



Warming Up to Agriculture and Women's History

Spring is upon us and there is much to celebrate this month. We recognize Women's History in March and National Agriculture Week from the 17th through the 23rd. As the days begin to get longer, your local cooperative is reflecting on this cold winter season and hopeful for a productive planting season ahead for its farming community.

We are proud to support women in the electric cooperative industry and appreciate those who work tirelessly to keep your lights on. International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 and the 2024 theme is "Inspire Inclusion," something we practice here daily at Choptank Electric Cooperative. We're grateful to have so many impactful women serving our cooperative, both on the Board of Directors and on staff.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the lives of many members here on the Eastern Shore. As Maryland's number one industry, agriculture has deep roots within our service territory and is one of the main reasons electric co-ops were created. Choptank Electric's goal in 1938 was and remains to reach the rural homes and farms that produce food, fuel and fibers for the rest of the country and need reliable, affordable electricity to continue. Our team thanks you this National Agriculture Week and every week for your dedication to growing and raising the goods we all need.


I look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting next month and encourage you to engage with us this year as an active member of your cooperative.



Mike Malandro
President & CEO
Choptank Electric Cooperative



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 



P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629
Member Service Center: 1-877-892-0001
Automated Member Service: 1-866-999-4574
Electric Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 option 1
Fiber Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 option 2
Use SmartHub to Manage Account,
Track Usage and Report Outages —>



Luck of the Draw Scholarships Awarded at Annual Meeting

The Luck of the Draw Scholarship is awarded by randomly selecting student applications from a live drawing at the end of our annual meeting. To enter the drawing, students must fill out the application and answer a 10 question quiz based on a Cooperative article in the application.

This year, the annual meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25, at The Fountains in Salisbury. The Board of Directors will draw and award 10 \$1,000 scholarships* to students in attendance who meet the following qualifications:

- ✓ Complete the Luck of the Draw application on our website at choptankelectric.coop under “Annual Meeting” or “Scholarships.”
- ✓ Submit the application to the Co-op by April 18 before 4:30 p.m. (applications will NOT be accepted at the annual meeting). You will receive a confirmation email when your application has been processed.
- ✓ Be present at the annual meeting on April 25 with your parent/legal guardian who is a Choptank Electric Cooperative member.



2023 Luck of the Draw Winners

- ✓ Enroll in an accredited two- or four-year college or technical school for the 2024 fall semester.

Winners of prior years, employees, and immediate family members of Choptank Electric are NOT eligible to participate.

> choptankelectric.coop/scholarships

*Scholarships must be redeemed by 8/31/24

Choptank Electric Cooperative BUZZ

Choptank Welcomes New Employees



Jeremy Goldman
Executive Director of
Business Development

Experience: Dorchester County, Caroline County, Sussex County and State of Delaware

Hobbies: Pottery, Cattle Ranch, Art

Looking Forward To: Working with a great team.



Robert Morscher
System Administrator

Experience: Sea Watch International, Choptank Transport and Safe Chain Solutions

Hobbies: Gardening, Woodworking

Looking Forward To: Learning how everything works, and how/where improvements may be made.



⚡ Congratulations to **Bob Thompson**, our Board Member from the Ocean Pines district, for receiving his Gold Certification from NRECA. The Director Gold certificate demonstrates a director’s ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability. We appreciate your dedication to our Co-op, Bob!

⚡ Congratulations to **DeShown Gayle** who earned the Journeyman/Apprentice Lineman position at the Regional Service Center.

⚡ Congratulations to **Luke Turner, Hunter Absher, Ben Cunningham** and **Camden Stinson** who completed the 6th Class Apprentice Lineman testing and moved to Apprentice Lineman 5th Class.

⚡ Congratulations to **Dylan Perdue** who was promoted to Engineering Fieldman 3rd Class.

⚡ Congratulations to **Scott Murray** who was promoted to AMI Network & Smart Grid Technician.

86th Annual Member Meeting

Thursday, April 25, 2024

Please join us for the annual meeting of Cooperative members on Thursday, April 25, to discuss important policy and leadership issues, and review the successes of 2023. All customers of Choptank Electric Cooperative are members and are entitled to vote and participate in discussions about how our electric distribution company functions here on the Eastern Shore.

