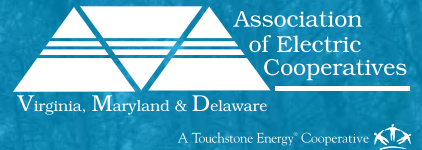


A regular update for leaders, members and friends of
the VA-MD-DE Association of Electric Cooperatives

from Richard G. Johnstone Jr. | President & CEO



Trees fell
on power lines
throughout the
MEC service area,
contributing to 80
broken poles.

COOPERATIVE RESPONSE

Winter Storm Tabitha

See more images on page 4.

Electric cooperative line crews worked diligently over Valentine's Day weekend to restore service to tens of thousands of members in the wake of one of the most damaging ice storms to hit the mid-Atlantic in many years.

More than 90,000 member-consumers served by Virginia, Maryland and Delaware electric cooperatives were without power at the peak of Winter Storm Tabitha, which brought heavy, wet snow topped by glazed ice to the three-state region.

Crews from less-affected VMD cooperatives stepped in to help the hardest-hit co-ops, while crews from three other states also traveled to Virginia to help bring back electrical service.

"This is one of the most challenging winter storms we have had in the last few years because of the way the ice has downed so many poles, trees and power lines," said Alan Scruggs, vice president of safety and training services at the cooperative association. "Teams have been working as efficiently and safely as possible, but the conditions have been unfavorable."

Southside Electric Cooperative, based in Crewe, Va., reported hurricane-like outage numbers after the brutal ice storm cut a wide swath through its system. The cooperative had to temporarily suspend restoration operations on the night of Feb. 13 because of reports of falling trees near workers in the field. SEC received assistance from co-ops in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, as well as from Central Virginia Electric Cooperative.

"The heavy ice storm that is pounding the area is bringing down numerous power lines. That may include lines that serve cell towers," SEC officials warned.

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, based in Chase City, also dealt with significant outages at the height of the major weather event and compared the damage to "a war zone."

"As quickly as crews can get a line up, another tree or limb falls somewhere else on the line and causes it to go back out. Not only is this problematic in getting services restored, but it is also a very dangerous situation for our crews," MEC reported.

Within the VMD systems, MEC received mutual aid from BARC Electric Cooperative, Community Electric Cooperative and Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. Additional assistance was also received from out-of-state crews.

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative was also hit hard by Tabitha. According to REC Director of Communications and Public Relations Casey Hollins, REC received help from A&N Electric Cooperative, Choptank Electric Cooperative and SMECO.

Also hard-hit was Northern Neck Electric Cooperative in Warsaw. According to Jay Garner, manager of public relations, NNEC received help from neighboring A&N Electric Cooperative and Choptank Electric Cooperative and SMECO in Maryland; all three co-ops traveled to REC following NNEC's power restoration.

Prince George Electric Cooperative in Waverly and Central Virginia Electric Cooperative in Arrington also recorded significant outage numbers. PGEC received help from SMECO. Once power was restored at CVEC, the co-op sent crews to Southside Electric Cooperative's service area.

Adding to the historic severity of Winter Storm Tabitha was the reality that another ice storm is heading our way tomorrow, Thursday, Feb. 18, with co-op crews and mutual-aid lineworkers standing ready to rebuild, restore and re-light the countryside ... again.

— Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS

'It's the Right Thing to Do': SVEC Named Tree Line USA Utility

Thanks to Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative's vegetation management efforts, the Arbor Day Foundation in January named the cooperative a 2021 Tree Line USA in honor of its commitment to proper tree pruning, planting and care in our service area.

Tree Line USA is a national program recognizing public and private utilities for practices that protect and enhance America's urban forests. It promotes the goals of delivering safe and reliable electricity while maintaining healthy community trees.

"It's the right thing to do. It's the right direction for us to be going. Trees are a renewable resource. They clean the air. They're a filtration system for the atmosphere," says Scott Sorrels, SVEC's vegetation management coordinator who applied to the Arbor Day Foundation.

SVEC earned the Tree Line USA designation by meeting five program standards: following industry standards for quality tree care; providing annual worker training in best tree care practices; sponsoring a tree planting and public education program; maintaining a tree-based

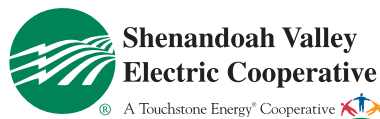
energy conservation program; and participating in an Arbor Day celebration.

SVEC is the fourth electric cooperative in Virginia to achieve this status, joining A&N, Mecklenburg and Rappahannock. The vegetation management department plans to reapply annually to maintain the designation.

Another recognition program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation is Tree City USA. It began in 1976 and is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees.

"Some of the jurisdictions we serve have worked hard to obtain Tree City USA status," Scott says, noting Luray and Winchester specifically. "We love the way becoming a Tree Line USA now ties in with that Tree City status. One should come lockstep with the other. Both of us can do our part to create a beautiful tree canopy without risking the expectation of safe and reliable electric service."

