community-focused boards and committees.

DEC is governed by an 11-member board elected by those served by the co-op. Board members must receive their power from Delaware Electric Cooperative and serve three-year terms.

– Report by Jeremy Tucker, Manager of Marketing and Communications, Delaware Electric Cooperative.



DELAWARE ELECTRIC CO-OP

"We Keep the Lights On"

**COOPERATIVE CAREERS**

**REC Names Director of Operations and Construction in Eastern Region**

**R**appahannock Electric Cooperative has promoted Daniel Dewey to director of operations and construction for the Cooperative’s Eastern Region.

Daniel began at REC as an apprentice lineman in 2004 and most recently served as a line foreman. His years of experience and countless hours in the field give him firsthand knowledge of what it takes to safely construct power lines and instruct and supervise line crews.

“Daniel has worked through the ranks, learning from the ground up and giving himself a wealth of dedicated knowledge in the electric distribution operations and construction industry,” said Maxie Rozell, REC’s manager of the Eastern Region. “He has a comprehensive understanding of the cooperative business model to meet our members’ expectations. He will bring continuity to the team, focusing on safety, reliability, resiliency and advancement of new technology.”

In this role, Daniel is responsible for the coordination and daily management of operations for construction services out of REC’s Bowling Green office. He oversees the management of equipment, tools and personnel; creates long- and short-term construction planning for Caroline, Essex, Goochland,



Daniel Dewey

Hanover, King and Queen, King William, Louisa and Spotsylvania counties; as well as maintains and promotes safety procedures.

Daniel resides in Essex County with his family.

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

**POWERFUL CAREERS**

VMDAEC’s Powerful Careers series continues in the February issue of *Cooperative Living*. This month, we highlight Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative Purchasing Manager Virginia Clifton and Member Services Manager Sheila Switzer, who recently retired from the co-op with 50 years of service.



Visit [vmdaec.com/powerfulcareers](http://vmdaec.com/powerfulcareers) for the series of articles and videos, as well as links to some powerful co-op careers.



Virginia Clifton

Sheila Switzer



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Keep up on the latest news and trends from cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, as well as nationwide. We look forward to connecting with you.



## COOPERATIVE TRAINING

### Contemporary Leadership & Management Workshop: Personality in Leadership

This workshop will explore your personality type and the interactions that you experience with other personality types. We will use the Meyers Briggs assessment to discover your styles in leadership, decision making, teamwork, motivators and communications. We will also explore all types to discover opportunities to improve workflow, effectiveness, communications and interactions.

**Who:** ALL are welcome!

**When:** Feb. 4-5

**Time:** Feb. 4, 1-4 p.m., Feb. 5, 9 a.m.-noon

**Via:** Zoom

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

**CPE:** 6 credits **Contemporary Leadership & Management:** 1 credit

**Cost:** Members: \$350 per person (your co-op/company will be billed following the class)

\*Your first four classes of 2021 are \$350, then \$325 each after that.

(Non-members: \$420)

**To register:** Email Brandon Burton at [bburton@vmdaec.com](mailto:bburton@vmdaec.com) with the name and email address of all participants.

**Deadline to Register:** Feb. 3, 2021\*

\*Please follow your co-op's/company's protocol prior to registering.



### Webinar to Explore KRTA Takeaways for VMD Systems

Presented by Jim Meiers, CFC Regional Vice President

Results from CFC's recent KRTA Report were published in October. Find out how co-ops in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware compared to others. Learn trends and takeaways from a more global look at the KRTA. Join Jim Meiers for an expanded discussion on the KRTA for the VMDAEC group during a webinar on Feb. 2 at 10 a.m.

**Who:** ALL are welcome!

**When:** Feb. 2

**Time:** 10-11:15 a.m.

**Via:** Virtual

**CPE:** 1 credit

**Cost:** FREE – sponsored by CFC

**To register:** Email Brandon Burton at [bburton@vmdaec.com](mailto:bburton@vmdaec.com) with the name and email address of all participants and whether a CPE certificate is needed.

**Deadline to Register:** Feb. 1\*

\*Please follow your co-op's/company's protocol prior to registering.



**REMINDER: Spring RoundUp, featuring Bryan Singletary; registration opens in February!**



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