

Current Communicator



MEMBER NEWSLETTER
OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

February 2021 VOLUME 30, NUMBER 1

Annual Meeting

Recap and Election Results

Mutual Aid

Hurricane Sally Restoration

Disconnect Moratorium

Managing Debt During COVID

A Letter from the CEO

As we look back at the year 2020, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC) has much to be thankful for and many accomplishments to highlight. We were able to serve our members through one of the most challenging years in recent history and our dedicated leaders and employees worked hard to keep the lights on through it all.

Providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity is exactly what we did in 2020! **CVEC logged its best year ever in reliability.** Continued investments in vegetation management, equipment upgrades, and field inspections are among the focused strategies used to improve reliability.

Despite the ups and downs of the pandemic, **CVEC finished the year in sound financial condition.** The moratorium on service disconnections illustrated the financial burden carried by many members who could not pay their electric bill after the pandemic hit. In December, all eligible members received capital credit refunds for the eleventh straight year.

Last year, more than ever, we were reminded that when the going gets tough, we lend a hand to those in need. Whether sending lineworkers to help with storm duty or donating food and gifts to our community during the holidays, **CVEC remains committed to the communities it serves.** That is the co-op difference!

The pandemic also revealed the dire need for internet in our rural area for education, work, medicine, and business. **CVEC will shorten the five-year fiber build, which was set to conclude in 2023, by one year in order to meet that increasing need.**

At the end of the year, we asked you how we did as a cooperative and you answered! **Our member satisfaction score was the highest on record and we are once again ranked in the Top 20 cooperatives** thanks to your feedback and honest answers on the survey. Our employees are here to serve you in the field and in the office and there is no better feeling than knowing we did that during such a troublesome year.

We look forward to serving you in 2021. It truly is our pleasure.

Gary Wood
President & CEO

2020 Annual Member's Meeting

CVEC's 83rd Annual Meeting was one for the history books due to COVID-19 precautions.

A limited number of directors and employees gathered under the truck shed lights at CVEC's Arrington office on September 23 to provide updates on the Cooperative's 2019 achievements to the membership. CEO Gary Wood, Treasurer Dr. Brian Bates, and Chairman Kinckle Robinson discussed the impact of the pandemic on finances, procurement of supplies, and the progress of the eagerly anticipated fiber build project.

While the in-person attendance was limited due to the pandemic, almost 1,000 members watched the meeting virtually and 2,166 members returned proxy ballots by mail.

Members who mailed in ballots were entered into a drawing to win a \$25 bill credit, a \$100 bill credit, or a grand prize check for \$500.

Members voted to re-elect three directors during the 2020 Annual Meeting



Jace Goodling
West District



Kinckle Robinson
South District



George Goin
East District



2020 Proxy Winners:

\$25 Bill Credit

Raymond Signoretti | Palmyra, VA
Jack D. Addington, Jr | Richlands, VA
Robert G. Holt | Appomattox, VA
Sharon M. Bloom | Roseland, VA
Richard W. Morris | Appomattox, VA
Nastaran S. Myers | Haymarket, VA
Keith F. Goodenough | Keswick, VA
Ophelia W. Washington | Dillwyn, VA
Ethel P. Bickford | Dillwyn, VA
Roy E. Hunt, Jr. | Amherst, VA
Howard B. Sprinkle | Wintergreen, VA
Evelyn H. Goodson | Troy, VA
David A. Egbert | Tampa, FL
Ronnie McCoy | Appomattox, VA
Robert Doss | Appomattox, VA
Dennis W. Carney | Dillwyn, VA
Randy H. Massie | Roseland, VA
James Murnane | Nellysford, VA
Wayne Mullins | Louisa, VA
Melvin R. Baber | Waynesboro, VA
Jonathan Watson | Palmyra, VA
Vincent J. Valentino | Lovington, VA
Joe or Reba Williams | Buckingham, VA
Joseph Rotolo, Jr. | Nellysford, VA
Tom L. Kneipp | Cumberland, VA
Faber Volunteer Fire Dept. | Faber, VA
Rosalie Toliver | Arrington, VA
Rebecca Tinsley | Scottsville, VA
Delmas Shifflett | Dyke, VA
April Clark | Crozet, VA
Mary E. Johnson | Prospect, VA
Betty Ryalls | Orange, VA
Goshen Baptist Church | Scottsville, VA
Gana Dunlop | Ormond Beach, FL
William F. Freeman | Afton, VA
Ricky Butler | Appomattox, VA
Allwood Church | Amherst, VA
Stephanie Burchell | Charlottesville, VA
Betty Darden Hodges Trust | VA Beach
Maryalice Gaskell | Nellysford, VA
Gary Taylor | Arrington, VA
Brandon Chiesa | Palmyra, VA

