

RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC
Cooperative *Living*



THE
Giving
SEASON
PAGE 10



A&N Electric Cooperative's Virgil Wessells portrays Santa during a December 2025 visit with members of the Eastern Shore Community Services Board day program.

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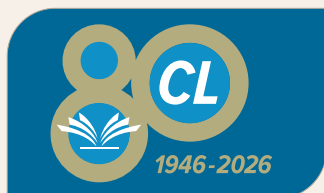


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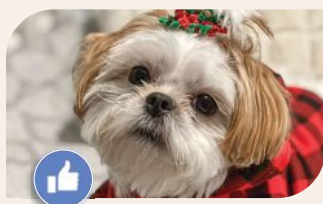
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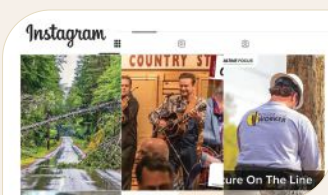
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Editor's Note: The October edition of *Cooperative Living* misspelled Loudoun Street and misidentified it as the former Water Street. Water Street was renamed Boscawen Street, its original name, in 1926.

VIEWPOINT

A Year of Milestones and Change

As we close out 2026 with this November-December issue of *Cooperative Living*, we reflect on a remarkable year of milestones, challenges and opportunities.

This year, we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act, highlighted in a feature inside this issue. This landmark legislation paved the way for electric cooperatives to bring electricity — and the opportunities it provides — to rural communities once left in the dark.

We also celebrated 80 years of *Cooperative Living*, revisiting decades of stories, photographs and milestones chronicling the changing face of rural America. Along the way, we were reminded how much our communities have evolved and of the shared values that continue to connect us.

Among those values is Concern for Community, a cooperative principle as relevant today as it was 80 years ago. That spirit shines in this issue's Cooperative Focus article,



“Making Spirits Bright,” highlighting how electric co-ops, through service and charity, make the holidays brighter for those in need.

We also kept an eye on today's emerging issues. In 2026, we expanded our coverage of artificial intelligence and unprecedented data center growth, particularly in Virginia, home to Northern Virginia's “Data Center Alley.” This growth is driving historic increases in electricity demand, challenging electric cooperatives to balance reliability, affordability and the need for additional generation and infrastructure.

From celebrating rural electrification's legacy to examining forces reshaping our energy future, 2026 has been a year of reflection, transformation and opportunity.

Thank you for welcoming *Cooperative Living* into your homes and allowing us to share the stories of the people, places and issues that matter to our communities. We look forward to continuing that journey with you in 2027. ●

Brian S. Mosier

Brian S. Mosier, President & CEO
Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives

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To inform you about your cooperative and its efforts to serve your energy needs; how to use electricity safely and efficiently; and the people who define and enhance the quality of life in communities served by electric co-ops.

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Wings and a Prayer

As part of a team, a BARC bucket truck enabled the rescue of an injured bald eagle in hopes of saving it

by Jack Cooksey, Staff Writer

It's a story that began with cooperative-assisted teamwork, a healthy dose of optimism and Concern for Community.

On Sept. 30, a staff member at a Division of Wildlife Resources fish hatchery in Bath County reported a large juvenile bald eagle hanging upside down in a nearby tree.

Kathrine McCarty, the DWR district biologist for Bath and surrounding counties, responded to assess the situation. "It certainly couldn't get itself unstuck," she says.

Reaching the eagle, trapped 30 feet above the ground in a tree that couldn't be climbed, required a bucket truck. After seeking help elsewhere, McCarty contacted BARC Electric Cooperative. Without hesitation, the co-op dispatched lineworker Jess Pritt, a general foreman and a bucket truck to the site.

When Pritt arrived, they decided he could carefully cut the limb and lower it so McCarty could untangle the bird. Its talons were wedged between two branches, and it had suffered a severe leg fracture while attempting to launch from its perch.

The next day, the bird was taken to the Wildlife Center of Virginia, where a team of veterinarians tediously repaired its leg.

For all of the valiant teamwork, unfortunately, the juvenile eagle succumbed to his injuries days later after suffering medical complications, says DWR spokeswoman Shelby Crouch. "That being said," she added, "[it] wouldn't have had the chance [it] did without the help from BARC and then the expert care at [the Wildlife Center of Virginia]." ●

▶ **Web Extra:** An extended version of this story is available at co-opliving.com/eagle-rescue.

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From rural electrification to today, electric cooperatives remain focused on communities, affordability and reliability

by Jack McCarthy, Contributing Writer

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Rural Electrification Act, the landmark legislation that helped bring electricity to rural America. As part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal reforms, the REA was signed into law on May 20, 1936. Just one month later, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative was established as the first electric cooperative in Virginia.

At the time, roughly 90% of rural Americans remained without power because serving them was viewed as too costly and not profitable enough for privately owned utility companies to justify the investment. With the help of federal loans and other support established by the Rural Electrification Act, communities came together to build electric cooperatives of their own.

Those cooperatives were founded on a simple idea: local people working together to meet local needs. The cooperative model of electrification prioritized service over profit and gave communities a direct stake in shaping their energy future.

Ninety years later, those same principles continue to define what makes electric cooperatives different.

Unlike investor-owned utilities,

cooperatives are member-owned, not-for-profit organizations with a mission to provide reliable, affordable electricity while powering and empowering their communities. From the beginning, cooperatives were built on the belief that when people work together to solve shared challenges, everyone benefits.

LOCAL VOICES

One of the clearest examples of the cooperative difference is how they are governed. Member-owners elect fellow members from their communities to serve on their cooperative's board of directors. Those directors help set priorities, provide oversight and ensure that decisions remain grounded in the needs of local communities.

This structure creates accountability unique to the cooperative model. The people helping guide the cooperative are not distant investors or shareholders. They are community members who live in the areas the cooperative serves, use the same electric service and share many of the same priorities as the people they represent.

That member-focused approach is especially evident during a cooperative's annual meeting, when member-owners gather to learn about cooperative

An Old Dominion Electric Cooperative employee attends Delaware Electric Cooperative's 2026 annual meeting.

activities, hear important updates on the business of the cooperative and participate in director elections. These meetings are an important part of cooperative governance, providing members with an opportunity to shape the future of their cooperative and ensure local leadership remains accountable to the communities it serves.

STRONGER TOGETHER

The cooperative model extends beyond the local level as well. Many electric cooperatives throughout Virginia, Maryland and Delaware jointly own Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, a generation and transmission cooperative. Through ownership of their power provider, local cooperatives have a voice in how power is planned, generated and delivered across the region. Like local distribution cooperatives, generation and transmission cooperatives such as ODEC are governed by a board of directors representing their member cooperatives and operate to meet the needs of the communities the members serve.

That ownership creates benefits that

extend far beyond governance.

By working in close partnership with a generation and transmission cooperative, local electric cooperatives can pool resources, share expertise and invest in infrastructure that would be difficult for any single cooperative to develop on its own. The result is a larger network of cooperatives working toward a common goal: delivering affordable, reliable power to their members.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Because generation and transmission cooperatives such as ODEC plan for the long term and manage a diverse portfolio of generation resources and power purchases, they can help reduce reliance on short-term market purchases and exposure to market volatility. Shared ownership allows cooperatives to make investments together, coordinate future needs and work to provide greater

stability for the communities they serve.

In many ways, this reflects the same spirit that inspired rural electrification nearly a century ago. The scale may be larger, but the principle remains remarkably similar. Communities can often accomplish more together than they can alone. And when people are at the heart of an organization, decisions look different.

What began as neighbors working together to bring electricity to rural America has evolved into a vast network of member-owners, directors, employees and cooperatives collaborating to provide affordable, reliable power for millions of people.

And there is no shortage of challenges ahead.

Demand for electricity is rising at a pace not seen since World War II as our lives become more connected to the grid. And while demand increases, many

power plants across the country have been retired, or are forecasted to retire, before the end of their useful lives. Yet even as the energy industry evolves, the principles that guided the first generation of cooperatives remain unchanged.

Electric cooperatives still exist to serve their members. They are still governed by local leaders elected by the people they serve. They still believe in the power of collaboration, and they still place community needs at the center of every decision.

Ninety years after the Rural Electrification Act helped bring electricity to rural America, the cooperative difference remains as relevant as ever.

