

# Capital Credits Applied to January Bills

We are pleased to announce a capital credit distribution this month to all active members who have accrued those credits in 1994 and 2022. Choptank Electric operates with a cooperative structure and returns those profits to you, our members, in the form of capital credits. Unlike investor-owned utilities that return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, our member-owners are returned those excess revenues.

In previous years, you may have received your capital credit as a check in the mail. In an effort to save you money and be more efficient, we are applying your capital credit directly to your electric bill in January. This saves you a trip to the bank and saves your Co-op on printing and postage costs to mail a check.

Choptank Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors voted to return a total of \$2.5 million to our

members in January 2024. The amount of capital credits you earn is based upon the amount of electricity purchased in a given year. Keep an eye out for your January billing statement to see your capital credits applied.

We hope you take pride in being a member-owner of Choptank Electric. Capital credit distribution is one of the many benefits of the Cooperative working for our members. If you have any questions about your capital credit distribution, please call our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001.



*Happy New Year,*

*Douglas D. Scott,  
Chairman of the Board  
Choptank Electric Cooperative*

**Choptank Electric  
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 

**Choptank  
Fiber**

P.O. Box 430 | Denton, MD | 21629

Member Service Center: 1-877-892-0001

Automated Member Service: 1-866-999-4574

Automated Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790

Text "OUT" to: 1-800-410-4790

Use SmartHub to Manage Account,  
Track Usage and Report Outages —>

[WWW.CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP](http://WWW.CHOPTANKELECTRIC.COOP)





**OUT  
IN THE  
FIELD**

**On Halloween, Ocean Pines members were tricked, not treated, with an outage caused by an underground cable failure. Our crews worked hard to restore power within a few hours and returned on November 1st to upgrade and improve the Ocean Pines grid. We want to say great job to our crew and thank our membership for their patience!**



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Bobby Schaller Jr.

MultiMedia Manager

By Katie Lockett,  
Manager of Marketing,  
Communications and Education

Meet the face behind our local pages of this magazine, Bobby Schaller! Bobby is the MultiMedia Manager at Choptank Electric Cooperative and has an extensive career in graphic arts and photography. Most of the communication you've received in the last two years from the Co-op has been designed by him, both digitally and printed.

"Witnessing and documenting the great work that our lineworkers and employees accomplish every day is the highlight of my job," shared Bobby. "I appreciate anytime I'm able to meet and talk with our members, especially at community meetings and fairs."

Bobby grew up in St. Mary's County and moved to Salisbury in 1998 where he lives with his wife and their five kids. He enjoys art, music, film



photography, skateboarding and coaching in his free time. Bobby formed a nonprofit in Salisbury to provide a free public park for youth on the Eastern Shore. He became president, raised money, and designed and helped physically build the skatepark on South Park Drive where he organizes and runs summer camps.

"Bobby is such a talented designer and brings real value to the cooperative community," said Valerie Connelly, Vice President at Choptank.

"He is dedicated to helping others and sets a great example in the workplace."

Prior to joining Choptank Electric, Bobby earned an art degree from Salisbury University and gained experience at CJZ Design & Photography and The Daily Times. "My favorite accomplishment while working at Choptank is creating our mural and helping to design our storefront at the new Junior



**Schaller teaching kids how to skate**

Achievement Center. We hope it inspires kids to enter a utility industry career here on The Shore," added Bobby.

"I hope our members know that I'm here to make sure they're represented, appreciated and up to date on important information regarding their Co-op," shared Bobby.



# Scholarship Offered by Trust Board

## Scholarship available for fall 2024 school year

By McKayla Kiernan, Communications Specialist

The Choptank Electric Trust Board is pleased to announce that our annual scholarship program will begin accepting applications on January 2, 2024. If you are a high school or home-school senior whose parent or guardian is a member or employee of Choptank Electric Cooperative, you are eligible to apply for the Choptank Electric Trust Scholarship that is distributed by the Choptank Electric Trust Board, a 501(c)(3) organization. Applicants must be entering a post-high school educational institution or technical/trade school as a freshman in the fall of 2024. The Choptank Electric Trust Board distributes nine \$2,000 scholarships every May and

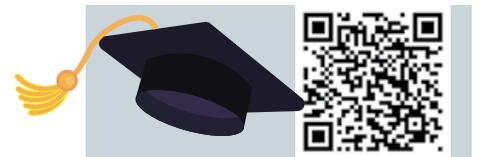
scholarship recipients are selected based on a combination of the following criteria:

- ✓ Financial need
- ✓ Academic achievement
- ✓ Extracurricular and community activities
- ✓ References
- ✓ Personal essay

The required essay should be limited to two typed, double-spaced pages on the following topic: "Why have I chose to continue my education and how will this scholarship assist me?" Letters of reference are required and may be from school administrators,

teachers, civic leaders, clergy or neighbors (not from relatives). Please limit to three references. The Academic Information section of the application must be completed by the student's guidance counselor or other appropriate school official. Applications postmarked after March 15 will not be eligible for consideration.

