



Choptank Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Choptank Fiber

August 2021

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P.O. Box 430 | Denton MD | 21629

Toll-Free: 1-877-892-0001

Outage Reporting: 1-800-410-4790

Automated Member Service: 1-866-999-4574



Your Pennies at Work

A partnership between the Choptank Electric Trust and local food banks continues to benefit the region.

By Elizabeth Hallett, Manager of Marketing & Communications

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21 caused many to lose their income, and some people could not afford basic necessities like food. During these uncertain times, the Choptank Electric Trust saw an opportunity to step in and aid our local communities. To that end, they donated over \$15,000 to local food pantries and food banks across all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore to ensure food was made available to those in need.

By spring 2021, there were still many communities that remained adversely impacted by the pandemic. Pairing up with the Maryland Food Bank of the Eastern Shore, once more the Trust donated \$7,500 to the Lower Shore Vulnerable Populations Task Force (LSVPTF), which was created to help combat COVID-19 ripple effects in the community by helping the most vulnerable populations in Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset Counties.

The LSVPTF's main goal was to create a "one-stop shop" for

these vulnerable communities. This included information on food access, donations and distribution, housing and living arrangements, education and childcare, health-care supplies, mental health, legal aid, information sharing, and more.

"We have always talked about trying to hold these types of events for our more vulnerable clients, but it has always been just out of our reach," said Michele Ennis, Executive Director of Tri-Community Mediation. "COVID created the perfect storm for us to pull together as a community and hold these events so that we could better connect with our vulnerable populations and help them."

"We use the food distribution as a magnet to get these people to the events," said Jennifer Small, Senior Regional Program Director for the Eastern Shore & TEFAP. "And from there, we encourage them to visit the other booths and take advantage of all available opportunities."

The Choptank Electric Trust Board's donation was utilized

to pay for food at six events throughout the months of May and June this past year. "We knew that COVID-19 relief was still a much-needed resource, and we are glad that we could partner again with the Food Bank to do even more," said Tom Terry, Representative for Ocean Pines on the Choptank Electric Trust Board.

The Trust also donated another \$7,500 to the Food Bank to support other affiliated open pantries across the Shore, including Rock Hall Church of God, Queen Anne's County's Backpack Program, Aaron's Place, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Michael's Community Center, and Delmarva Community Center. All of these pantries supply not only food, but also additional resources for clients who need help with housing, jobs, and other life necessities.

Overall, the Trust helped fund over \$15,000 to Food Bank locations and helped hundreds of families during the months of May and June when the money was applied.



Photo credit: Tri Community Mediation

2020 Capital Credit Allocation

The 2020 capital credit allocation was processed in June 2021.

Choptank Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned utility. Any margins (profits) above the cost of service are allocated back to our members-owners based on how much electricity each member purchased during the year.

The 2020 capital credit allocation was processed in June 2021, after the 2020 financial statements were reviewed and audited. The 2020 capital credit allocation notice for active members was shown on their July 2021 electric bill in the left message area above the bill stub. Inactive members with 2020 electricity billings were mailed a separate allocation notice.

The capital credits (margins) allocated to members' accounts for 2020 totaled \$7,024,777. This is a combination of Choptank Electric, which totaled \$5,853,810, and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), Choptank Electric's energy supplier, which totaled \$1,170,967.

The Choptank Electric Board of Directors reviews the

Co-op portion of capital credits each year and decides how and when to pay out the amounts allocated. Their decision is based on a variety of factors including the overall financial condition of the Cooperative. Any decision to pay out the ODEC portion of capital credits would be entirely contingent upon refunds received from Choptank Electric's energy supplier.

The capital credits (margins) allocated to members' accounts for 2020 totaled \$7,024,777.

If you have questions about your capital credits, please contact our Member Service Center at 1-877-892-0001. Please have your account number available when you call.

2021 Fairs and Festivals

Having the opportunity to support and meet our members during the summer fair season is one of the highlights of working for our Cooperative. Whether via sponsorships or by having our employees attend to provide helpful information to our members, summer fairs and festivals are a great way for us to show #ConcernForCommunity.

Here's our 2021 list of events:

- **Dorchester Banner Hometown Heroes - May 20** ✓
- **Talbot County Fair - July 9-10** ✓
- **Kent County Fair - July 15-17** ✓
- **Queen Anne's County Fair - August 9-14**
- **Wicomico County Fair - August 20-22**
- **Blues & Oyster Roast - October 3**
- **Tawes Clam and Crab Bake - October 13**

Thank you to all of our members who stopped by and said hello, and we hope to see more of you during upcoming events!