Technology may change. The energy mix may evolve. The demands placed on the electric system will certainly continue to grow. But the mission endures. ●

COOPERATIVE KITCHEN

SUGAR & Spice

Cinnamon-infused dishes to liven up the holiday feast

Honey-Glazed Spiced Carrots

recipes courtesy of Wendy Lankford

Ingredients:

2 lbs. small carrots, peeled and trimmed
4 tablespoons butter, melted
3 tablespoons honey
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt



1 tablespoon light brown sugar
1 tablespoon chives, thinly sliced
½ tablespoon ground cinnamon
¼ tablespoon each nutmeg
¼ tablespoon pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stir together all ingredients except carrots and chives in a small bowl, reserving 2 tablespoons of the mixture. Pour the remaining mixture over carrots and toss to coat. Spread carrots in a single layer on two baking sheets. Bake for 30 minutes. Toss roasted carrots with reserved butter mixture and transfer to a serving platter. Sprinkle with chives.

GOT A FAVORITE RECIPE?

Email your favorite recipes to cooperativekitchen@co-opliving.com, or mail to Cooperative Kitchen, c/o Cooperative Living, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Include your email address. You can also submit recipes online at co-opliving.com/cooperativekitchen.

Due to volume, we cannot guarantee publication of all recipes. Reader recipes are submitted in good faith. Cooperative Living cannot warrant results.

Southern Candied Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients:

6 sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 cups sugar
½ cup butter



1 tablespoon each of nutmeg and cinnamon
1 tablespoon vanilla (add after cooking)
pinch of salt

Directions:

Mix sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon and salt. Melt butter in a large pan over medium heat. Add sweet potatoes and stir to coat. Cover, reduce heat and cook for about 1 hour, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender and candied. Stir in vanilla and serve.

The Cooperative Difference: Putting People over Profits

As a member-owner of a local electric cooperative, you're part of a system designed to put people first. Member-owners elect local leadership, and many local electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware jointly own their power provider, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC).

Cooperative is more than what we are; it's who we are. Here's how the not-for-profit electric cooperative model works — and the value of being a member-owner.



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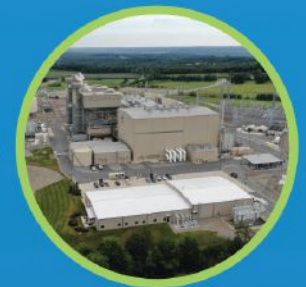
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And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get FastHelp, the

sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek new cellular embedded medical alert device that cuts out the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you. ■



■ **NO MONTHLY BILLS:** "My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old," said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. "Now, we both have FastHelp™, the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look 'cool' not old," he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.

Seniors born before 1964 get big boost

Instantly connects to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button with no contracts, no deposits, and no monthly bills

Seniors born before 1964 get new medical alert device

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The phone lines are ringing off the hook. That's because for seniors born before 1964, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am today the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style help buttons that make you talk to a call center, only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere and everywhere cell service is available whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever," said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design

(Continued on next page)



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-221-2809 DEPT. FSTH240 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

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MAKING SPIRITS

Bright



A Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative bucket truck lights up a community holiday parade.

Giving back to the communities they serve is at the heart of what electric cooperatives do

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

As the holiday season begins and daylight fades earlier, communities come alive with light and color. Electric candles flicker in windows, strands of lights twinkle among tree branches and festive displays illuminate rooflines — familiar sights in communities served by electric cooperatives across Virginia and Maryland.

Yet electric cooperatives have long understood that powering a community means more than keeping its lights on. Concern for Community, one of the seven cooperative principles that guide them, reflects a commitment to the well-being of the people and places they serve. That commitment is year-round, but during the holidays, it shines in ways that extend well beyond power lines. Through charitable programs, community partnerships and acts of service shaped by local needs, electric cooperatives bring cheer and goodwill.

SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT

Sometimes, making a difference begins with less than a dollar. Across the region, several electric cooperatives offer programs that allow members to round up their monthly electric bills, turning a few cents at a time into

meaningful support for their communities.

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, which serves a broad swath of north-central and eastern Virginia, turns members' spare change into community support through The Power of Change. Participating members round their monthly bills to the next whole dollar, with the collective contributions reinvested in REC communities through grants to organizations addressing local needs.

On Virginia's Eastern Shore, members of **A&N Electric Cooperative** can support neighbors in need through Members Helping Members, a community nonprofit program funded by voluntary donations made through members' electric bills. Members seeking assistance apply through their local department of social services.

Farther west, in the Shenandoah Valley and surrounding communities, **Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative** offers a bill-rounding program through Operation Round Up. Members' small contributions, along with support from SVEC, help local organizations continue work that directly benefits people throughout the co-op's service territory.

In Maryland, **Choptank Electric Cooperative** also

The cooperative spirit comes to life when people come together to care for their neighbors and strengthen the places they call home.



PHOTO COURTESY ANEC



PHOTO COURTESY PGEC



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PHOTO COURTESY REC

A. A&N Electric Cooperative employees spread holiday cheer during a festive community celebration.

B. Holiday Helper at Fort Lee receives gifts from Prince George Electric Cooperative to help support military families.

C. A Southside Electric Cooperative lineworker hangs a wreath while helping a local community prepare for the holidays.

D. Allyson Sharpe and Sequaya Smith, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative employees, wrap Christmas gifts for local families.

Cooperative ushers in the holiday season by supporting neighbors facing food insecurity. Beginning around Thanksgiving and continuing through mid-December, SEC employees contribute to food drives organized across the co-op's four district offices and headquarters. "Employees bring in canned goods and nonperishables, with all of the collections delivered to several food banks across our 18-county service area," says Mark Thomas, senior community relations coordinator for SEC.

In southeastern Virginia, **Community Electric Cooperative's** Angel Tree Community Drive allows members and employees to help local families facing difficult circumstances. Donations collected through the holiday initiative are applied directly as bill credits to member accounts. Last year's recipients included a grandmother raising young relatives and a member battling breast cancer.

Providing gifts for children in need is another holiday tradition across cooperative territories. In southeastern Virginia, **Prince George Electric Cooperative** participates in the Sussex County Social Services Angel Tree program

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allows members to round up on their electric bills through its Operation Round Up program. The Choptank Electric Trust distributes those funds to local organizations serving various needs throughout Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Individually, the contributions may amount to only a few cents. Together, though, they can put food on a table, help a family in need or strengthen an organization serving its community. It's the same spirit of collective action that gave rise to electric cooperatives nearly 90 years ago.

THE HEART BEHIND THE HOLIDAYS

During the holidays, electric cooperative employees across Virginia and Maryland find countless ways to inspire a sense of community — stocking food pantry shelves, selecting gifts for children, volunteering their time and supporting organizations already at work meeting local needs.

Across Southside and central Virginia, **Southside Electric**

The holidays may spotlight giving, but electric cooperatives' commitment to *community* continues all year long.

Making Spirits Bright

(continued from page 11)



PHOTO COURTESY CEC

PHOTO COURTESY BARC



and supports Holiday Helper at Fort Lee. “We’re proud to play a small part in making the season brighter for local families,” says Jill McKenzie, the co-op’s manager of human resources and communications.

In west-central Virginia, **BARC Electric Cooperative** partners with Unity4Kids, a charitable organization dedicated to helping local youth and their families in Alleghany, Bath and Rockbridge counties. Co-op employees participate in the charity’s annual Angel Tree program, helping turn children’s wish lists into reality. The co-op also contributes to local food programs and Highland County’s Angel Box initiative.

Among the organizations Community supports are Meals on Wheels of Suffolk and Isle of Wight and Roc Solid Foundation, a Chesapeake-based nonprofit dedicated to helping children and families fighting pediatric cancer. “Whether it’s delivering meals to seniors or supporting families facing challenges, our holiday efforts bring warmth and care to our neighbors,” says Jessica Parr, manager of communications at the co-op.

Serving Southside Virginia and portions of North Carolina, **Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative** helps fill Santa’s sleigh each year by collecting toys for the Marine Corps League Lake Country Detachment #1085 Toys for Tots campaign. The co-op also supports other local organizations helping those in need throughout the holidays, including the Emporia Police Department Blue Christmas Toy Drive.

