

CHOPTANK ELECTRIC  
**Cooperative Living**

HOLIDAY  
**ROOTS**

PAGE 10

From left, Amy, Jane and  
Charlie Cawley with their dogs  
Precious (not visible) and Mohawk.

PHOTO BY MCKAYLA KIERNAN

For changes of address, please contact Choptank Electric Cooperative.





# Choptank Electric Welcomed Rural Fiber Expo to Maryland

The annual Rural Fiber Expo, put on by the Virginia, Maryland and Delaware Association of Broadband Cooperatives (VMDABC), came to Annapolis this year. Choptank was honored to host the event for the first time in Maryland.

“We welcome you to the home of the Chesapeake Bay, the blue crab, the national anthem and the one-time Capital of the United States,” said Mike Malandro, Choptank President & CEO, in his opening remarks. “We are proud that Choptank Fiber is among the many remarkable successes in Maryland with almost 5,000 subscribers since our start in 2021.”

The Rural Fiber Expo is an opportunity for the 150+ participants to discuss the challenges they face and the innovative solutions deployed for rural broadband. Industry experts from across the mid-Atlantic discussed strategies and best practices for the year ahead.

VMDABC Board Chair Casey Logan said, “This annual



meeting is not just a formality; it is a celebration of our collective achievements, a testament to our resilience, and a beacon of our future aspirations.

“As we celebrate our achievements, we must also look to the future with optimism and determination. The landscape of our industry is ever-changing, and we must remain agile and innovative to stay ahead. Our focus for the coming year will be on protecting our Cooperatives

*(continued on next page)*

NOV.-DEC. 2024



## 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 and select option 1  
Fiber Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790 and select option 2  
Use SmartHub to Manage Account,  
Track Usage and Report Outages →



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



*“We are focused on finishing our major build-out over the next few years and launching ancillary services – like VoIP and cellular – to make Choptank Fiber the best provider in the community. Just like we are with the electric cooperative.”*

**- Mike Malandro, President & CEO**

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from harmful legislation and advocating for our membership, ensuring that government remembers and understands the cost to deploy broadband is not uniform throughout our geographical regions.”

Choptank experts were featured in several breakout panels. Sarah Dahl, General Counsel and VP of Member Services, discussed broadband affordability for members and the impact of the government withdraw from the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and the Maryland Emergency Broadband Benefit (MEBB). Tim McGaha, VP of Technical Services, provided insight into best practices and common obstacles during the Operations Roundtable. And Katie Luckett, Choptank’s Marketing, Communications & Education Manager, talked about outreach efforts and value-added features offered by Choptank Fiber.



**As this year’s Rural Fiber Expo wrapped up, Choptank Electric Cooperative and our subsidiary Choptank Fiber celebrated:**

- Construction to more than 14,000 serviceable locations,
- Curbside pedestals and an offer of service to 10,000 previously unserved families,
- 4,499 active customers, and
- Construction speed that will deliver service to our remaining grant-awarded buildout locations by the end of this calendar year – almost two years ahead of schedule.

**From top to bottom: Tim McGaha, VP of Technical Services, Katie Luckett, Manager of Marketing, Communications and Education and Sarah Dahl, VP & General Counsel, participated in panel discussions at the Rural Fiber Expo in Annapolis.**

**Photos provided by Jim Robertson and Terry Burke.**



# Nathan Smith Earns New Credentials

Recognized by NRECA as a Certified Loss Control Professional

The Choptank Board of Directors recently recognized Nathan Smith for earning his Certified Loss Control Professional credentials. Nathan is Choptank's Manager of Safety, Training and Compliance Operations. He has been employed with the Cooperative for 19 years.

"We are proud of Nathan's commitment to the safety of our employees and our members," said Mike Malandro, President & CEO of the cooperative. "Our first priority is to make sure everyone gets safely home to their family after a full day of maintaining of our electric grid."

With the completion of this NRECA sponsored program, Nathan has demonstrated that he has the knowledge and skills needed to

successfully manage challenging safety and loss control events. From environmental issues to disaster recovery, emergency procedures and workplace violence, the program prepares safety managers to take preventative measures and corrective action.

"Nathan sets a great example for the younger men and women beginning their careers at Choptank," said Lance Lockerman, VP of Operations. During his tenure at the cooperative, Nathan trained as an apprentice, was certified as a journeyman, served as chief lineman and is now the safety manager.