The annual meeting and dinner will be held at The Fountains Wedding & Conference Center at 1800 Sweetbay Drive in Salisbury, Maryland. Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. for members to register, visit with staff and vendors, and enjoy dinner.

The business portion of the annual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. with President and CEO Mike Malandro reporting on the Co-op business over the last 12 months. Three Board Members will be standing for re-election during the 2024 meeting.

- ✓ **Bob Arnold**, representing Queen Anne's County
- ✓ **Kristen Nickerson**, representing Kent County
- ✓ **Doug Scott**, representing Dorchester County

Biographical information about each Director candidate is posted



BOB ARNOLD



KRISTEN NICKERSON



DOUG SCOTT

online at www.choptankelectric.coop and is displayed in the lobby of the headquarters office in Denton. Petitions for nomination were submitted, reviewed and approved by the Credentials and Elections Committee. Because there is only one approved Director candidate for each district, the Committee has invoked Bylaws section 4.06(b). This section states that in the event of an uncontested election, Choptank Electric Cooperative may forego the balloting process. A final vote to elect Directors will occur during the annual meeting. This saves the Cooperative and its members thousands of dollars in the printing and mailing of ballots and the hiring of a voting service provider.

In addition to the formal business of the meeting, there will be an opportunity for students to receive scholarships. Ten \$1,000 Luck of the Draw scholarships will be awarded to students who pre-file their applications and are present at the meeting with their parent or legal guardian who is an active cooperative member. Applications, qualifications and other details about the scholarships are posted on the website under "Member Benefits" and are covered on the previous page.

All members who attend the annual



We are proud to partner with the **Maryland Food Bank!**

Please bring nonperishable items with you to help us fight hunger. Those who donate will be entered into a drawing for a prize at the end of the meeting.

meeting will be awarded a \$10 bill credit on their next electric bill (limited to one per membership). There will also be door prizes drawn at the end of the meeting ranging from \$100-\$500 in bill credits.

To RSVP and reserve your space at the 2024 annual meeting, please contact our Member Service Center by:

- ✓ Calling 1-877-892-0001
- or
- ✓ Emailing us at annualmeeting@choptankelectric.coop

We will need your name, account number, guests' names and total number in your group to reserve your space and accurately register you for the 2024 annual meeting. The RSVP deadline is Monday, April 8, but call today to guarantee your spot.

> www.choptankelectric.coop/annual-meeting



Scan to learn more about our board members up for re-election



Celebrating the First Powerline Worker Pre-Apprenticeship Class

By Katie Lockett, Manager of Marketing, Communications and Education



We are proud to recognize the inaugural class of the Powerline Worker Pre-Apprenticeship program that graduated on December 20, 2023. Seven participants completed this 13-week program offered by Wor-Wic Community College through a partnership with Choptank Electric Cooperative and the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC).

The graduates were Andrew Brinsky, Ricky Donaldson Jr., Jason Lewis, Brian Postles, Hunter Rodgers, Gavin Roystuart and Zachary Smith.

“I cannot wait to see the success these graduates will undoubtedly have in their careers as powerline workers,” said Mike Malandro, President and CEO of Choptank Electric. “This partnership with Wor-Wic Community College and the VMDAEC supports the future of

the industry and provides first-hand training for lineworkers right here on the Eastern Shore.”

Students received hands-on experience with climbing, setting and pulling poles, proper rigging and framing, bucket truck inspection, maintenance and operation, and electrical test equipment. Much of the training was conducted at Choptank Electric’s Regional Service Center facility in Salisbury, right across from the program’s classroom instruction at Wor-Wic Community College.

Students gained knowledge of the power industry, including generation, transmission, distribution, and safety standards. Instruction also covered OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid/AED, and ATSSA Traffic Control trainings with the goal of students obtaining certifications. The program was instructed by Jerone Mabe, Manager of Technical Services for VMDAEC.