SVEC employees extend the spirit of the season through an Angel Tree partnership with a local radio station and

A. BARC Electric Cooperative embraces the spirit of giving back to the communities it serves throughout the holiday season.

B. Roc Solid Ready Bags are packed for families facing pediatric cancer by Community Electric Cooperative and Prince George Electric Cooperative employees.

the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Salvation Army. “We ‘adopted’ 12 children last year,” Preston Knight, communication manager at SVEC, says. “We also support the public schools’ preschool Christmas outreach program, which leads to the purchase of coats, shoes, and gas and grocery gift cards for families during the holidays.”

Across the Chesapeake Bay, Choptank finds plenty of ways to make the season brighter throughout Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Its holiday efforts range from food and clothing drives and Adopt an Angel programs to support for Gifts of Hope for His Hope Ministries and Compass Regional Hospice’s annual Festival of Trees fundraiser. The co-op also sponsors Christmas programs at local schools and churches and participates in holiday parades throughout its nine-county service territory.

In western Virginia, **Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative** combines practical help with Christmas wishes through a holiday drive collecting nonperishable food and unwrapped gifts for children in Craig County. “In collaboration with Craig County High School, Craig County Department of Social Services, Feeding Southwest Virginia and many other local residents and contributors, we are grateful to be able to bring Christmas in the form of gifts and food,” says Maiya Ashby, director of communications

For electric cooperatives,
community is more than
where they serve. It is the heart
of why they serve.

PHOTO COURTESY CBEC



PHOTO COURTESY CHOPTANK E.C.



A. Food and toy donations arrive at Craig County High School with help from Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative employees.

B. Employees from Choptank Electric Cooperative support Compass Regional Hospice's annual Festival of Trees.

C. NOVEC employees sort donations at House of Mercy in Manassas during the co-op's annual Day of Caring.

"Through Unity4Kids, BARC supports families navigating domestic violence, cancer, foster care transitions and other unimaginable challenges. Each gift delivered represents hope, love and reassurance that they are not alone. If we can make a difference in the life of even one child, every effort is worth it."

— Billy Reid, director of broadband for BARC Electric Cooperative



PHOTO COURTESY NOVEC

at CBEC. The co-op also supports the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce Tinsel Trail, which benefits local nonprofits, and makes donations to local food pantries.

Serving areas in far Southwest Virginia and northeastern Tennessee, **Powell Valley Electric Cooperative** embraces the Angel Tree tradition, helping provide Christmas gifts for children in need throughout its service territory.

HELPING HANDS

Cooperative employees also devote personal time to acts of service. In Northern Virginia, **Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative's NOVEC HELPS**

— Hands Engaged in Local Public Service —

is an employee-run nonprofit that turns holiday goodwill into hands-on service. Its members volunteer at House of Mercy Virginia and Boxes of Basics, and they also collect toys and gifts for local families in need during the holiday season. Meanwhile, NOVEC sponsors the Gobble, Gobble Run or Wobble 5K in Warrenton, benefiting Learning Starts Early and its work with preschool education and at-risk families.

For employees of REC, serving their communities continues beyond the workday through Project Big Heart, an employee volunteer organization with chapters at each of the cooperative's four offices. Employees raise funds throughout the year to support local causes. As the holidays approach, those efforts

help community organizations meet the needs of seniors, children and families throughout REC's service territory.

A holiday tradition for ANEC brings a different kind of Christmas cheer. The co-op partners with a local Rotary Club to brighten the season for adults with developmental disabilities participating in the local Community Services Board day program. Operations Supervisor Virgil Wessells dons a Santa suit for the occasion, visiting participants alongside a few elves and even the Grinch. "It's one of the most rewarding activities we do around the holiday season," says Jay Diem, communications and public relations supervisor at ANEC.

Concern for Community guides electric cooperatives to invest in the well-being and future of the communities they proudly serve.

POWER ON PARADE

Few sights capture the connection between an electric cooperative and its community quite like a familiar bucket truck wrapped in twinkling lights and rolling down Main Street in a holiday parade. Throughout the year, the trucks carry lineworkers wherever they're needed to restore power. At Christmastime, some of those same trucks trade storm duty for strands of lights, garland and wreaths and take their place among the floats and festivities. For members, it's a chance to see the people behind the power as neighbors

(continued on page 14)

Making Spirits Bright

(continued from page 13)



PHOTO COURTESY NNEC

A. In Warsaw, Va., a Northern Neck Electric Cooperative lineworker helps decorate the town for the holidays.

PHOTO COURTESY MEC



B. Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative employees help fill Santa's sleigh by collecting toys for the local Toys for Tots campaign.

PHOTO COURTESY PVEC



C. Community spirit shines at the Harrogate Christmas Parade with help from Powell Valley Electric Cooperative employees and their families.

who live, work and celebrate alongside them.

That tradition stretches across cooperative territories. **Northern Neck Electric Cooperative**, serving Virginia's Northern Neck and neighboring communities, participates in Christmas parades in Kilmarnock and Warsaw. Last year, NNEC earned first-place recognition for Best Commercial Entry in Warsaw's Christmas parade. CEC joins the festivities in the Windsor Christmas Parade, where it has won multiple Best Float trophies. SEC employees and trucks are also familiar sights in local parades — typically in Blackstone, Crewe, Farmville, Altavista, Gretna and Bedford. SEC lineworkers use bucket trucks to help communities hang holiday decorations. PVEC has participated in holiday parades in communities including Harrogate and New Tazewell, while NOVEC bucket trucks, festooned with lights and Christmas decorations, can be spotted in parades every year in Remington and Warrenton.

THE GIFT OF LIGHT

Electric cooperatives also give members opportunities to help their neighbors through the gift of electricity itself. REC, MEC and SVEC each offer programs that allow members to donate money toward another member's electric account. Depending on the program, recipients may receive

a postcard or certificate, and gifts may be given anonymously. Rather than adding another package beneath the tree, these programs offer a practical gift that helps meet a basic household need.

For a neighbor facing a difficult season, a little help keeping the lights on — and the house warm — may be one of the most meaningful gifts of all.

THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE

The cooperative difference is rooted in a structure that connects an electric cooperative closely to the people and places it serves. Members are not simply customers; they're member-owners with a voice in the cooperative's direction. That connection gives service a meaning that extends beyond just keeping the lights on.

For electric cooperatives in Virginia and Maryland, lighting a community means helping the places they serve shine in every sense of the word. MEC President and CEO Casey Logan says, "The true spirit of the holiday season is found in acts of kindness, generosity and service to others. As a cooperative guided by the principle of Concern for Community, we believe that giving back enriches not only the lives of those we help but also strengthens the bonds that unite us as a community." ●


 For electric cooperatives in Virginia
 and Maryland, lighting a community
 means helping the places they serve
 shine in every sense of the word.

► To learn how you can help your local electric cooperative give back during the holidays, contact your local co-op.

Reach More Than 600,000 Homes, Farms and Businesses

Each issue of *Cooperative Living* reaches more than 600,000 homes, farms and businesses across Virginia and Maryland, connecting your message with more than 1.2 million readers.

Discover how your business can benefit from this powerful connection to Virginia and Maryland's electric cooperative membership.