Nathan Smith with Doug Scott, Chairman of the Board (left), and Lance Lockerman, VP of Operations.

"The employees at Choptank live in the community they serve. Our Board and our leadership are dedicated to a culture of safety and a commitment to electric reliability," explained Doug Scott, Chairman of the Board. "It's the dedication of employees like Nathan that earn our Cooperative the highest member satisfaction rating year after year."

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



### HUNTER RODGERS

Apprentice Lineman 5th Class

By McKayla Kiernan,  
Communication Specialist

National Apprenticeship week is November 17-23, 2024. Although we don't need a designated week to appreciate our amazing apprentices, we

would like to spotlight one of our new apprentices who is just starting his career as a lineworker here at Choptank Electric Co-op.

Meet Hunter Rodgers, an Apprentice Lineman at Choptank Electric. Hunter graduated from the Powerline Worker Pre-Apprenticeship program through Wor-Wic Community College and began working at Choptank on June 10, 2024.

Although only five months into his career here at Choptank, Hunter already has a passion for serving our members. He describes being motivated by his wonderful "co-op family" at the Cambridge district, his family, his friends and keeping the lights on for our members.

According to Curtis Short, Manager of District Operations in Cambridge, "Hunter has been a great addition to our team. The Pre-Apprentice

program provided a good head start for his career. We look forward to helping him progress through his Apprenticeship to become a Journeyman."

Hunter is looking forward to learning as much as he can in the lineworker field while having a long, prosperous career serving Choptank's members.



# Thank You to all Veterans!

## Especially those who keep the lights on.

Hear Mike Malandro talk about his time served and how it prepared him for his service at our Co-op.



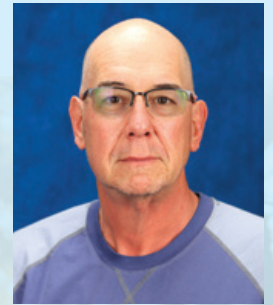
**Mike Malandro**  
President & CEO



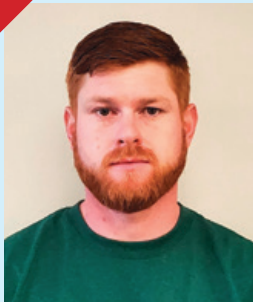
**Cole Herr**  
Journeyman Lineman



**Ethan Wallace**  
Chief Lineman



**Marion Townsend**  
Meter & Apparatus Technician



**Derek Brinsfield**  
Meter & Apparatus Technician



**Frankie Davis**  
Apprentice Lineman



**Tyler Blackiston**  
Apprentice Lineman



**Scott Smart**  
Journeyman Lineman



**Otis Wagner**  
Work Order & Material Coordinator



**Scott Maurer**  
Work Order & Material Coordinator



**Patrick Helgason**  
Apprentice Lineman



**Brian Postles**  
Apprentice Lineman

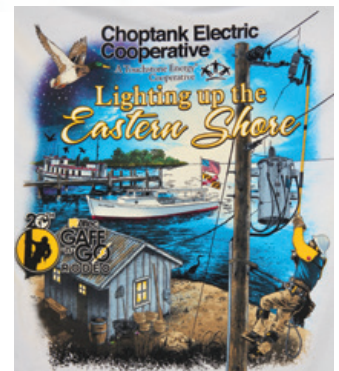
## T-Shirt Raises Funds for Fallen Linemen Foundation

Choptank Electric Cooperative and the Choptank Electric Trust donated \$2,160 to the Fallen Linemen Foundation this fall to support injured lineworkers and their families. The donated funds from Choptank Electric Cooperative of \$1,080 were generated from the proceeds of the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo t-shirt sales over the summer. Thank you to the more than 400 members and families for buying a shirt to support our winning Rodeo team and the

Fallen Linemen Foundation!

Choptank Electric Trust generously matched our donation of \$1,080 with funds from Operation Round Up®. We are proud to give back to such an impactful organization in our industry. To learn more about the Fallen Linemen Foundation, visit > [fallenlinemenfoundation.com](http://fallenlinemenfoundation.com)

**Winning T-shirt designed by Journeyman Scott Smart.**







Photos courtesy of Patriot Point.