**top row l to r: Dr. Kristin Mallory, Mike Malandro, Brian Postles, Hunter Rodgers, Gavin Roystuart, Zachary Smith, Dr. Deborah Casey, and Jerone Mabe
front row: Andrew Brinsky, Richard Donaldson Jr., and Jason Lewis**

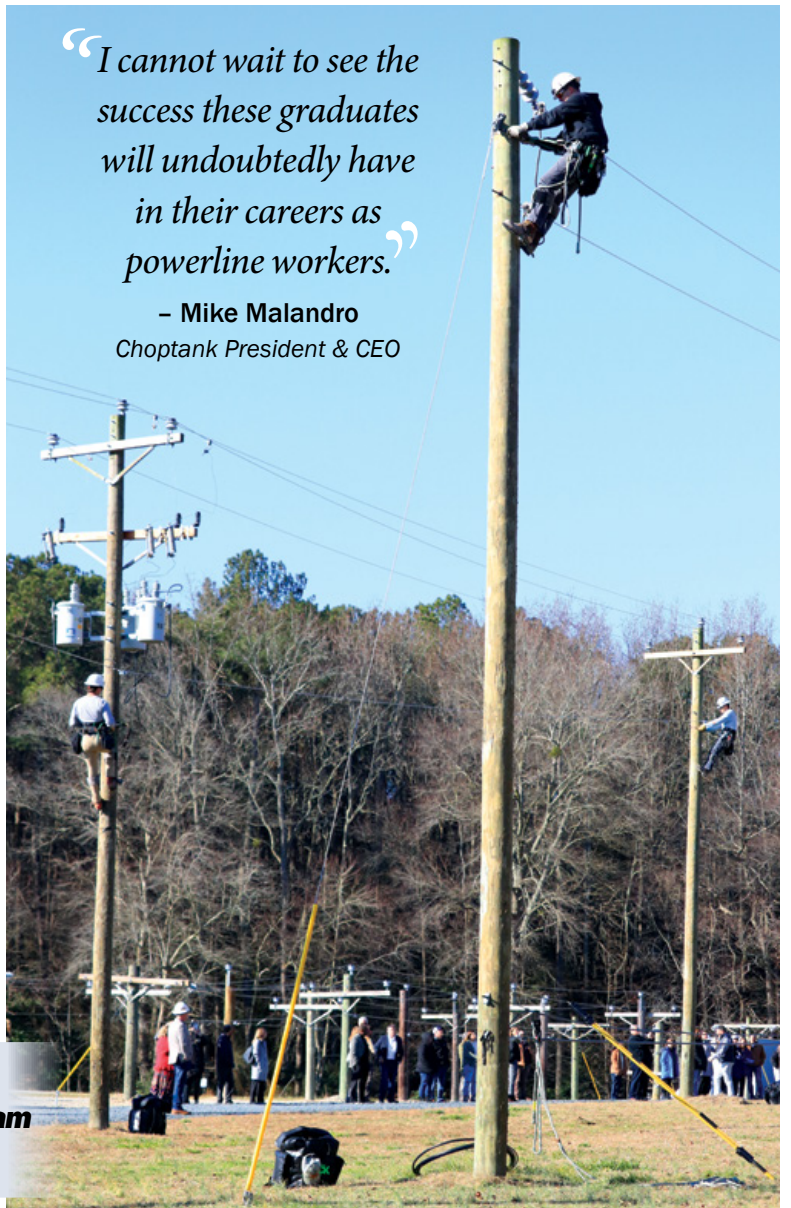


After the ceremony, graduates showed off the skills they learned.

The second cohort began in February and is set to graduate this spring. The program is grant-funded, so it is offered at no cost for chosen applicants who live or work in Maryland. The grant also covers subsequent CDL training of successful program graduates.

Alan Scruggs, Vice President of Safety and Training Services at VMDAEC, addressed the graduates at the ceremony on December 20 and shared these final remarks, “You now have an insight into one of the best careers imaginable. My advice to you after my 30 years in the co-op family: Never quit learning, always ask questions, and most importantly, always make safety the top priority for you, your families, and your co-workers.”

After the ceremony at Wor-Wic, family and peers were able to watch the graduates climb the powerline poles at Choptank’s training facility to celebrate their hard work and new skills. Check our social media this spring for the application process for the next program cohort.