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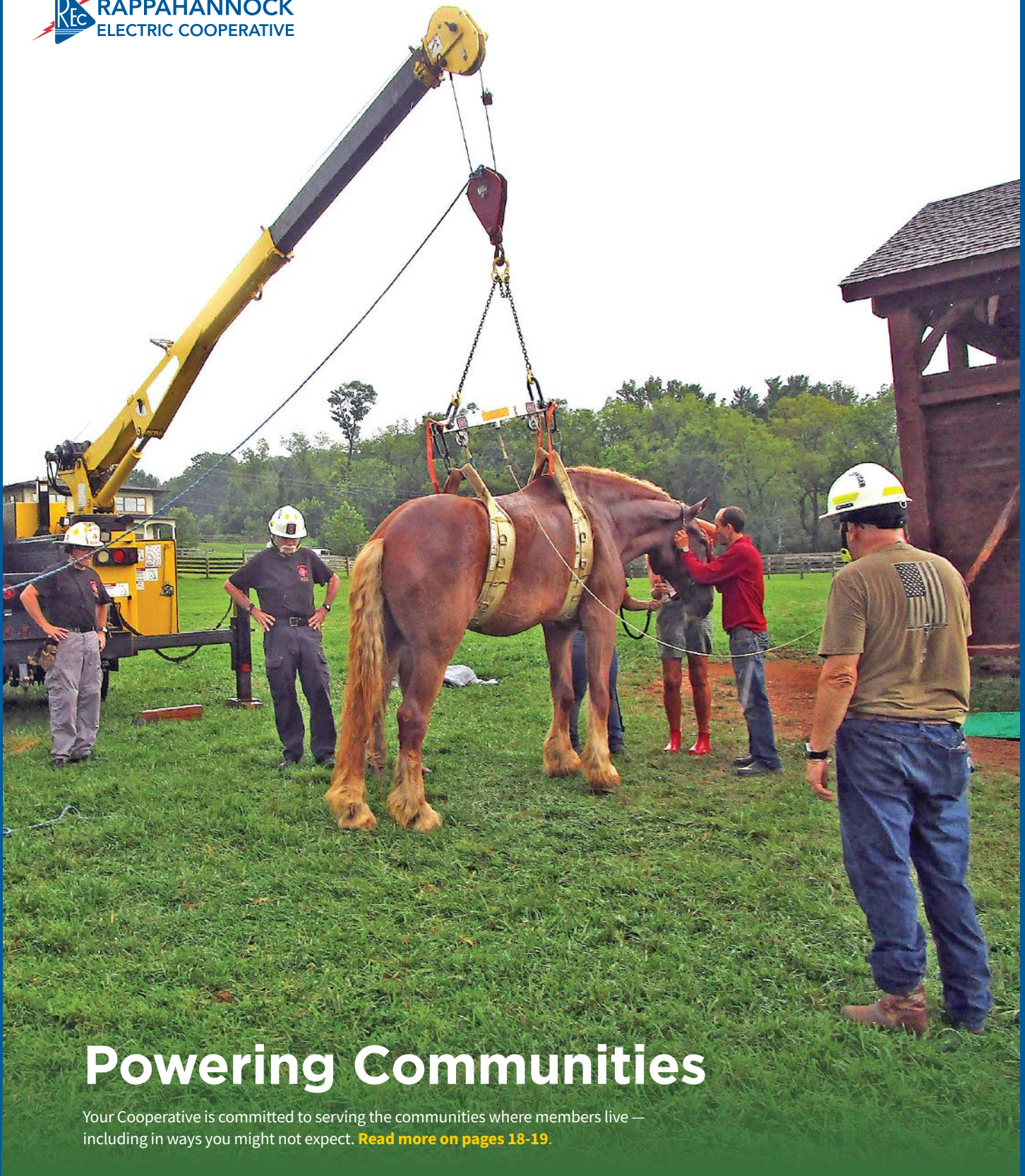
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Sonja Kinney at 804-297-3429
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Powering Communities

Your Cooperative is committed to serving the communities where members live — including in ways you might not expect. [Read more on pages 18-19.](#)

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Affordability: Managing Costs

page 20

Keep the Holidays Safe and Bright

page 21

Are You Ready for Winter?



A MORE BALANCED BILL, FEWER SURPRISES



Starting in January, REC's new Balanced Billing program will make monthly electric bills more predictable, helping members plan their budgets.

Your Balanced Billing amount will be adjusted monthly, rather than twice a year, based on your average electricity use over the previous 12 months.

These more gradual adjustments help reduce large fluctuations in the amount due, making your electric bill more manageable from month to month.

More predictable bills. Easier budgeting.



12-month rolling average.



Adjusted monthly.



Easier planning.

Notice to Members of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Notice is hereby given to all member-owners of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative that the Cooperative anticipates filing a general rate case application with the Virginia State Corporation Commission on or after Jan. 4, 2027.

For information, visit myrec.coop/ratefiling or contact Rappahannock Electric Cooperative:



P.O. Box 7388
Fredericksburg, VA 22404



or call **1-800-552-3904**



Affordability Starts with How We Manage Costs

Every dollar matters. We know families and businesses across our communities are paying more for many of the essentials they rely on every day. At REC, our responsibility is to provide the safe, reliable electricity you count on while keeping costs as low as possible.

That responsibility means even more as the cost of providing electric service continues to rise. The equipment REC uses every day to maintain the electric system costs considerably more today than it did just five years ago. From 2020 to 2025, transformer prices increased 177%, crossarms 144% and some conductor more than 161%.

While we can't control every cost, we can control how we respond. That means looking for savings, finding other sources of funding and protecting members from costs they shouldn't have to bear.

What is REC doing to manage costs?

Bringing in outside dollars. Since 2024, REC has secured more than **\$45 million in grant funding** to support projects and investments.

Creating revenue from assets we already have. Leasing space on utility poles and access to fiber, along with earnings from REC expertise, generated approximately **\$8 million in revenue and earnings in 2025 and 2026.**

Reducing the cost of power. REC's Summer Savings Plan delivered approximately **\$302,000 in net savings in 2025** and paid more than \$33,000 in rebates to participating members. Battery storage used to reduce power needs at times of peak demand when power costs rise has also produced more than **\$1 million in wholesale power cost savings since 2021.**

Protecting members as the system grows. Data Center members are required to fully cover 100% of the cost of the infrastructure needed to serve them. By the end of 2025, REC collected **\$345 million in infrastructure costs**, helping protect existing members from costs associated with servicing these new loads.

REC is also investing proactively in reliability, including more than **\$30 million in vegetation management in 2025 and 2026**, while continuing to pursue efficiencies and opportunities to avoid future costs.

No single strategy can offset all the rising costs the energy industry is experiencing. But managing what we can control and sharing the savings with REC member-owners is part of how we work to keep reliable electricity as affordable as possible.

And that work continues every day.

Is Your Name on The List?

As a member-owner, you share in REC's financial success. When REC returns a portion of its margins to member-owners through capital credits some checks go unclaimed, often because contact information has changed.

AVERAGE UNCLAIMED = \$100+ CREDIT



Scan the QR code to check the list for your name — or someone you know.

Recognize a name? Call 800-552-3904 and speak with a member services representative.





Lending a Lift

A retired REC truck starts a second career in animal rescue, while a Cooperative crew helps a local grower harvest towering sunflowers.

The Belgian draft horse's owner and veterinarian had been trying to get Beauregard back on his feet for hours before they called for more help. Rescuers needed something capable of lifting a 2,000-pound horse safely. With no medical history of issues and nothing that appeared broken, the vet believed Beauregard would be able to stand on his own if he could be lifted onto his feet. It was the perfect opportunity for a specialized volunteer rescue company to put a recent donation to the test.

Power Lines to Lifelines

In August, REC donated a 2011 Ford F-550 crane truck to the Technical Large Animal Rescue Team at Little Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company (LFVFR).

Before the truck received a new coat of red paint, emergency lights or Little Fork markings, it was called into service.

"The operation was flawless," said Doug Monaco, chief of LFVFR, which is based in Rixeyville, Va. "This vehicle saved hours of work by being able to lift him up with the hoist."

The donation grew out of an April conversation between LFVFR and REC.



Brandon Pickeral

"Definitely not your average day at the office! Our team had the opportunity to help, and I'm honored to have been part of this experience as Mr. Loris harvested his impressive 25-foot sunflowers. It's moments like these that remind us of what being a cooperative is all about — coming together, lending a helping hand and supporting our neighbors and community whenever we can."

—Brandon Pickeral, First Class Lineman

The rescue team, which responds to incidents across Virginia and neighboring states, sometimes needs heavy equipment to safely lift large animals. Without a capable vehicle of its own, the team had to borrow a nearby tractor or use its portable tripod lifting system. But setting up the system's three long, heavy sections of aircraft aluminum requires time and effort — both important considerations during a rescue.

"We thought we'd go to the electric company to see if they had something," Monaco said. "Well, they came up with something even better than we thought. It fit exactly what we needed."

REC has also donated retired fleet vehicles to fire departments, charities and other community organizations, said Mike Lee, Director – Fleet Operations. In this case, the connection was especially clear: A truck that spent more than a decade serving REC members could continue serving the region in a very different role.

"REC touches a lot of communities in our service area, but also, we're a part of the community," Lee said. "And that's what community is all about — helping each other."