## Patriot Point

### A Safe & Tranquil Outdoor Retreat for Soldiers on the Chesapeake

By Valerie Connelly, VP Government Affairs and Public Relations

As we continue our Veterans Day recognition of Choptank members and employees who have served in the military, we also want to highlight the very worthy organization, Patriot Point, a veteran's haven on the Chesapeake Bay served by Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Since 2016, the 294-acre hunting retreat has been hosting wounded active-duty service members, veterans and their families, many of whom are working to cope with stress related to their time spent serving our nation.

"We partner with veteran service organizations across the country to give soldiers a safe place to relax, hunt, get counseling and sometimes do yoga," explains Stephanie Moon, a manager at the facility and a certified trauma-sensitive yoga instructor.

Stephanie and her husband Will

Moon, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL, recently moved to Dorchester County to become the "caretakers" of Patriot Point, situated on Taylors Island Road on the banks of Slaughter Creek. Their kids are now enrolled in local schools and the couple is working to bring awareness and build support for the mission of Patriot Point.

"The original owner of the property used to drive to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., to bring recovering soldiers out to hunt and fish," said Moon. "Then, when the Military Bowl organization purchased the property, a partnership with veteran support organizations was formed to increase our capacity and outreach."

The retreat typically hosts small groups of about 10 people. The sponsoring VSO brings licensed clinicians or counselors depending on the group needs. A recent

weekend with a warrior reunion foundation brought together an elite SEAL team that had served together years ago. And as the hunting season gets underway, the Gold Star Teens foundation will teach safety-first for a group ready to take on the local sika deer.

The Patriot Point website lists 16 different Veteran Service Organizations that have hosted events at the facility over the last two years. Soldiers, veterans, their families and caregivers can work through local VSOs to set up visits to Patriot Point. Members of the Choptank community who want to help with the mission can read more about it and donate online at [patriotpoint.org](https://patriotpoint.org)

VETERANS DAY  
NOVEMBER  
11

# New Demand Reading on your Meter and Monthly Bill

## Giving members more control over energy use

**C**hoptank Electric Cooperative has been updating our residential meters this year to include a demand reading on the meter face. This reading will also be added to all residential monthly electric bills beginning December 1, 2024, as a new line titled Demand (kw). It is being added to bills to get you used to seeing your demand and understanding your usage. The charge associated with demand will be established at a later date.

This reading reflects the highest usage of any 15-minute interval within that billing cycle. You can

think of the demand reading as a 'high score' for electricity usage. It only updates when a new high score is achieved, and resets at the beginning of the 30-day billing cycle.

High demands cost both you and Choptank Electric the most, so we are incorporating these numbers to make you aware of your demand usage and change behaviors if desired. For example, don't charge large devices at 5pm on a hot summer day while doing the laundry, running the vacuum, dishwasher, blender and have every light and TV on. This is 'demanding' a lot

of electricity at once and will reflect on your demand reading, likely achieving a new high score (not a good thing – think of golf where you want a low score).

All members will be able to see the first two numbers on their meter. Most with our standard

meter will also see a status of the disconnect.

1. Demand (kw) – this will be new and will be much smaller (somewhere between 3-30 kw usually)
2. Usage (kwh) – this is the same number that has always been on the meter (e.g. 31726 kwh)
3. Disconnect switch status (open or closed) – most should say closed, meters without a switch will say 'none' or some may even not have the status

As you begin to pay attention to your demand, you can help the grid by spreading out your electricity usage, rather than running all of your appliances at once. If you have questions about this new reading on your meter or on your bill, contact our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001.



**Choptank was well represented at the September annual meeting of the Maryland-District of Columbia Utilities Association in Cambridge, Md. Matt Tefteau, Lisa DeSantis, McKayla Kiernan and Valerie Connelly participated in discussions on utility regulations, transmission projects, cyber security and legislative priorities for the year ahead. Lisa DeSantis was re-elected as the Association Treasurer. McKayla Kiernan joined the Communications and Outreach Committee.**

**2024 - 2025  
MEMBER GUIDE  
NOW AVAILABLE**

view online at > [www.choptankelectric.coop](http://www.choptankelectric.coop)



**HAPPY**  
*Thanksgiving!*

**OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED**  
**November 28 & 29 and**  
**December 25 & 26 for Christmas.**





