

Celebrating National
Co-op Month With A

FOCUS ON YOU



RECNEWS

October 2021

Across the country, select grocery stores and dairy farms, housing complexes and community banks, health-care clinics and corner bakeries all have something in common. Along with Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), they are among more than 60,000 cooperatives across the country. Each shares the same guiding principles as REC.

/ Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are open to anyone able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

At REC, Cooperative leaders have gone a step further and created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan to ensure employees and member-owners recognize and celebrate the differences among us that create a stronger foundation for everyone.

/ Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are controlled by their members, who participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

In August, more than 16,000 member-owners participated in the Annual Meeting by designating their proxy in the latest election for the Board of Directors. REC's Board is made up of member-owners just like you.

/ Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

In the past two years, REC has returned more than \$28 million to member-owners in the form of a cash-back bill credit. These "Capital Credits" represent the members' ownership in the Cooperative.

/ Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.

REC maintains mutual aid agreements with cooperatives throughout the state and beyond to ensure outside crews are on standby in the event of a major power outage. And REC crews are always ready to help fellow co-ops.

/ Autonomy and Independence

If a cooperative enters into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raises capital from external sources, they ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Broadband has been an urgent need for many member-owners, and REC has partnered with local governments and other third parties to help bridge the rural digital divide.

/ Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives educate and train their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.

While REC engages in a robust training schedule for employees, the Cooperative also proactively reaches out to community groups and organizations to share information on electric safety, energy efficiency, sustainable energy solutions and other programs that will benefit members.

/ Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

Over the past year and a half, REC has supported schools, first-responders, nonprofits and other groups that have been working to do good during trying times.



Committed to Corporate Citizenship

REC Employee Makes the Right Call

Brian Wolfe looked forward to watching his oldest son, Greg, play in a Spotsylvania County Little League game 13 years ago. Unfortunately, there was no umpire to make the calls.

Wolfe, a senior public relations specialist at REC, stepped up and hasn't looked back since.

"There cannot be a game without umpires," Wolfe said, "so I turned it into my way of giving back to the community."

The greater Little League community has taken note. Over the summer, Wolfe was selected – for the second time – to umpire in the Little League Softball World Series. The event was held in Greenville, N.C. Along with other umpires, he was given this second opportunity not only because of his commitment and skills, but also because would-be first-time World Series umpires deferred until they could work at a Series without pandemic restrictions.

"We all stepped up to help make it happen in the COVID era we are currently in," Wolfe said. "The volunteers (grounds crew, announcers, coaches, transportation staff, meals staff, concessions, hotel staff etc.) were all amazing." Wolfe sees parallels between REC's culture and the one that runs through Little League.

"It's all about commitment to community," Wolfe said. "Little League is all about adults coming together (all volunteers) to provide children the opportunity of playing baseball or softball."



Without that community effort, it wouldn't be possible or affordable for many children to be able to play. So much like REC serves its member owners, Little League does the same for its community."

Back in 2008, Brian never imagined the hundreds of hours he'd spend on ballfields in the years ahead. As for Greg, Wolfe's oldest son, he recently graduated from Radford University. And Wolfe? He's holding onto his umpire uniforms. Games started up again this fall, and someone needs to make the calls.

'I Saw a Need and Just Wanted to Help'

REC System Inspector Jonathan Foxx's job is to look for ways to improve the equipment that provides electricity to more than 170,000 member-owners.

In his community, he brings the same "what-can-I-do-to-help" mentality.

So when Foxx saw a need in a local school, he was eager to step up.

He recently led a backpack drive at Madison Elementary School in Caroline County, providing backpacks and school supplies to more than 30 children.

"This is my community," Foxx said. "I saw a need and just wanted to help. It was really that simple. As an REC employee or just as a person, anytime I can make a positive difference that's what I'm going to try to do."