“I cannot wait to see the success these graduates will undoubtedly have in their careers as powerline workers.”

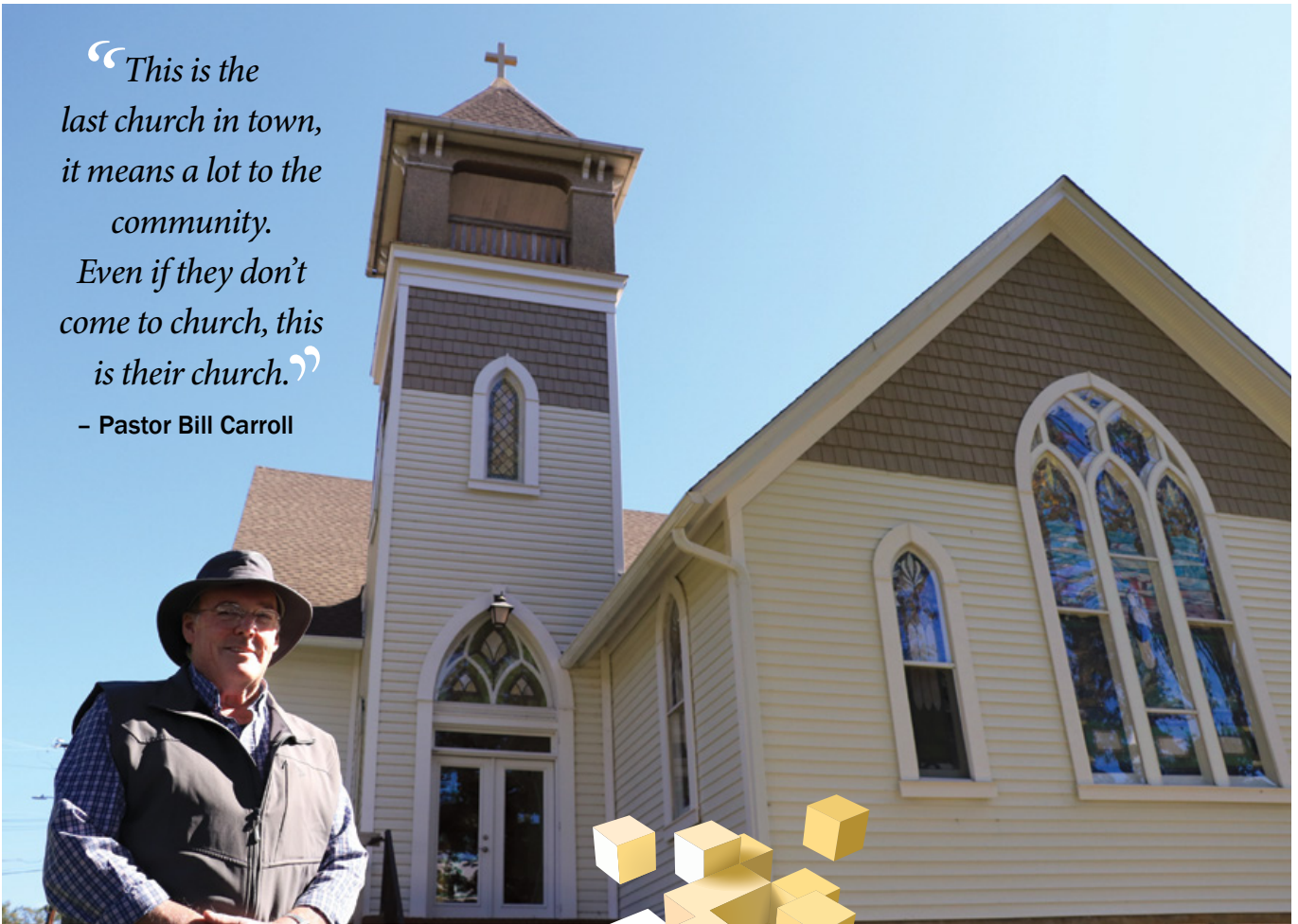
– Mike Malandro
Choptank President & CEO



**Scan to watch our
powerline worker program
graduation video**

“This is the last church in town, it means a lot to the community. Even if they don’t come to church, this is their church.”

