

Starheim is New Delaware Electric Cooperative CEO

Delaware Electric Cooperative has named Greg Starheim the new president and chief executive officer of the Greenwood-based not-for-profit utility.



Greg Starheim



Greg Starheim most recently served as senior vice president of Business and Industry Development at the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. and will replace longtime CEO Bill Andrew. Greg was selected by the co-op's board of directors in May to lead DEC's 170-person workforce after a comprehensive national search.

"The energy industry is currently undergoing an unprecedented transformation. The board is confident that Greg's expertise will guide the co-op and its dedicated employees through these changes and allow DEC to provide members with energy that is even more reliable, sustainable and affordable," said board member Michael Brown, who worked closely with CarterBaldwin Executive Search and other board members to select the new CEO.

After decades working at General Electric, Greg joined the co-op world in 2003, serving as CEO and general manager of Delaware County Electric Cooperative in New York. From 2012 to 2015, Greg served as president and CEO of Kenergy Corp., a 56,000-member electric cooperative headquartered in Henderson, Ky. He is an expert in power supply and finance, and in delivering high levels of customer satisfaction. He brings more than 37 years of experience in the energy industry to DEC.

According to Greg, "I'm humbled to be given the opportunity to lead DEC. The co-op has some of the most innovative and committed employees in the nation, and our focus will remain on how to provide clean, affordable power and exceptional service to our 106,000 members."

Starheim will take the reins of the cooperative on July 1. According to Bill, "Greg will provide the leadership and vision to ensure DEC continues to be a national leader in renewable energy, conservation and innovation. He is excited to meet our members and visit the communities the co-op proudly powers. DEC and our members will be in good hands."

— Report by Lauren A. Irby, Manager of Public Relations & Community Outreach, Delaware Electric Cooperative.



Lanier Frantz Wins Unsung Virginia Award

Mary Ann Gober and Jeff Ahearn, CEO of Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative, present the award to Lanier Frantz. (Photo by Jim Robertson.)

A Craig County resident is the 2021 recipient of the Unsung Virginian Award for his work in promoting aviation, as well as conservation, in his community.

Lanier Frantz of New Castle received the award, bestowed annually since 1968 by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. The Unsung Virginian Award honors a citizen, who has not previously been recognized, for services rendered to the Commonwealth without thought of personal gain.

"Through his drive and determination, Lanier Frantz has truly made a difference in the lives of those in Craig County and beyond. Lanier epitomizes the Seventh Cooperative

Principle of Concern for Community, and his efforts carry on the tradition of the Unsung Virginian Award," said Jeff Ahearn, CEO of Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative.

Representatives of the VMD Association and Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative presented a certificate of honor to Frantz, who also was recognized at a Memorial Day weekend ceremony in New Castle.

[Read the whole story of Lanier Frantz.](#)

Full STEAM Ahead

NOVEC and NOVEC HELPS support solar energy workshop for students

This fall, NOVEC HELPS and NOVEC will help the Pink Space Theory organization hold the first Solar Design Stars workshop benefitting Title I schools in Prince William County. The three-week program will teach participants the importance of green energy and environmental stewardship while introducing them to the engineering design process. They will also learn about careers in renewable energy.

Pink Space Theory exposes underserved and underrepresented students in prekindergarten through 12th grade to hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) learning experiences. The workshop will be part of the nonprofit organization’s Girl Power Program Series, which helps girls build STEAM knowledge and self-esteem.

Monica Nichols, Pink Space Theory founder and president, says she was inspired to start the organization after her own struggles with math. “As an African-American female engineer, I want to do my part by providing youth, especially girls, with learning opportunities to engage, expose, and empower them to want to explore the wonderful world of STEAM. I want to remove any barriers that may preclude girls from wanting to pursue it.”

The partnership between NOVEC HELPS and NOVEC will cover the program expenses, including paying for a local county teacher, George Mason University instruction, and solar kits. At the end of the three weeks, students will participate in a design challenge to make a solar-powered boat. Engineers will judge their entries.

– Report by Ashley Arnold, NOVEC Community Liaison.



A STEAM participant works on a Pink Space Theory project. (Photo by Monica Nichols.)



Monica Nichols, Pink Space Theory founder and president. (Photo by Ashley Arnold.)

NNEC and PGEC Join Northam at Broadband Bill Signing

Brad Hicks, president and CEO of Northern Neck Electric Cooperative, and Casey Logan, president and CEO of Prince George Electric Cooperative, represented Virginia’s electric cooperatives at the bill signing of H.B. 2304 and S.B. 1413 with Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam on June 9 in Franklin, Va.

The law will expand broadband access in Virginia by allowing investor-owned electric utilities to recover costs of and revenue from expanding broadband to unserved areas. This paves the way for Virginia’s electric cooperatives, including Northern Neck Electric Cooperative to create partnerships with other investor-owned electric utilities, like Dominion Energy, to establish broadband in their service areas.

“Every Virginian needs access to high-speed internet to participate in modern society,” Northam said. “Add the pandemic has highlighted how urgent this is — for workers, for businesses, for students, for telehealth.”

After the bill signing, Brad said, “Since the 1930s, it has been the role of the electric cooperatives to connect their communities with the world through electricity. Today, the need to connect is similar, but the tool is broadband. This law will allow cooperatives like ours to better serve our members, our communities, and our region, connecting them to the world.”

In 2020, Northern Neck Electric Cooperative signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dominion Energy and All Points Broadband to aid in the deployment of broadband throughout the Northern Neck. Work has begun on the project in the western part of the region.

– Report by Kyle Allwine, Manager, Public Affairs, Northern Neck Electric Cooperative.



NNEC President and CEO Brad Hicks with Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam.