Julia C. Richardson | Louisa, VA
Robert Baker | Palmyra, VA
H.B. Thomson | Scottsville, VA
Susan Watson | Palmyra, VA
Clyde Thomas | Faber, VA
Gertrude M. Burge | Concord, VA
Frank DeMarco | Palmyra, VA
Linda L. Davis | Louisa, VA

\$100 Bill Credit

Johnny Cornett | Louisa, VA
Ray Lee Ashley | Afton, VA
Janet L. Drinkard | Appomattox, VA
Cary Akron | Palmyra, VA
Nancy V. Lewis | Appomattox, VA
Darlene Goff | Faber, VA
Mary Tolley | Pamplin, VA
Daniel J. Monahan | Charlottesville, VA
Roy H. Haislip | Scottsville, VA
Lee Ellen Dunaway | Gladstone, VA

\$500 Check

Steven Grubb | Lovington, VA

CVEC is a member-owned electric cooperative. Each year, CVEC holds an election at the Annual Meeting to select members to serve as directors and represent the membership in setting policies and making decisions. For information on running for a director position, please view Section 4.4 of the Bylaws located at www.mycvec.com.

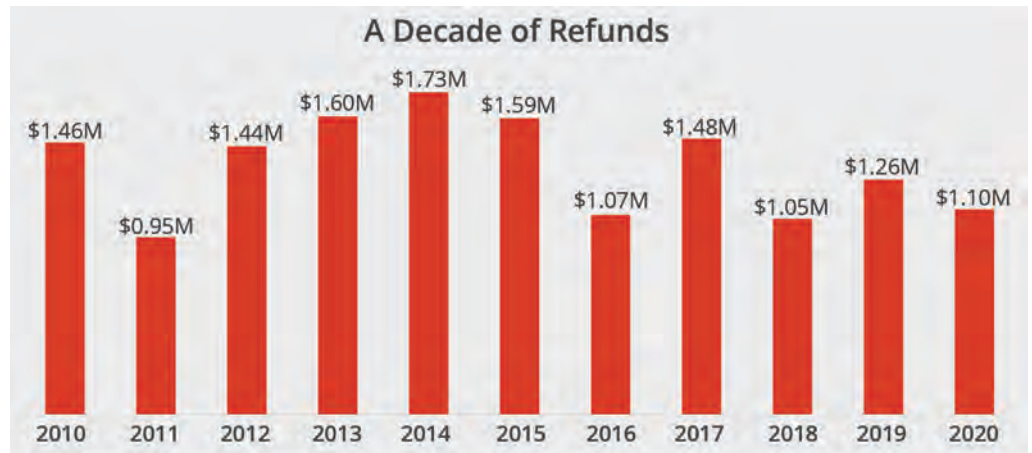
The next CVEC Annual Meeting will be held on June 23, 2021.



CVEC Board Approves Capital Credit Refund

For the 11th consecutive year, the CVEC Board has approved a capital credit refund to members.

As a not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative, CVEC is owned by its members. The members contribute investment in the lines, poles and substations as part of the rates they pay for electric service. This money is then used for distribution line investment for a period and eventually returned to the members. Over the years, CVEC has returned over \$20 million to members.



Patronage Capital:

CVEC does not have “profits” that go into executive bonuses or shareholder dividends. Instead, all revenues we receive through our rates beyond our costs for providing electric service remain the property of our members.