Reaching New Heights

On Sept. 21, a rainy Monday, First Class Lineman Brandon Pickeral was more than 20 feet above the ground, using a bucket truck for an unusual assignment: helping harvest giant sunflowers and cornstalks. Rappahannock County grower Jason Loris had reached out to REC for assistance as he got ready for his fifth year of entering his giant vegetables, fruits and plants into competition at the State Fair of Virginia.

"The REC team did an amazing job. I couldn't have done it without you," Loris said after Pickeral, Service Foreman Lee Taylor and Area Serviceman Troy Jenkins joined him and Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteers in harvesting three giant cornstalks and five sunflowers that towered over his Amissville garden.

The harvest required both reach and careful handling — especially for the sunflowers, with their thin stalks and heavy, seed-bearing heads. Loris' dedication and skill, along with the crew's



Mike Lee, Director - Fleet Operations, and Ed Kelso, President of LFVFR, review paperwork for REC's truck donation.



The Loris family at the State Fair of Virginia, from left: Mila, Beth, Lexi and Jason.

careful assistance, paid off. He set four new Virginia records at the 2026 State Fair: tallest sunflower at 25 feet, 10 inches; tallest corn stalk at 18 feet, 4 inches; longest cucumber and longest carrot.

A retired truck found a new purpose. A Cop crew brought its skills to a remarkable harvest. Both stories show how REC's community connections can lead to practical help in unexpected ways.



Before You Plug It In, Stop and Check

Holiday decorating often means adding one more string of lights, another inflatable outside or an extra extension cord.

Before plugging in another decoration, pause for a moment. Taking a few seconds to check can help you use electricity safely and efficiently throughout the winter.

1. Check cords and plugs.

Inspect cords, plugs and light sockets for cracks, fraying, exposed wires or loose connections before use.

Don't try to get "one more season" out of damaged lights, decorations or extension cords. Replace them instead.

2. Choose products for the right location.

Use lights, decorations and extension cords labeled for outdoor use when decorating outside. Look for a certification mark from UL or ETL on the label.

3. Use outlets and extension cords safely.

Extension cords are intended for temporary use, not a substitute for permanent wiring.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for how many light strings can be connected.

Don't connect extension cords or power strips together and do not overload outlets by trying to pull more power from the outlet than it's designed to deliver. Plug outdoor decorations into an outlet protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), which helps protect against electric shock.

Stop using an outlet or plug if it becomes unusually warm or makes buzzing or crackling sounds. Have a qualified electrician inspect any suspected outlet or wiring problems. Keep cords out from under rugs and furniture and avoid pinching them in doors or windows.

4. Give space heaters extra attention.

Plug electric space heaters directly into a wall outlet, never into extension cords or power strips. Keep at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, including curtains, bedding and furniture, and turn off when you leave the room or go to sleep.



5. Turn decorations off before leaving or sleeping.

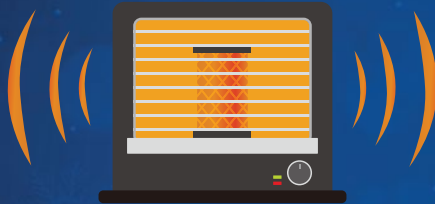
Turn off electrical decorations before leaving home or going to bed. Choose LED holiday lights, which use less energy and run cooler than incandescent lights. If using a timer or smart plug for decorations, follow its instructions and check that it's rated for the connected electrical load and for outdoor use, if applicable.

Make safety checks part of your holiday decorating routine.

Before you plug it in, stop and check.

Could a Space Heater Raise Your Electric Bill?

A portable electric space heater can warm a small area, but running one for hours each day can add substantially to your electric bill. When winter's chill settles in, it can be tempting to use space heaters to keep your home cozy. But running them frequently can increase your electric bills. To run one space heater every day for a month could cost around \$80. For example, operating a 1,500-watt heater for 12 hours daily will use 540 kilowatt hours (kWh) in 30 days. At REC's current residential rate of 15 cents per kWh, that's \$81.



Before adding more heating, look for ways to keep warmth in:



Add a layer of clothing or use a regular blanket for personal warmth.



Seal around windows and doors with appropriate caulk or weatherstripping.



Have attic insulation and ducts in unheated areas checked for opportunities to reduce heat loss.

**DON'T WAIT
UNTIL YOUR
POWER
GOES OUT.**

**BE READY
WITH A WHOLE-HOME
GENERATOR.**

**Vividly
Brighter**

BY RAPPAHANNOCK
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



What If the Power Went Out Right Now?



Imagine the power went out while you were reading this.

Not later, after you've seen the forecast and made a trip to the store. **Right now.**

Could you find a working flashlight? Would you have drinking water if your well pump stopped? And if the outage stretched through a cold night — or longer — how would your household stay warm?

Your answers can help you to prepare before the next winter storm.

Snow, ice and high winds can damage the electric system and lead to power outages. REC maintains and upgrades its electric system year-round to improve reliability and prepares to respond when outages occur. Preparing at home matters, too. Keep the essentials within reach. Keep flashlights or battery-powered lanterns somewhere easy to find. Test flashlights and battery-powered lights now, store spare batteries nearby and make sure everyone knows where to find them. Save your phone's battery for communication by keeping a separate light source available.

Keep an emergency water supply, especially if your home relies on an electric well pump. Store at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, plus additional water for pets. When winter weather is forecast, set aside extra water for cooking and basic household needs.

Prepare for the cold



An extended winter outage can leave your home without heat.

Even heating systems that use propane, natural gas or other fuel may rely on electricity to operate fans, pumps or controls. Check whether your heating system can operate without electricity before you need it.

Extra blankets, sleeping bags and warm layers can help conserve body heat. Identify a safe place to stay if your home becomes too cold, such as a friend's home or an available warming center. If you use a fireplace, wood stove, generator or another backup heat or power source, make sure it is ready before you need it and that everyone understands how to use it safely. Operate portable generators outdoors, at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents. Never use an oven or cooking stove to heat your home. Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms before winter.

Plan for your household



Preparedness looks different for every family. If someone in your home relies on powered medical equipment or refrigerated medication, work with their healthcare provider or equipment supplier on a backup plan before an outage.

Keep phones and portable power banks charged when severe weather is approaching. Consider adding a battery-powered weather radio so your communication plan doesn't depend entirely on a mobile phone. Know how to manually open an electric garage door. Keep ready-to-eat food and a manual can opener on hand.

Build your plan around the supplies, equipment and care your household depends on each day.

Know what to do if the lights go out



Update your contact information and sign up for outage text alerts before a storm. Report an outage through MyREC SmartHub or by calling 800-552-3904. Outage reporting is available 24 hours a day.

Preparing now on a quiet fall day can make a big difference on a stormy winter one.

Start today: Test your flashlights, check your supplies and save REC's outage-reporting number.



myrec.coop/stormprep
MyREC SmartHub
800-552-3904

APPLY NOW

2027 Youth Tour and Scholarships

Explore the nation's capital or get help paying for your education through two opportunities available to REC members and their families.



Youth Tour

Youth Tour is open to current high school juniors whose parent or guardian is an REC member-owner. Selected students will travel to Washington, D.C., meet students from across the country and explore leadership, government and U.S. history while learning about electric cooperatives.

To learn more or apply, visit myrec.coop/youthtour.

Apply by Jan. 31, 2027.



REC Community Scholarships

The REC Community Scholarship program helps students pay for education at a college, university or career and technical school. Eligible applicants must be an REC member or have a parent or guardian who is an REC member-owner. Eligible students of all ages may apply. Start gathering the required transcripts and letters of recommendation now.

To learn more or apply, visit myrec.coop/scholarships.

The application deadline is Feb. 27, 2027.



RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE PRESENTS

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY *tour*

NOVEMBER

Nov. 8
National Veterans Day Parade
Washington, DC

DECEMBER

Dec. 4
Toy Lift, *Ruckersville*

Dec. 4
Madison Christmas Parade

Dec. 5
Spotsylvania Christmas Parade

Dec. 5
Berryville Main Street Christmas Parade

Dec. 5
Christmas on Main Parade, *Front Royal*

Dec. 5
Orange Christmas Parade

Dec. 5
Tappahannock Christmas Parade

Dec. 5
Lights on Main Street Parade,
Stanardsville

Dec. 5
Lake Anna Boat Parade

Dec. 6
Little Washington Christmas Parade

Dec. 6
Christmas in Middletown Parade

Dec. 6
Culpeper Christmas Parade

Dec. 12
Bowling Green Christmas Parade



John D. Hewa
President &
Chief Executive
Officer



Board of Directors
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Christopher G. Shipe
Region II



Darlene H. Carpenter
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Sanford Reaves Jr.
Region IV



Randy Thomas
Region V



Linda R. Gray
Region VI



J. Mark Wood
Region VII



Eric Paulson
Region VIII



Eugene L. Campbell Jr.
Region IX

Local Pages Editor – Casey M. Hollins, CCC

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800.552.3904 | office@myrec.coop

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.