– Report by Ashley Kreis, Public Relations Representative, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.



Recycling Wood Reels Helps the Environment and Saves Money

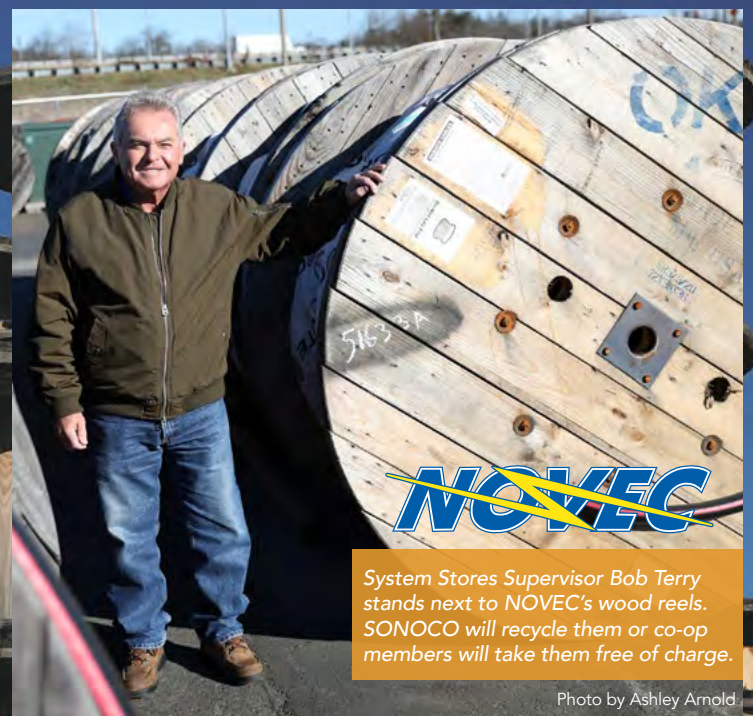
Like sewing thread, power-line wire and cable arrive at NOVEC's Gainesville Technical Center on small, medium, and large wood spools, or reels. After construction crews string overhead wire or bury underground cable, they need to dispose of the reels. Instead of taking them to county landfills, NOVEC recycles them.

"We're a green-friendly company," explains Kent Cassell, the Co-op's purchasing department manager. "We recycle everything we can, from used computers to transformer oil. We started recycling reels because I was concerned about the number of trees providers had to cut down to make new reels. I also didn't like dumping so many used reels at landfills, not to mention the significant expense of disposal."

Kent found a solution. "I stumbled across SONOCO, a reel recycling company. We adopted SONOCO's Wood Reel Recycling Program in 2006 and have used it ever since."

As part of the program, the South Carolina based company collects used reels from the Gainesville warehouse. It then recycles them at little or no cost to the Co-op.

Since 2006, the program has saved Co-op members thousands of dollars in landfill fees and preserved approximately 1,400 trees. In 2020, NOVEC recycled 229 reels. The Co-op avoided adding close to 50,000 pounds of waste to landfills and saved more than \$3,000.



System Stores Supervisor Bob Terry stands next to NOVEC's wood reels. SONOCO will recycle them or co-op members will take them free of charge.

Photo by Ashley Arnold

"We all need to do our part for our environment," states Bob Terry, NOVEC system stores supervisor. "Why kill trees and add to landfills when we don't have to? Recycling just makes good sense for people and businesses."

USED REELS AVAILABLE

Co-op members may pick up used reels, free of charge, depending on availability. A number of people have requested reels to use as tables and school desks in the past year to help with online learning at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

POWERFUL CAREERS

REC Names Director of Strategy Execution and Enterprise Risk Management



Justin Cruise

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative has promoted Justin Cruise to director of strategy execution and enterprise risk management.

This new role expands the cooperative's current strategy coordination activities, project management and the administration of enterprise risk management. Justin will be responsible for advancing REC's strategic objectives, managing risk awareness and reduction, supporting business continuity efforts and ensuring the successful execution of business projects.