Our offices will be closed on Monday, September 6, 2021, to celebrate Labor Day.

ChooseEV Portal Improvements

Do you own an EV or thinking about purchasing one? Visit the ChooseEV portal today!

Members interested in electric vehicles (EVs) can benefit from visiting the ChooseEV portal on our website, located in the bottom-right card on the Energy Efficiency page, or directly at <https://choptankelectric.coop/energy-efficiency>.

The ChooseEV portal is a one-stop gateway to find all the facts members need to make informed decisions throughout their EV journey; from learning about the benefits of owning an EV, to using a commute calculator to discover savings, to finding existing government incentives, and more.

Recently, the ChooseEV portal received two important updates: members can now find local dealerships that offer EVs in a variety of makes and models, and the popular Commute Calculator now includes vehicle images, allowing members to visually confirm which cars can save them the most!

Try it today, and see how much an EV could benefit you!

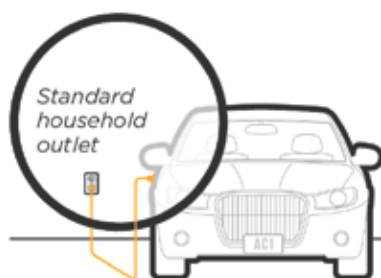


Scan the QR code to try the ChooseEV portal today!



Electric Vehicle Charging Levels

AC Level One



VOLTAGE:
120V 1-Phase AC

AMPS:
12-16 Amps

CHARGING LOADS:
1.4 to 1.9 KW

VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:
3-5 Miles per Hour

AC Level Two



VOLTAGE:
208V or 240V 1-Phase AC

AMPS:
12-80 Amps (typ. 32 Amps)

CHARGING LOADS:
2.5 to 19.2 kW (typ. 6.6kW)

VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:
10-20 Miles per Hour
20+ for some EV models

DC Fast Charge



VOLTAGE:
208V or 480V 3-Phase AC

AMPS:
<100 Amps

CHARGING LOADS:
50-350 kW

VEHICLE CHARGE TIME:
60-80 Miles in 20 Minutes

Sources: Advanced Energy and EPA

Empowering Co-ops to Support Local Communities

New network gives cooperatives the power to support local communities.

“In the age of digital engagement, Voices for Cooperative Power will amplify co-op grassroots influence to be the most effective in their advocacy efforts.”

Voices for Cooperative Power was recently launched by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) to allow co-op members and the communities they serve to engage with Congress. Previously, co-op members utilized action.coop to engage and let their voices be heard on Congressional actions or regulatory proposals. Voices for Cooperative Power provides a far more user-friendly and inviting platform for members to customize their experience by choosing the issues most important to them.

Now more than ever, engagement with elected officials, especially at the federal level, will determine policy decisions on reliable, affordable, and responsible energy. Planning for tomorrow, policymakers are reviewing various energy proposals. Co-ops and their members can highlight the developing resources co-ops are investing into the communities they serve to meet these challenges and provide commonsense solutions.

In the age of digital engagement, Voices for Cooperative Power will amplify co-op grassroots influence to be the most effective in their advocacy efforts. We encourage members during this month, especially while members of Congress are on August recess to visit voicesforcooperativepower.com and voice their opinions. Choptank Electric members have seen the success and power of grassroots action at the state and local levels over the past two years. Moving forward, infrastructure investments and energy innovation through federal proposals will be at the forefront, allowing co-ops to provide next-generation technology in the communities they call home.

Voices for Cooperative Power

What We Do | Issues | Latest Updates | Sign Up

VCPP

Welcome!

Co-op members have a unique perspective on energy policy. Make your voice heard today!

Sign Up

Members of Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) work together to influence elected officials as they make important federal and state policy decisions that impact electric co-ops and their constituent members. Our mission is to ensure the way we use energy is reliable, VCP members come together to communicate this perspective and protect the ability of our co-ops to deliver affordable, reliable service to our communities.

Voices for Cooperative Power

Learn how co-ops power their communities and empower members.

The co-op difference.

Sign Up Now

Why join?

Public decisions impact co-op members in different ways. Your voice can make a difference.

Learn More

Share your story.

Tell us who you're here and how energy makes your business impact you.

Share Your Story

Issues that impact us.

Co-op members face unique challenges. There are the issues that impact us most.

Issues

Let your voice be heard by scanning the QR code!

Choptank Fiber Website: Key Areas to Know

Waiting patiently for Choptank Fiber to service your area? Visit choptankfiber.com!