– Pastor Bill Carroll



To tell the story of the last church standing in Betterton, Maryland, you have to first touch on the history of Betterton itself. The town sits atop and within a steep north facing hill where the Chesapeake Bay and the Sassafras River meet. Founded as a true fishing village, Main Street begins at the water’s edge. Naturally, Betterton became a great location for local farmers and watermen to ship their products to larger markets in Baltimore and beyond. As the town grew, so did the need for faith, and Methodists began congregating at The Old Crew Homestead in 1868. During the first part of the century, Betterton would become a place to vacation for city folk escaping the summer’s heat. With the town’s rapid growth, the hard workers of Betterton needed a larger and more permanent place of worship. They found one at the top of the hill and,

One Piece at a Time

Choptank Trust Donates to Church Renovation

By Bobby Schaller, MultiMedia Manager

in 1914, began building the church that continues to stand today, overlooking the Bay, at the corner of Main Street and 3rd Avenue.

Betterton Methodist Church is one story, with an expansive gable roof, an engaged square bell tower and unique Catholic-style stained glass windows on all sides. Unfortunately, when the Chesapeake Bay Bridge opened in 1952 vacationers started to take the drive down to the ocean, bypassing Betterton. By and by, Betterton’s tourism industry waned along with the church’s upkeep.

Walking in one Sunday morning,

Pastor Bill Carroll noticed a large part of the stucco wall hanging high above the entrance. While knocking the mortar down, he knew right away something had to be done. The church had enough money to fix the bell tower’s siding but after that, they had to get creative. They brainstormed and started fundraising and looking for grants. Being a Choptank member himself, he applied for a Choptank Trust donation. Choptank awarded three donations over five years totaling \$11,500 toward church renovations. Realizing it would take quite a bit more, church leadership decided to renovate one piece at a time.

The beautiful stained glass windows were in bad shape. Harkening back to days of old when most folks were illiterate, they are a parable of Jesus’ life and purpose. They also hold clues to the town’s history. With opalescent glass, predominantly

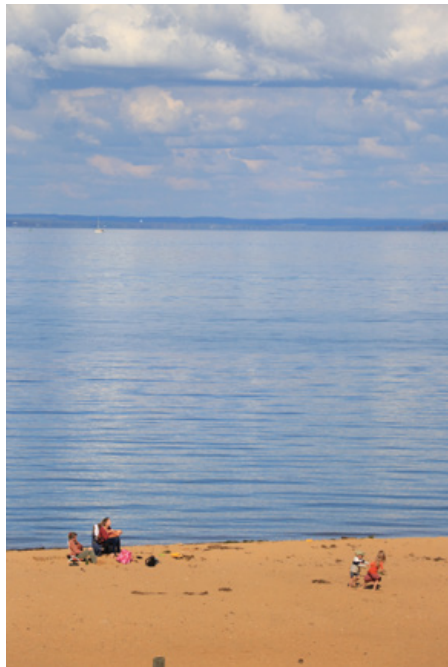


Betterton Methodist Church

lavender, green, beige, and sky blue, each panel is topped with a stylized fleur-de-lis. They had not been touched in years and had holes in some of the panes. All windows were restored to their original shape and then protected by plexiglass, the front doors were replaced and ceiling fans were installed. This really helped the energy efficiency of the church, keeping folks cool in the summer, warm in the winter and allowing more light in. They opened up the interior of the church to make it more inviting and began replacing lightbulbs with LEDs. Doing a little bit at a time was starting to work.

The church was making due with whatever they had. "A lot of stuff that you see happen here, it's happened because the community makes it happen. Choptank included," said Pastor Bill. Church members helped out in any way possible by reviving and painting the cross, replacing all the gutters, restoring the bell tower, cutting the grass, landscaping and snow removal. With no air conditioning, Pastor Bill even found and revived old oscillating electric fans from the '30s to keep folks cool. Still, the church needed more resources, especially for the exterior.

"The Lord works in mysterious ways.