How does that work? At the end of the year, the Cooperative allocates electric service margins to the members in the form of patronage capital. Patronage capital represents the members’ ownership and investment in the Cooperative. Patronage capital is used to maintain and improve the distribution system and should be viewed as members’ investment in the lines, poles and substations of the Cooperative.

Capital Credits:

Each year, the Board of Directors determines if the Cooperative will refund a portion of patronage capital to the members. This refund is issued in the form of capital credits. This refund of capital is one of the many benefits of being a cooperative member.

The Board of Directors of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC) authorized \$1.1 million in capital credit refunds to Cooperative member-owners. This refund was used to retire 18% of the 2019 patronage capital allocations. In December, members were mailed a check if their refund exceeded \$100 or a bill credit for refunds less than \$100.

CVEC is an electric cooperative that was formed in 1937, by the members - for the members. Just like cooperatives around the world, CVEC operates according to a core set of principles that guide everyday decisions. Along with improving the quality of life for our members, these Seven Cooperative Principles are what set electric cooperatives apart from other electric utilities.



CVEC Linemen Assist with Hurricane Sally

Four CVEC linemen traveled to the Gulf Coast to aid their sister cooperative after Hurricane Sally devastated the area.

In September, Hurricane Sally battered the Gulf Coast and co-ops from Virginia and Maryland rose to the call for help. Seventy lineworkers total, including four from CVEC, headed to Baldwin EMC in Alabama where they had more than 78,000 members in the dark.

The CVEC crew spent nine days in Alabama lending a hand. This was CVEC line technician Blaine Cunningham's first deployment. "It was a great experience. I mostly remember the smell of the area from the tidal water," he recounts.

T.R. Eubank, CVEC foreman and employee of 21 years, has worked storm duty for plenty of local and out-of-state deployments during his tenure. "It is hard to remember all the different storms I have been on, but guessing I would say a few dozen." He noted the impact the pandemic had on procedures, "Everyone was in masks during the initial briefings. But once we got to work, it was similar to being here at work."



(L to R) CVEC Linemen T.R. Eubank, Jason Purvis, Phillip Massie, & Blaine Cunningham

Photos of bucket trucks from all over the country lined up to get into the ravaged Alabama and surrounding areas flooded news outlets. Phillip Massie, CVEC journeyman and employee of 6 years, walked us through the process of getting to site. "It didn't really take that long to get through the checkpoints. Once we got parked, it did take a long time to check-in and get our assignments." He has been on five deployments to date. "I always want to go help others out and do my part... I am ready for the next one." Massie recalls the safety measures and change in sleeping arrangements due to the pandemic. "The sleeping trailers were unique. With the bed curtains, it seemed a bit like a coffin, but it worked!"

Jason Purvis, CVEC journeyman and 15-year employee, reflected on the comradery of being at Baldwin EMC with lineworkers from 92 other cooperatives across the country. "It was an awesome experience... amazing how many people were there to help." Purvis, who spent a month in Bolivia in 2019 helping to connect villages to electricity for the very first time, is no stranger to lending a hand to those in need.

CVEC gives thanks to this crew who volunteered to travel to Alabama to help with the restoration and to their families who shared them for the time they were away.

CVEC was also the recipient of mutual aid after a mid-December ice storm wreaked havoc on CVEC's Eastern district, leaving over 7,000 members without power. Crews from Southside Electric and Rapphannock Electric joined CVEC crews and contractors to assist with restoration. Thanks to all those who lent a hand!



Pedal to the Metal - Building Fiber Quickly

The pandemic has proven one thing for sure – Central Virginians are lacking access to reliable internet needed for school, work, telehealth, and connection to the outside world.

In recognition of the urgent need to get members connected, the Board of Directors authorized a plan to increase the pace of construction across the CVEC system. The new goal of completing the fiber backbone construction by July 2022 shortens the buildout schedule by a year. Firefly Fiber BroadbandSM, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CVEC, will provide internet connections for all members who choose service by fall of 2022. CVEC is on pace for the next two years to build 1,000 miles of line each year and make service available at more than 10,000 new CVEC locations each year. Follow our progress on the Broadband page at: www.mycvec.com.