PGEC President and CEO Casey Logan met with Governor Northam in June about the co-op’s broadband deployment with Dominion Energy.



Limited But Successful: 2021 Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

On June 16, MEC held its abbreviated Annual Meeting of the Membership in accordance with the cooperative’s bylaws and in recognition of ongoing COVID concerns. It was a beautiful evening, but the cooperative greatly missed the annual fanfare and the opportunity to visit with its members. Hopefully, 2022 will allow MEC to return to a traditional annual meeting.

Board Chairman David J. Jones called the meeting to order, while Director Donald Moore delivered the invocation. Jones touched on three key issues at the cooperative. The first was safety, which he called “our highest priority,” noting that the cooperative’s safety scores and benchmarks continue to be among the best.

Reliability remains essential too, as the cooperative uses the latest technology to be more efficient and work smarter in supplying a reliable source of power across 4,500 miles of line across portions of nine counties in Southside Virginia and northern North Carolina. Finally, Jones reported that the cooperative remains financially strong, returning \$40.9 million in capital credits to its membership since 1938. Also strong financially are the EMPOWER Broadband and Empower Telecom subsidiaries, Jones said.

“We stepped up to provide the best-of-the-best broadband service to our members when no one else would,” he reiterated.

Secretary-treasurer Stanley Duffer said Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative had operating revenues of \$68.8 million and \$1.2 million in operating margins in 2020. “Since Mecklenburg

Electric is a not-for-profit business, these operating margins ultimately will be returned to our members in the form of capital credits,” he said. Sixty-eight percent of revenues came from residential members, while the cooperative’s total assets were more than \$212 million, he added.

As to director elections, General Counsel Jim Guy noted that recent bylaw changes reduced the number of directors from 11 to nine across three magisterial districts. Elected to three-year terms were Donald Moore, representing the Gretna District; David J. Jones, representing the Chase City District’ and Franklin B. Myers, representing the Emporia District. Elected to a two-year term was Fletcher “Bob” Jones, representing the Chase City District. A total of 3,142 proxies were cast with 15 members present at the meeting.

David Jones and Vice Chairman Myers also recognized Duffer and Larry Layman as retiring directors and presented them with resolutions of appreciation. Duffer served for 34 years on the board, while Layman served for nine years. Jones also cited MEC employees for the ways they handled the difficult challenges of 2020 and conducted business successfully despite the pandemic. “It’s a privilege to be here and to be working with you,” he said.

Ten members won \$50 credits toward their electric bills. Another 10 won \$100 credits while lucky member Duane Brumfield of Bracey won a \$250 credit.

To view the meeting, visit meckelec.org.

– Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, Cooperative Living.

Girl Power Camp

COMING THIS FALL!

A Powerful Careers day camp highlighting operations careers

Connecting more women with the energy industry has been a popular trend over the past few years. One particular area of focus is centered around line work. While we continue to see more women take on roles in the field, attracting them to a line crew remains a challenge.

On Sept. 22, the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Electric Cooperatives Training Center in Palmyra, Va., will host a one-day energy career experience for high school girls interested or curious about working on a line crew, in a substation or with advanced metering technology. Training Center instructors will lead students through various activities in the classroom and the training yard. A variety of associate members and vendors, including Southside Community College are also invited to enhance the experience.

VMDAEC staff will be in contact with co-op communications staff over the next few weeks with more details.



Gena Boorman
Northern Neck
Electric Cooperative

In Memoriam: John Bruce

John Bruce, a longtime journalist at *Cooperative Living* and other electric cooperative publications, died June 9 at his home in Monterey, Va.

John began his career as editor of the Goochland Gazette in Manakin-Sabot, Va. He later was associate editor of *Cooperative Living*, writing news and feature articles, as well as taping, scripting and editing video documentation of power generation facility construction.

"John was an excellent photojournalist and quite lively, funny and a key part of our success from 1987 to 1997," said Richard G. Johnstone Jr., the retired president and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives and retired executive editor of *Cooperative Living*. "I'll remember him fondly as a big part of my work life for many years."

From 1997 to 2009, he was editor of *South Carolina Living*, the magazine of electric cooperatives in the Palmetto State.

He was also instrumental to the National Country Market Sales Cooperative in Austin, Texas, as a founding board member, serving 10 years as board chair of the advertising



John Bruce

"I'll remember him fondly as a big part of my work life for many years."

— Richard G. Johnstone

sales cooperative with a circulation exceeding 7 million readers.

In August 2011, John became the Highland County news editor for *The Recorder* in Monterey, where he served the community for nearly 10 years with award-winning features, photography and investigative journalism.

Our condolences to his wife, Carol; his son, Jacob "Jake" Robert Bruce and his wife Linghan Song of Richmond; his grandson, Connor Everett Song Bruce; and sister-in-law, Catherine Bruce. Condolences and memories may be shared with the family at obaughfuneralhome.com.

— Report by Steven Johnson, Editor, *Cooperative Living*.

In Memoriam: Sue Glisson

Sue Glisson, who formerly worked at the VMD Association and as an advertising assistant for *Cooperative Living*, passed away May 1 at the age of 71. Sue graduated from Huguenot High School in Richmond and from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1971. She was at the association for more than 18 years before her retirement in 2016. If you called the magazine, chances were that you spoke to Sue, as she handled a variety of tasks, including classified ad manager.

VMDAEC 2021 Annual Meeting

ReSURGEncE!

Featuring:
Keynote Speaker Kris Paronto
Former U.S. Army Ranger

July 25-27
Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront



POWERFUL CAREERS

Learn about Central Virginia Electric Cooperative Power Portfolio Specialist Andrew Cotter and his Powerful Career at vmdaec.com/powerfulcareers.