A family enjoys the Betterton Beach

One day you are without, while the next you have plenty," recalled Pastor Bill as his face still lights up with astonishment. Choptank published a story in *Cooperative Living* in June of 2021 about the church's renovations. From that, anonymous members found out about the effort and sent them a handsome check with a note that said, "if you need more let us know." the church replied with a thank-you card and was sent another generous check and the renovation was able to continue.

The exterior renovation ensued and the church was restored to, as close as possible, its original form. The restoration has been a success. Sunday mass is now held every Sunday instead of every other and attendance has increased dramatically. A celebration was held recently, with live music and catering to commemorate the completion.

"Betterton Methodist Church has served the community for nearly 150 years. Choptank Electric Trust looks to support organizations who serve their community as well as respect the history of the area. With the support of the Choptank Electric Trust and much fundraising, Betterton



All stained glass has been restored

Methodist Church was able to complete much-needed repairs to their facilities and continue to support the community in and around the town of Betterton," said Kent County Trust Board Member Sharon Redding.

When asked what the church's renovation means to the people of Betterton, Pastor Bill Carroll had this to say. "A church is never designed to draw on the community. It's always been designed, by Christ, to help the community. Choptank's gracious donations are a big part of us reaching our goal to restore our church. Aside from the fact that it's now very energy efficient, the safety and overall look reassures our community that when they are in need of help, the church is here for them."

To learn more about our Operation Round Up® Trust program, go to www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund

To learn more about the church, go to www.stillbetterchurch.org

CHOPTANK LINEMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

1/10/24
Lowtide

OUT
IN THE
FIELD

In early January a big storm hit the Eastern Shore. With high winds, heavy rains and high tides, we had over 3,000 members without power at some points. Crews worked above and beyond and through the night and had all members' power restored as quickly and as safely as possible.

Thanks to our members for all of the kind words!



Leslie Beveridge

We couldn't believe how quickly our power was restored last night in the midst of the storm. Your hard work does not go unnoticed. Thank you!!

Like Reply Hide 45m



Paula Mahaffey

Thank you to all the men, women working last night to restore our power in Earleville... Thought we would have to wait until after the storm was over... Surprised it happened so quickly... Thank you!!!

Like Reply Hide 1h



Dal Marshall

Thank you Choptank for all you do.

Like Reply Hide 1h



Anne King Whaples

Bless all line workers, be careful!

Like Reply Hide 2h



Debbie Murray Evans

Thanks to all the power line workers out here that work in these conditions to restore power. We are so spoiled!

Like Reply Hide 3h



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution co-op serving approximately 56,000 residential, commercial and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

President & CEO

Micheal E. Malandro

Board of Directors

Douglas D. Scott
Chairman, Dorchester Co.

Robert E. Arnold
Vice Chairman, Queen Anne's Co.

John J. Burke Jr.
Treasurer, Cecil Co.

Matthew R. Holloway
Secretary, Wicomico Co.

Amy I. Brandt
Caroline Co.

Craig N. Mathies Sr.
Somerset Co.

Kristen E. Nickerson
Kent Co.

Jeffrey D. Rathell Sr.
Talbot Co.

Robert B. Thompson
Ocean Pines District

Donna R. West
Worcester Co.

**Choptank
Fiber**

Choptank Fiber, LLC

Choptank Fiber, LLC, is a wholly owned broadband subsidiary of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Choptank Fiber's goal is to install true gigabit broadband with no data caps one community at a time until we serve all our members on the Eastern Shore.

Choptank Electric Trust Awards



The Choptank Electric Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation funded by Operation Round Up donations from members of Choptank Electric. Funds from the Trust are distributed in all nine counties of MD's Eastern Shore.

To apply or to find out more about this program:

> www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund

December 2023

- Judy Center Early Learning - \$500
- Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry - \$1,200
- Greensboro Cemetery Association - \$1,500
- Lower Shore Autism Community - \$2,000
- Mt. Zion Cemetery - \$4,000
- His Hope Ministries - \$2,600
- Talbot Humane - \$2,500

January 2024

- Cricket Center - \$7,150
- Kent County Commission on Aging - \$975

The total of approved applications for December and January was \$30,175, which included \$12,414 for individual home and medical expenses.