For additional information and to download the application, please scan the QR code below or visit: [choptankelectric.coop/scholarships](https://choptankelectric.coop/scholarships)



# Dedicated to Serving Members and the Cooperative

## Kelly Hubbard Retires After 34 Years of Service on Choptank Lines



**Kelly Hubbard**  
Serviceman

*Kelly Hubbard began his career at Choptank Electric Cooperative in February of 1989 as an Apprentice Lineman in Cambridge. He worked hard to become Lineman and Chief Lineman in Salisbury, and eventually took on the role of Serviceman. Kelly was responsible for reporting to outages to assess the situation, call in a crew when needed, and fix the problem to restore power as Serviceman. In 2015 Hubbard went above and beyond his duties when driving home after work. He noticed that a member's house had caught fire. He then notified the fire department and kept the pets found inside the household safe until the owners returned.*

*His favorite part of working for the Cooperative was "the good company and relationships with our members and crew." He noted that he also enjoyed going away on storm travel with other linemen to help other cooperatives.*

*"Kelly's skilled, hardworking dedication over his 34-year career at the Co-op will be missed. He showed up every day with a positive attitude, ready to work. Kelly has helped many members of the Cooperative as well as coworkers over the years. Whenever I asked Kelly for assistance, he always replied 'no problem boss, I will take care of it'. Thank you, Kelly, you are always someone we can count on." Said Tom Filewicz, Senior Manager of District Operations.*

*Kelly's last day with Choptank Electric was November 15, 2023. He plans to travel with his wife to Alaska and spend more time with the grandkids in his retirement.*



# Choptank Lights Up Guatemala

## Choptank linemen bring power to Central America

By Katie Lockett, Manager of Marketing, Communications and Education

Local linemen Brandon Thompson and Casey Butler of Choptank Electric Cooperative traveled to Santa Isabel, Guatemala, in October for three weeks to help electrify a village with NRECA International. They traveled with other lineworkers from electric cooperatives in Maryland and Virginia to connect 103 homes and a school with electricity. NRECA International partnered with the Municipal Electric Utility of Ixcán (EMRE) to connect Santa Isabel to the local power grid. Read more about the program and trip on page 8.

Brandon Thompson is a Journeyman in the Salisbury district and has worked at Choptank Electric for five years. He decided to volunteer for United We Light because he had never been out of the country and wanted to experience it by doing something similar to what he does for work while helping others. “This was such an eye-opening

experience that made me feel fortunate for how we live and work in the United States,” said Brandon. “I really enjoyed working with the local municipal utility and learning how they climb poles without the equipment we have at home. And the families were so friendly and welcoming of us into their village.” NRECA sent some power tools down

*“This was such an eye opening experience that made me feel fortunate for how we live and work in the United States.”*

**– Brandon Thompson,  
Choptank Journeyman**

to Guatemala, but our linemen didn’t have bucket or line trucks for setting transformers, making it harder to pull wire and climb. Brandon was able to work on the

connections and wiring in the huts as well as on the poles, learning residential electric work while he was there as well. “I got to do so many things on the trip that I don’t normally do in my job at Choptank, which was cool to experience.”

Casey Butler is a Chief Lineman in the Denton district and has worked at Choptank Electric for four years. He decided to volunteer for United We Light because he had always wanted to go on a mission trip and serve the less fortunate and thought this was the perfect opportunity.

“I’m so glad I went—it was much different than what I expected,” said Casey. “The conditions that the villagers live in were worse than anticipated, yet they were so joyful. It humbled us all and made me grateful for what we have back at home.”

Both Brandon and Casey enjoyed interacting with the locals in the village—especially the kids. “They



slowly accepted us and warmed up to our presence. They loved high fives and expected them from us every day,” added Casey. The linemen would play soccer and different games with the kids in the evenings and would sometimes be able to communicate with them through the translator.

“The local translator who followed our group around had a big impact on me,” said Brandon. “Especially during the roadblocks and political protests in the beginning of the trip when things were a bit uneasy. He helped explain to us what was happening and taught us a lot about the region.”

Casey noted that it was difficult at times to complete a rather simple task with the workers who didn’t speak English. “We figured out some nonverbal communication with the locals and EMRE crew to complete certain jobs when we couldn’t understand each other. But when the power was turned on for the village on the last day, their excitement and gratitude was undeniable.”

“I am so proud of Brandon and Casey for stepping up to the challenge and using their skills to improve the quality of life for the residents in Santa Isabel, Guatemala,” shared Tom Filewicz, Senior Manager of District Operations at Choptank Electric. “Their selfless dedication is much appreciated.”