Power It Forward

Neighbors Helping Neighbors with their REC electric bill.



myrec.coop/gift

Provide the Gift of Electricity to a family member, friend, neighbor, co-worker or someone in need by applying a credit directly to their REC account — giving comfort, stability and the power to move forward.

To give a gift, please scan the QR code.



Happy Holidays!

REC offices will be closed

Nov. 26-27 and **Dec. 25.**

REC's outage reporting system is
monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you experience a power outage,
use the **MyREC SmartHub app**, visit myrec.coop/out or call **800-552-3904**.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

America's Most Trusted Gutter Protection!



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a Great Day Improvements brand

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maintenance
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**Cynthia F.
Dayton, OH**

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Eliminate Leaks	✓	✗	✗	✗
One-Piece Design	✓	✗	✗	✓
Customized to Your Home	✓	✗	✗	✗
Never Have to Clean	✓	✗	✗	✗
No Clog Guarantee+	✓	✗	✗	✗



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Satisfied
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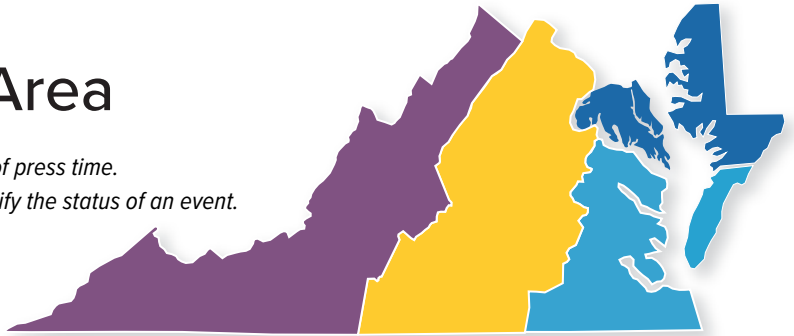
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Events Around the Area

Editor's note: All information is believed to be accurate as of press time.

Before attending, please use the contact information to verify the status of an event.

Listing an event does not constitute an endorsement.



BLUE RIDGE WEST

NOVEMBER

20-21 WINCHESTER. Women of the Moose Harvest Craft Fair. Moose Lodge. 215 E. Cork St. Times vary. 540-667-8865.

21-22 MIDDLETOWN. Kris Kringle Market. Belle Grove Plantation. Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bellegrove.org

27 MIDDLETOWN. Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. 4:45 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

DECEMBER

6 MIDDLETOWN. Christmas Parade. Historic Main St. 2 p.m. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

11 MIDDLETOWN. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "O Radiant Dawn." Grace United Methodist Church. 7 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

12 WINCHESTER. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "O Radiant Dawn." First Baptist Church of Winchester. 7 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

31 MIDDLETOWN. First Night Middletown. 540-869-2226. Middletownva.gov

PIEDMONT

NOVEMBER

6-7 LOCUST GROVE. Holiday Craft Bazaar. Lake of the Woods Church. Times vary.

7 CENTREVILLE. Holiday Bazaar & Craft Fair. Centreville United Methodist Church. 9 a.m. Centreville-umc.org

13 LUNENBURG. Lunenburg County Community Concerts. 1423 8th St. 7-8:45 p.m. Office@victoriabaptistchurch.com.

13 BOYDTON. The Boyd Tavern "Christmas Open House with Santa." 449 Washington St. 1-4 p.m.

14 PRINCE GEORGE. Tinsel Town Holiday Bazaar. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Prince George High School. 804-720-8206.

14 HAYMARKET. 5K and Fun Run: A Frozen Experience. 7 a.m. 15900 Berkeley Drive. Virginiaartfactory.org/5k

14 MINERAL. 31st Annual Belmont Art & Craft Fair. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. 7124 Belmont Road. Cherylmarshbcow@gmail.com.

20-21 HAYMARKET. Haymarket Town & Country Garden Club Holiday Shoppe. 3510 James Madison Hwy. Times vary. Htcgardenclub.com

20-29 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's "Disney's Frozen the Broadway Musical." 10960 George Mason Circle. Times vary. 703-330-2787. Virginiaartfactory.org

21 SOUTH HILL. Friends of the R. T. Arnold Library's 44th Annual Holiday Arts and Crafts Bazaar. 408 W. Danville St. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friendsoftra@gmail.com.

21 MINERAL. Christmas Bazaar. St. Jude Catholic Church. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Louisacatholics.org

DECEMBER

4 MANASSAS. Holiday Market. 9419 Battle St. Times vary. 703-330-2787. Virginiaartfactory.org

10-12 WARRENTON. Warrenton Chorale Christmas Concert. Warrenton United Methodist Church. Times vary. Warrentonchorale.org

11-13 MANASSAS. ARTfactory's "The Day Before Christmas." 9419 Battle St. Times vary. 703-330-2787. Virginiaartfactory.org

12 PRINCE GEORGE. "Nick of Time" Holiday Bazaar. 9010 Hines Road. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. 804-720-0603.

13 UPPERVILLE. Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert Series: "O Radiant Dawn." Trinity Episcopal Church. 3 p.m. 540-635-6947. Blueridgesingers.org

TIDEWATER

NOVEMBER

7 WAKEFIELD. "Aw Shucks" Oyster Roast. 12205 Brittle's Mill Road. 4-8 p.m. L_deweese@tawarriorsedu.org.

21 KILMARNOCK. Annual Historyland Community Workshop. Craft and Bake Sale. Grace Episcopal Church. 303 S. Main St. 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Hcw.kilmarnock@gmail.com.

21 MONTROSS. Stratford Harbour Holiday Bazaar. 2657 N. Independence Dr. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Msalcetti@aol.com.

21 ONLEY. Annual Kiwanis Craft Show. Nandua High School. 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. 757-442-4427.

27 CAPE CHARLES. Festive Fridays. Historic Downtown. 5-8 p.m. Capecharlesvirginiascap.com

28 DELTAVILLE. Holly Point Gift Market. Deltaville Maritime Museum. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Deltavillemuseum.com

DECEMBER

4, 11, 18 CAPE CHARLES. Festive Fridays. Historic Downtown. 5-8 p.m. Capecharlesvirginiascap.com

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Just a short drive from downtown Richmond, Hopewell is brewing something special. Begin your visit at **Good Ship Brewing & Eatery**, located steps from the historic **Beacon Theatre**—the perfect spot to enjoy a craft beer or a bite before the show and return for another round afterward. Then sip your way through downtown favorites like **Brew and Blossom Coffee Co.**, **Manna Bakery**, and **What the Cup Coffee**, each offering artisan flavors and welcoming local charm. Beyond the brews, explore Hopewell's scenic Riverwalk, historic sites, and vibrant dining and arts scene. From morning lattes to evening pints, Hopewell invites you to slow down, savor the moment, and see what's brewing. www.visithpg.com, www.hopewelldowntown.com, www.hopewellva.gov





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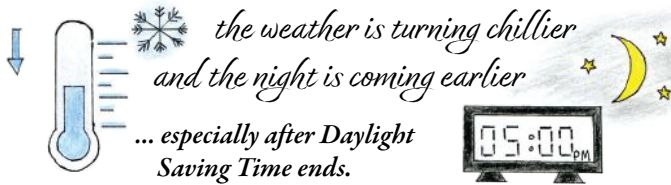
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THE Cozy Time OF YEAR

story and artwork by Anne M. Dellinger, Contributing Columnist

The November-December stretch is on and change is in the air. If you live in Earth's Northern Hemisphere, you may have already noticed that ...