Ever since the Maryland General Assembly voted for Choptank Electric Cooperative to move forward with its *broadband through member regulation* plan, the Co-op has been hard at work assessing and improving its fiber backbone, securing broadband grants, and informing its members along the way. Choptank Fiber's main site, www.choptankfiber.com, plays a key role in housing and communicating all the information about this massive project.

- **Packages:** Find the most updated pricing, review appropriate usage, and more.
- **Service Maps:** Register your interest, view deployment maps, and learn about plans for the future of Choptank Fiber.
- **Support:** Get answers to common questions about broadband, and read useful equipment instructions for current customers of Choptank Fiber.

- **About Us:** Learn about Choptank Fiber, how to contact us, and read terms and conditions.
- **Latest News:** Choptank Fiber news is not official until you read it here!



Scan the QR code to visit >>

Employee Spotlight: Curtis Short

Short is our Manager of District Operations for Cambridge & St. Michaels.



Curtis Short
Manager of District Operations

Curtis Short

Manager of District Operations, Distribution Services Department
How long have you been working at the Co-op? *I started July 11, 1986, as an Apprentice Lineman at the Denton District office, became a Journeyman, then spent 10 years as a Serviceman. I joined the management team in 2005 as Contractor Coordinator. I became Manager of District Operations when Choptank bought the St. Michaels territory in 2006 and later added the Cambridge District in 2020.*

What skills do you need to have to work in your position? *Initially, I completed the Lineman Course from Northwest Lineman College. Later on, I added management courses. Ultimately, on-the-job training and experience as part of the line crew and as Serviceman helped prepare me for this position.*

What is the best part of your job? *I enjoy interacting with our members and providing excellent member service.*

Tell us a little about yourself. *I live in Denton, MD, with my wife, Pamela, and two daughters, Mackenzie and Mallory. I am an active member of Choptank Ruritan Club and Sons of the American Legion Post 29.*

Beware of Solar Scams

Use caution and patience to ensure you don't fall victim to solar scams.



We are hearing more and more about how our members are approached about solar power as an investment in the future with benefits for generations to come. However, as the solar industry grows and more companies compete for your business, an uptick in misleading solar advertisements or sales practices is bound to happen.

Whether a friendly solar panel sales representative shows up at your door, calls, or emails to inform you about the benefits of solar power, remember to use caution before signing on the dotted line to a potential costly and long-term investment. Here are some red flags to look for:

- In general, be on the lookout for sales tactics that exaggerate the upfront cost of a solar installation to make financing appear necessary, use clever language disguising a solar or roof replacement loan as a “special program” sponsored by a government or utility, or claim that “program funding” is available “only in your area” or “only for a limited time.”
- Additionally, beware of solar companies that urge you to share your address, contact information, or utility bill to “see if you qualify,” which can then be used by sales staff to try and sell you a product or service.

Facebook and other social media sites have become common venues for ads promoting special “low-cost” or “no-upfront-cost” solar programs. These ads often target low- and middle-income homeowners.

In addition, members should be wary when approached by a solar company — from the sales staff, to

the finance company, and the panel installer, all these points of contact could result in fraudulent interactions and false promises. Remember to consider the following:

- Do not feel pressured to sign a contract in person or online.
- Insist that the salesperson provide paper copies of all contracts and documents.
- Take time to read every document that requires your signature or initials.
- Seek advice from your electric cooperative to discuss availability of service, requirements, and other information.
- Get all of your questions answered before signing anything.

While there are legitimate financing products offered by installers and solar financing companies that can enable you to go solar with little to no upfront costs, make sure to exercise caution, and make the right choice for you and your family.

Thinking about solar? Explore our Green Energy page by scanning the QR code.



Member Notes

Our members are the reason Choptank Electric Cooperative exists. Without their participation and support, it would be hard for us to make an impact in the communities we live in and have the pleasure to serve. From time to time, whether via social media, by phone call, or by sending old-fashioned letters and photos with their paper bills, our members love to let us know they are proud to belong to our Co-op!



Baby Jameson, and dog buddy, Boomer - Proud grandfather and member, Roy L. from Federalsburg, sent us this adorable picture of his grandson, Jameson, and his faithful buddy, Boomer, just in time to celebrate National Pet Month during May!

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 Maryland's Eastern Shore.

June 2021

- Freedom Hills Therapeutic Riding Program - \$5,000
- Easton Choral Arts Society - \$600
- Fairview Church of the Brethren - \$2,500

The total of approved applications was \$19,775 which included \$11,675 for individual home and medical expenses.



Choptank Electric Cooperative

Choptank Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Choptank Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a not-for-profit, member-owned, electric distribution Co-op serving approximately 54,000 residential, commercial, and industrial members in all nine counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

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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.