Brandon and Casey bonded with the other lineworkers on the trip from the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives and say the experiences they share will last a lifetime. The group plans to keep in touch and get together annually. “It makes me want to help

these other co-ops out even more now during storms because we all feel like family,” added Casey.

“Concern for Community is one of the seven cooperative principles, and these two men have taken that

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*“It humbled us all and made me grateful for what we have back at home.”*

**– Casey Butler,  
Choptank Chief Lineman**

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idea to new horizons by volunteering on this trip,” said Wayne Daubach, Manager of Regional Operations at Choptank Electric. “They have truly shown what can be accomplished when you set your mind to it. We appreciate their determination.”

To learn more about the United We Light program and other mission trips, visit: > [nrecainternational.coop](http://nrecainternational.coop)

Photos by John Johnston of SMECO



*“The opportunity here is for all of our 10,000 students to see what businesses and what opportunities are right here in their backyard ... We want them to stay here and thrive here and help our community grow.”*

*– Jayme Hayes, President & CEO  
of The Eastern Shore Junior  
Achievement Center*



**A well-attended ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in late October**



## **Perdue Henson Junior Achievement Center Highlights Careers in Energy**

By Matthew Tefteau, Manager of Government Affairs

**C**hoptank Electric Cooperative and Delmarva Power recently partnered to develop an educational and interactive energy industry storefront. This partnership demonstrates Eastern Shore utilities coming together and investing in career engagement, STEM programming, and workforce development.

Choptank Electric Cooperative leadership joined over 400 individuals during the October ribbon-cutting ceremony. Community leaders spoke about making sure that students in every

corner of the state of Maryland have access to first-class educational opportunities. Jake Day, Maryland Secretary of Housing & Community Development, noted the amazing opportunity students will receive visiting the JA Center. “They will see firsthand the skills needed to acquire good-paying jobs in different industries right here on the Eastern Shore,” said Day. Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman highlighted the importance of the JA Center, especially when it comes to financial literacy. “We know financial education is key to long-term success,” stated Lierman.

More than 10,000 students from six Eastern Shore counties will visit the Perdue Henson JA Center in Salisbury, MD over the course of the next year. Elementary and middle school students will participate in JA BizTown to learn about the different industries that make up a town, and middle and high school students will participate in JA Finance Park to learn about personal finance budgeting and career exploration.

The joint utility storefront also offers student the ability to see “How Energy Grids Work.” Designed by Bobby Schaller from Choptank Electric Cooperative, the 12-foot



**(L-R) Board Member Jeff Rathell, CEO & President Mike Malandro, Maryland Secretary of Housing Jake Day, Board Member Donna West, and Matthew Teffeau stand in front of our new utility storefront**

mural of the Eastern Shore highlights how energy travels from generation to your home. The hands-on storefront experience features careers as a lineworker, engineer, customer service rep, community relations manager, safety manager, CEO and CFO. Students will get to try on lineworker gear, sell hard hats, label the parts of a utility pole, pay a utility bill, and learn how electricity and high-speed internet benefit a community through the other storefronts in the Center.

Scan the QR code below to learn more about the Junior Achievement Center of The Eastern Shore and their mission. Or visit:

> [easternshore.ja.org](http://easternshore.ja.org)





# WINTER SAFETY

> When using a generator, **NEVER** run it inside your home or garage. Doing so can be deadly.

**W**inter is officially here. The days are short and the temperatures are dropping, which increases the possibility of snow, ice and treacherous weather. We ask members to always be prepared for winter weather and subsequent outages. This includes having an emergency kit ready.

In addition, please stay away from downed wires or damaged electric equipment. Touching energized wires can cause serious injury or death. If you see downed wires, call 911 immediately.

For helpful tips on how to prepare for a winter storm and ready an emergency kit, please visit:

> [choptankelectric.coop/prepare](http://choptankelectric.coop/prepare)

## 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](http://www.choptankelectric.coop/operation-round-trust-fund)

### October 2023

- Fruitland VFC - \$1,000
- QA County Make a Difference Day - \$500
- Salisbury Jaycees - \$300
- Chesterwye Center - \$5,000
- YMCA of the Chesapeake - \$1,000

**The total of approved applications for October and November was \$52,261, which included \$26,786 for individual home and medical expenses.**

### November 2023

- Friends of the Grape - \$1,500
- Bayside Community Network - \$1,575
- Millington VFC - \$5,000
- Historical Society of Kent County - \$2,000
- Positive Strides - \$2,400
- SkillsUSA at CCTC - \$2,000
- William M. Singerly Steam Fire Engine & Hook & Ladder Co - \$1,000
- Worcester County Veterans Memorial - \$1,700



### 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.

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Micheal E. Malandro

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#### 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.