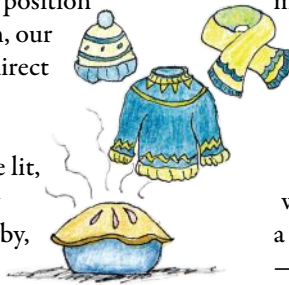
As you learned (or will learn) in science class, colder temperatures and shorter days are the result of Earth's North Pole tilting away from the sun as autumn disappears into winter.



Most people don't think about the actual mechanics of how this end-of-year seasonal change occurs. Since we don't get dizzy or lose our balance as Earth gently angles us into position for the winter season, our adjustments to less direct

sunlight are simple ... turn on more lights and add more layers!

As wood stoves and fireplaces are lit, soft blankets, hot drinks and freshly baked cookies will soon appear nearby, ushering in the *Cozy Season!*

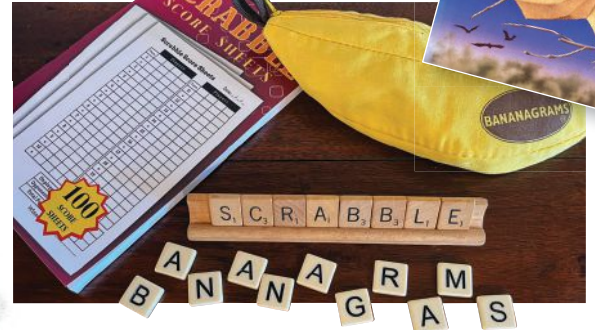


November acts as a bridge between the spooky fun of October and the exciting sparkle of December. This in-between time is perfect for planning some relaxed, "in person," screen-free activities to share with your family and friends on dusky evenings.



Before the holiday hustle and bustle starts, open up a **jigsaw puzzle** (100, 300 or even 500 pieces, depending on the space available) that can be left on a table for many evenings.

A colorful puzzle is a great conversation piece made of many pieces! It clearly sends an invitation to onlookers to come sit and talk for a spell while enjoying a relaxing challenge. As interest and dialogue grow, so will the puzzle. With a bit of dedication and determination, it will be complete by early December!



Keep November's cozy vibe going by turning down the harsh overhead lights. Sit near a fire, if available, or use flameless candles and fairy lights to set the mood. Then consider one of these ideas:

- Break out a word and strategy board game that may have been stored away for a while, like **Scrabble** or **Bananagrams**. A specialty dictionary would be helpful to challenge word spellings because *there will be* challenges!
- Choose a **favorite book** with a seasonal or thrilling mystery theme. Pass the book around so that each family member can read a paragraph, a page or even a whole chapter (if it's short) aloud. Be sure to use character voices to keep everyone paying attention and maybe laughing or shuddering! After a set time, talk about what you think might happen next in the story. Also, be aware that the youngest participants may want to share their favorite picture books, which adds a whole new level of fun to this pass-the-book activity.
- Stir up some **nervy energy** by creating a casual **spelling bee** in four easy steps —

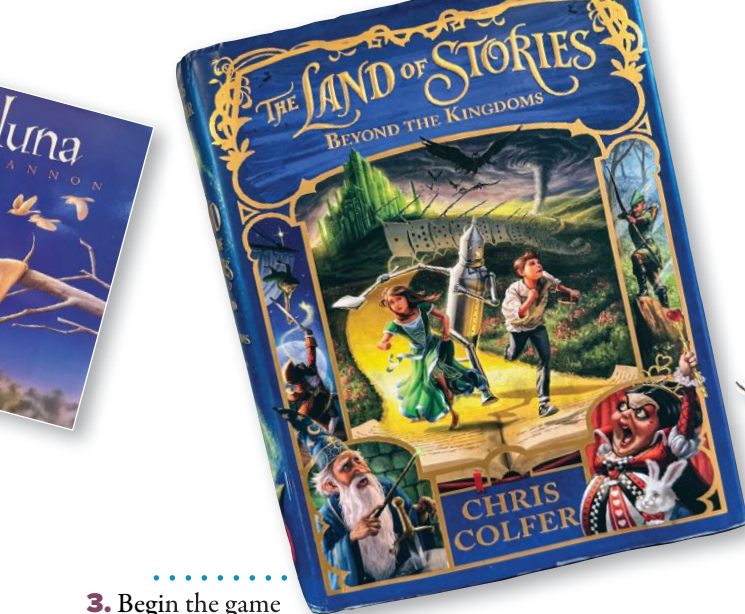
..... *Spelling!*

- 1.** Recruit someone to establish a **word list** by looking over printed materials, such as a newspaper or magazine. They will select a set number of random, familiar words, grouping them by difficulty, as shown here with these words from the newspaper sports section:

EASY LIST — Game • Rally • Crowd • Team Sweep • Coach

MORE DIFFICULT LIST — Season • Opponent Victory • Celebrate • Practice • Huddle

- 2.** Choose a **word master** to call out words from the list. As a group, establish a few rules by deciding:
 - whether a player gets one or two strikes before elimination; and
 - whether options such as "repeat," "definition" or "use in a sentence" will be allowed.

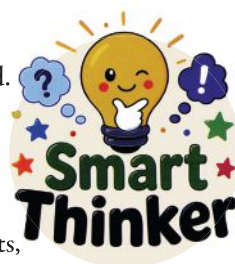


3. Begin the game with easy words, to build confidence.

The player:

- steps up and hears the word; then
- says it, spells it and repeats the word.

If the player misspells the word, they leave the competition. However, if **all** players misspell the word, a second-chance round could be offered. Depending on the number of participants, you may or may not want to appoint a judge and record keeper. Prizes could be specialty stickers.



4. For variations in your spelling bee, team up with a partner so you can brainstorm spelling together. Or, have a themed spelling bee, using words from favorite books, movies or foods. Be clever and creative and enjoy the playful rivalry!

Some say that November feels like a “gentle hug” as friends and family gather to enjoy comfort foods and celebrate togetherness.

As you settle into this inviting, transitional season, jot down a few words that you think describe it best ...

Maybe it seems like a “mug of hot chocolate” or a favorite “warm fuzzy sweater” to you.

No matter how it's pictured, November will always be best known for its warm and comfy moments shared with loved ones.

So, before it slips away, find a warm spot and cozy up with your favorite people. Someday you'll look back and fully appreciate this Winnie the Pooh quote ... *“We didn't realize we were making memories ... we just knew we were having fun.”* ●



Super Sleuth CORNER

In November, a special spice often fills homes with a welcoming scent.

It is a familiar, versatile spice used throughout the year, but it especially shines during the cozy season.

For generations, its aroma has stirred fond memories of family gatherings, while its warm flavor has added something special to cookies, apple desserts and pumpkin pie.

Owlbert does not have a strong sense of smell, but he wants to learn more about this powerful, enticing spice hidden in this magazine. Follow the directions below and submit your answers for a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.

- Find the spice hidden in this magazine and give the page number.
- What is the name of this spice?
- What is one of your family's favorite foods that uses this spice?

Submit your answers online at co-opliving.com/super-sleuth or send answers with your name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuths
4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Kids Korner submissions are for children under the age of 16.

JULY Super Sleuth Winner

July's Kids Korner column was about homefront heroes being the heart of the Revolution. For a chance to win a **\$25 Amazon gift card**, kids were asked to find a picture of a three-cornered hat hidden in the magazine and provide the page number where it was found. They were also asked to name the hat and share whether they had ever seen one worn during a Revolutionary War reenactment.

The winning answers are:

- Page 11
- Tricorn hat
- “Yes, we were learning about the Revolutionary War in social studies class and I saw it there.”

OUR WINNER IS AVERY.

Congratulations, Avery!

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Eye on the Mark

*Virginia Division of Wildlife Resources
looks ahead to third annual
archery event*

by Jack Cooksey, Staff Writer

You may not know an arrow's fletching from its nock, but don't worry: You'll learn soon enough if you're adventurous enough to attend the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources 2027 Archery Open.

In partnership with the Ward Burton Wildlife Foundation, DWR will welcome youth and adult archery competitors to the annual event on Jan. 9, 2027, at the Richmond Raceway Complex.

"For the competitors, we are beyond excited to bring the DWR Archery Open back for its third year," says DWR Archery Education Coordinator Ben Fairbanks. "DWR is dedicated to growing the sport and supporting archers throughout the commonwealth."