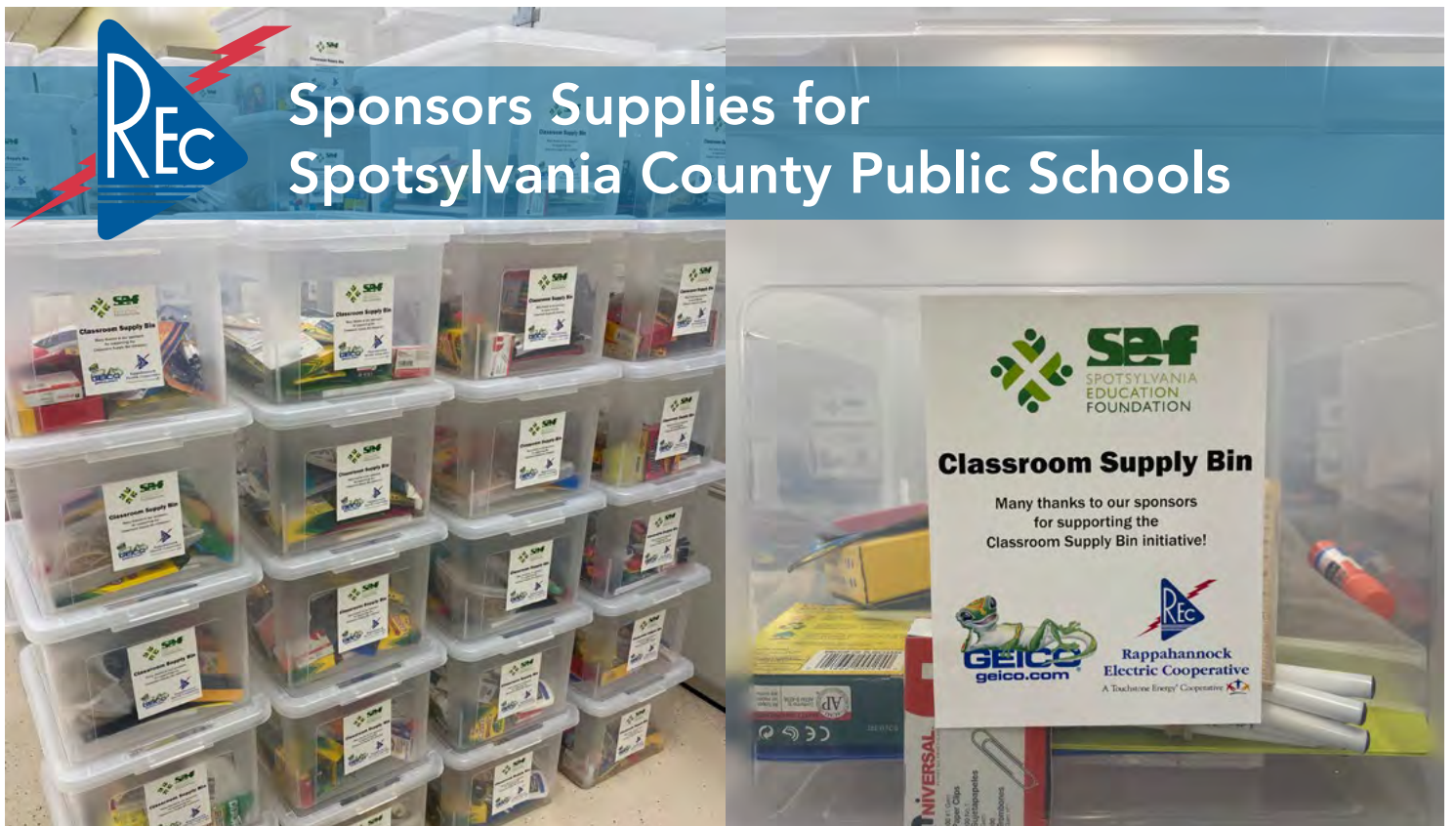
"Justin has been instrumental in streamlining and managing REC's strategic processes," said Peter Muhoro, vice president of strategy and technology. "His dedication, work ethic and knowledge of the cooperative business model has been crucial in the cooperative's renewed focus in strategy execution, business planning and risk management."

Justin began at REC in 2013 as a public relations specialist. In 2018, he was promoted to strategic coordinator. As the strategic coordinator, Justin assisted in developing the cooperative's strategic and business plans, and he has worked closely with the board of directors and executive team on governance planning.

Justin holds a bachelor's degree in management from Emory & Henry College and a master's degree in management, strategy and leadership from Michigan State University. He resides in King George, Va., with his son.

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

COOPERATIVES IN THE CLASSROOM



School has looked very different in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. From virtual classes to spaced-out desks and mask requirements, school systems have worked hard to keep students safe and ensure they continue to get a solid education.

To support Spotsylvania County Public School's efforts, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative sponsored classroom kits. These kits were distributed to every classroom in the county — over 1,600 in total.

"REC has made a difference in the lives of Spotsylvania County Public School students," said Angie Sullivan, executive director of the Spotsylvania Education Foundation. "REC's role in this initiative will ensure that all students will have the supplies they need to fully participate in learning activities."

Likewise, students and families are already under stress navigating the new modes of learning due to the pandemic. Being able to provide school supplies helps to alleviate the additional stress of providing supplies.

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

Images from Winter Storm Tabitha



Left, a Rappahannock Electric Cooperative crew removes a tree from the line in the right-of-way. Right, a dangerous downed line near Marye Road in Spotsylvania County was among many repairs made by REC crews.



Icy and muddy conditions made it difficult for Central Virginia Electric Cooperative crews to access this right-of-way with trucks.



Northern Neck Electric Cooperative crews worked from the truck and on the pole to restore power outages.



Prince George Electric Cooperative crews work to restore power in icy conditions.



The Southside Electric Cooperative service area experienced catastrophic damage comparable to that following a hurricane. More than 180 poles were reported damaged on the SEC system.