# CHOPTANK ASSISTS NOVEC IN RESTORING POWER

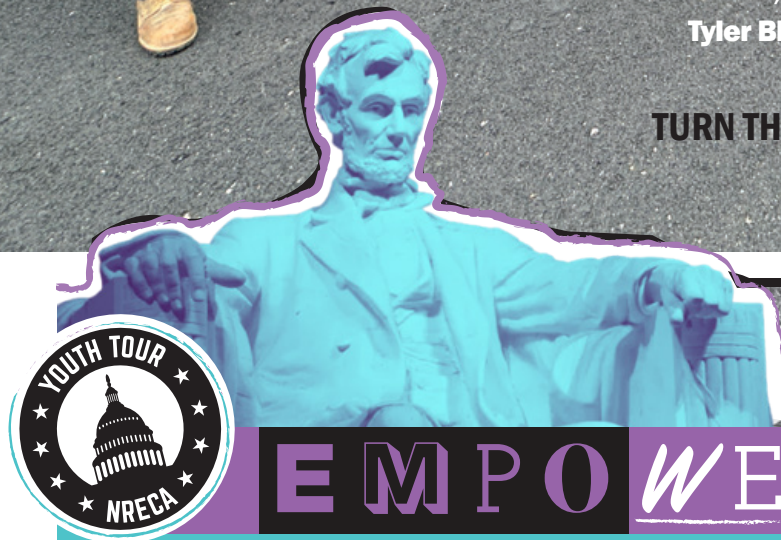
A powerful line of thunderstorms swept through Northern Virginia on August 30, 2024. The storm caused significant power outages and left many residents in the dark. These Choptank linemen volunteered to assist NOVEC in restoring power to their members as safely and as quickly as possible.

*Thank You, All!*



Left to right: Tyler Williamson, Dean Samuel, Josh McCafferty, Mason Johnson, Todd Anderson, Cole Herr, Matthew Taylor, Tyler Blackiston, Camden Stinson, Brody Bennett, Paul Miles and Hunter Rodgers

TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE STORM COVERAGE →



EMPOWER



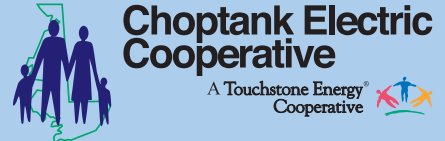
➤ We're searching for students to attend the Youth Tour program with us in Washington, D.C., next year from June 16-20, 2025.

Interested high school juniors and seniors can learn more and apply online at

➤ [www.choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour](http://www.choptankelectric.coop/youth-tour)

Participants must be members of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Applications are due January 31, 2025.





**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**

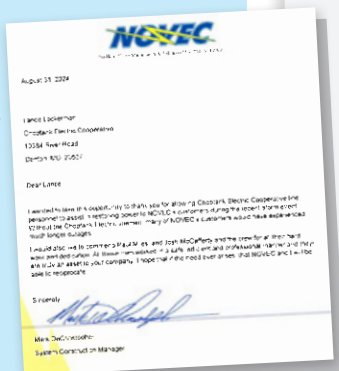
Choptank Fiber, LLC, is a wholly owned broadband subsidiary of Choptank Electric Cooperative. Choptank Fiber's goal is to install true gigabit broadband with no data caps one community at a time until we serve all of our unserved members on the Eastern Shore.

Dear Lance,

*I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing Choptank Electric Cooperative line personnel to assist in restoring power to NOVEC's members during the recent storm event. Without the Choptank Electric linemen, many of NOVEC's customers would have experienced much longer outages.*

*I would also like to commend Paul Miles, and Josh McCafferty and the crew for all their hard work and dedication. All these men worked in a safe, efficient and professional manner and they are truly an asset to your company. I hope that if the need ever arises, that NOVEC and I will be able to reciprocate.*

Sincerely,  
Mark DeChristopher  
NOVEC SYSTEM  
CONSTRUCTION  
MANAGER



**NOVEC - 8/30/24**

Teams of NOVEC lineworkers and 12 fully equipped crews from nearby jurisdictions are working around the clock in Stafford County and southern Fauquier to clear fallen trees and repair downed lines. More than 30 broken electric poles are being replaced as well, a labor-intensive and time-consuming process. Thursday night's storm, which dumped nearly 7 inches of rain in one hour and registered winds of 60-80 mph, did extensive damage and left nearly 6,000 NOVEC customers without power.



**NOVEC - 8/31/24**

Damage assessment from Thursday's storm is complete and line crews will work through the night as the lights continue to come on for Stafford and Fauquier County customers. NOVEC crews are joined by contractors and linemen from other organizations (Choptank Electric Cooperative, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, Prince George Electric Cooperative, Bayline Construction, River City, and Utility Lines Construction Services, LLC.)