The statewide competition features six equipment divisions — barebow, bowhunter, compound, open, recurve and unlimited. The registration fee is \$35 for youth competitors and \$50 for adults. An adjunct competition, the Open Championship, allows experienced archers to vie for up to 75% of a registration pool in cash prizes, drawn from its \$100 entry fees.

The full-day event is not only about competition, though. At the Try Archery Range, it will give anyone curious about the discipline the experience of drawing and releasing an arrow. Three breakout sessions will cover basics for new archers and will teach

finer points to more advanced archers. Shoot with the Pros allows intermediate-level archers to learn from experts through coaching and a Q&A session. 3D Archery Instruction with Fellowship of the Arrow presents the experience of 3D archery — the outdoor target sport in natural settings such as in woods or on fields — and the passion that some shooters have for traditional archery. Adaptive Archery with Jacobs' Chance presents the mission of the nonprofit dedicated to adaptive sports and empowering individuals with disabilities through inclusive programs fostering growth and connection.

Green Top Sporting Goods supports the event as its presenting sponsor. "The DWR Archery Open is a great example of how archery can create community, fellowship, education and a lifelong appreciation for conservation," says Hunter Brooks, vice president and general manager of Green Top Sporting Goods. ●



PHOTOS COURTESY VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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— F.A., Edina, MN

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day, date, 24-hour clock, and celestial sun and moon displays — details once reserved for the world's elite.

Inside beats a sophisticated **27-jewel automatic movement** with over 200 precision-crafted parts, powered by the natural motion of your wrist.



Fine automatics of this caliber often sell for thousands, but the Graves '33 can still be yours for under \$150. **Supplies are limited**, and once this special offering disappears, it might never return.

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What the Nose Knows

Whether perfume, popcorn, pipe smoke or a skunk, aromas conjure countless memories

by Margo Oxendine, Contributing Columnist



It is said that smell is the most nostalgic of the senses. There are many scents that can take me back to a moment or

place and stir pleasant memories.

When I was about 5 years old, my mother kept a bottle of Chanel No. 5 on her dresser. Gee, but did I love that smell. Now and then, I would splash it all over myself. Somehow, Mom always knew just what I was doing and, shall we say, strongly advised against it. To this day, I still wear only Chanel No. 5.

During my early years of high school, my grandmother passed away and left me her cosmetics and potions. What a gift! My favorite was her powdered lavender sachet. I couldn't get enough of it. When one of my girlfriends came to spend the night before a big spelling bee, I showed her my prized treasure.

I demonstrated how I liked to smell it by covering one nostril with a finger and inhaling the lavender powder

through the other. It shot up my nose, and I began to sneeze. I couldn't stop. Throughout the spelling bee, I sneezed constantly. Still, somehow, I managed to win.

Another mishap occurred when I came to adore the scent of peonies: I managed to inhale an ant along with the lovely aroma.

Later in high school, I switched to Revlon's Intimate. My boyfriend loved it. "I wish you'd take a bath in it," he said one day.

So, on prom night, that's just what I did. We rode to the prom with two friends, car windows rolled down — but my boyfriend loved it.

A male friend of mine loved the scent of English Leather cologne. He, too, bathed in it every morning before school, and we spent English class enveloped in the aroma. I haven't smelled English Leather since.

My beloved dog, Brownie, smells like popcorn. I don't know why, yet I was inspired to write a little ditty about it. It's one of Brownie's songs, and it goes

like this: "She is as sweet as jelly. She has a scratchy belly. She smells a lot like popcorn. I'm so glad Brownie was born." Brownie and I loved it.

I also became quite fond of Crabtree & Evelyn's "Potpourri" room spray. I'd buy it by the six-pack and use it all the time.

That fad passed, but I still have a can or two. I know it's there whenever I may nostalgically crave it.

My late father smoked a pipe, and Mom and I loved the scent of it. One day, after he passed, we were walking down a sidewalk when a man smoking a pipe walked by. Like a military formation, Mom and I turned around and followed him, inhaling all the way.

Now that I've discovered the wonders of nature and walking in the woods, there are a host of scents I love. Of course, there's the smell of leaf piles in the fall. Even snow has a certain scent when it's falling — and you know how I love snow.

Oddly, I don't mind the smell of skunks. At least the scent lets you know they're in the vicinity. Thankfully, I've never been sprayed by one. Brownie has never been "skunked," either. One of my high school friends wasn't so lucky. On his way to prom, he stepped out his back door — and onto a skunk. He was wearing a rented tuxedo, and the incident was the talk of the town for some time.

I guess when you consider that, going to prom in a nearly noxious cloud of Intimate perfume ain't too bad. ●



[SCENE IT!]



PHOTO BY KEN NEWMAN, PGEC MEMBER



WHEREZ IT?

Look for a tiny version of the CL logo above in the pages of this issue of *Cooperative Living*. Submit the page number where you found it, along with your name, email and phone number to **Wherezit**, c/o *Cooperative Living*, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 or go online at co-opliving.com under "Contests." Deadline is **Nov. 20**. The winner will receive a **\$25 Amazon email gift card**.



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RATES: Non-business: \$80 per 25-word block plus \$5 per word over 25; OR "Mini" ad - \$5 per word (max. 10 words). Business, agent and broker ads: \$150 per 25-word block, plus \$5 per word over 25. Display Real Estate: \$299 per block.

DEADLINE: Dec. 5 for January-February issue; Publisher reserves the right to designate classification or reject any ad. No personals, please.

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Are you feeling isolated, disconnected, and embarrassed? Would you love to hear conversations again, even in noisy environments?

You're not alone. Nearly 40 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss, yet most wait an average of seven years before doing something about it—often because they assume hearing aids are too complicated, too noticeable, or too expensive.

MDHearing was built to change that. Our hearing aids are sold directly to you, eliminating the clinic middleman. That means you can get high-quality, **doctor-designed, audiologist-tested, FDA-registered** hearing aids with many of the same features as those sold in clinics for up to **90% LESS**.



"I switched to MDHearing aids and so should you. These are better than my \$6,000 hearing aids."

Joe Namath, Super Bowl III MVP
MDHearing Aid User

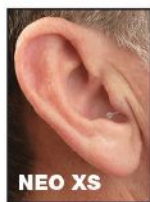
Choose From Our **Smallest NEO XS** or Our **Best-Selling AIR** Models

Both are medical-grade, rechargeable hearing aids offering sophistication and high performance.

MDHearing™ NEO XS

Our smallest hearing aid ever!

At 50% smaller than our previous model, the NEO XS is **virtually invisible**. And, at only \$148.50 each when you buy a pair, you won't find a better hearing aid for the price.



NEO XS

\$148⁵⁰

each when you buy a pair



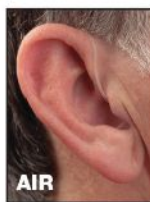
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MDHearing™ AIR

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Features background noise reduction, noise cancellation, ComfortTips, and simple controls, providing high sound quality in a discreet fit.



AIR

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OH, WATT FUN!

Electric cooperatives light up holiday parades and celebrate the communities they proudly serve

by Laura Emery, Staff Writer

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If your photo is published in this column, we will send you a \$20 Amazon gift card via email. Send your high-resolution images to saycheese@co-opliving.com. Please include your first and last name, along with a description of the photo. You may also mail your photo(s) to: Say Cheese, 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060. Do not send originals; photos cannot be returned.

BRIGHT ON CUE ▶

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative's bucket truck gets into the holiday spirit during Warrenton's holiday parade.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY NOVEC



▼ FROSTY'S BUCKET LIST

A ride with Southside Electric Cooperative gets checked off Frosty's Christmas bucket list.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SEC



◀ MERRY ON THE MOVE

Choptank Electric Cooperative brings a truckload of twinkle to the Federalsburg and Snow Hill Christmas parades.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CHOPTANK



◀ GLOW WITH THE FLOW

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative rolls through the holidays in brilliant style. PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MEC



THE GIFT OF POWER ▶

Northern Neck Electric Cooperative puts a festive twist on one of its hardest-working vehicles at the 2025 Kilmarnock Christmas Parade.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY NNEC



SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you



could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you aren't completely happy with your purchase, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	\$299 *	\$99 +s&p	Save \$200
B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain		\$149 +s&p	
C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw)	\$299 *	\$99 +s&p	Save \$200
Complete Set**	\$747 *	\$249 +s&p	Save \$498

**Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

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