15,221

homes passed
in Phase 1



3,917

poles replaced
with new



4,750

anchors placed



8,725

service requests



5,717

homes connected



1,278 of 3,600
miles of fiber
constructed

Virginia and Maryland Cooperatives Form New Broadband Association

The first association of its kind in the nation, CVEC joins forces with other cooperatives to form a broadband association.

Five electric cooperatives in Virginia and Maryland announced the creation of an innovative association of broadband cooperatives to help bring world-class internet service to underserved rural areas where, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, more than 20 million Americans do not have broadband in their homes or businesses. The new Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Broadband Cooperatives (VMDABC) recognizes the benefits of collaboration, as well as the growing workload required to support a common agenda. The association consists of five founding cooperative members that are in various stages of developing comprehensive fiber-to-the-home networks, and also will benefit the cooperatives' communications systems. Brian Bates, a director at CVEC, will serve as secretary-treasurer.

Safety Tip:

Do not put anything on top of an electric blanket, including pets, when it is in use. When covered, electric blankets may overheat.

*Source: Electrical Safety
Foundation International*





IMPORTANT ACCOUNT NOTICE

Notice to Nonresidential Accounts:

As of November 18, 2020, nonresidential accounts may be subject to disconnection for nonpayment. Central Virginia Electric Cooperative will resume nonresidential disconnections after January 1, 2021.

Notice to Residential Accounts:

There is a moratorium in effect for residential utility disconnections, pursuant to House Bill 5005, otherwise known as the Commonwealth of Virginia Budget, Section 4-14, Enactment 7(a), as of November 18, 2020. This moratorium means that we will not disconnect you for nonpayment of your electric bill or fees during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency. This does not mean that your electric bill is not due, or that amounts due to us are being waived or forgiven. This moratorium will continue until the State Corporation Commission issues an order exempting the Cooperative from the moratorium. It will also end if the Governor determines it is unnecessary or until 60 days after the public health emergency ends. Please contact us to make payment arrangements if you have not done so already.

Notice to Residential Accounts COVID-19 Relief Repayment Plan

There is a repayment plan available if you need assistance paying your current or past bills due, pursuant to House Bill 5005, otherwise known as the Commonwealth of Virginia Budget, Section 4-14, Enactment 7(b), as of November 18, 2020. This repayment plan is available to residential accounts 30 days or more past due, and arrearages can be paid over 6 to up to 24 months.

Entering into a repayment plan does not mean that your electric bill is not due, or that amounts due to us are being waived or forgiven. Your current billing information is listed on your electric bill, or you may call the Cooperative at 800-367-2832 to obtain up-to-date billing information. If you need help paying your electric bill, please dial 211 or contact your local Department of Social Services office, or visit <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea/> for information on energy assistance programs. If you have a complaint about the repayment plan, you may contact the Division of Public Utility Regulation at 1-800-552-7945.

CVEC Earns Six CCA Awards

CVEC's Communication team participated in the Cooperative Communicators Association (CCA) Awards this fall and earned several top awards for their work to brand Firefly Fiber BroadbandSM, CVEC's fiber subsidiary.

The CCA is an organization comprised of 350 professionals who communicate for a variety of cooperatives - not just electric co-ops! Each year, as part of a multi-day educational and networking event, the CCA recognizes cooperatives for exceptional communication efforts in a variety of different categories.

This was CVEC's first time entering the contest and the Communications Team earned a total of six awards, including Best of Show!

- **First Place: Programs & Projects Promotional Video (3+ minutes)**
- **First Place: Programs & Projects Miscellaneous Promotional**
- **First Place: Programs & Projects Small Shop Portfolio**
- **Second Place: Programs & Projects Campaigns and Programs Long-Term**
- **Second Place: Photography Smartphone**
- **Best of Show: Programs & Projects**

Need Heating Assistance?

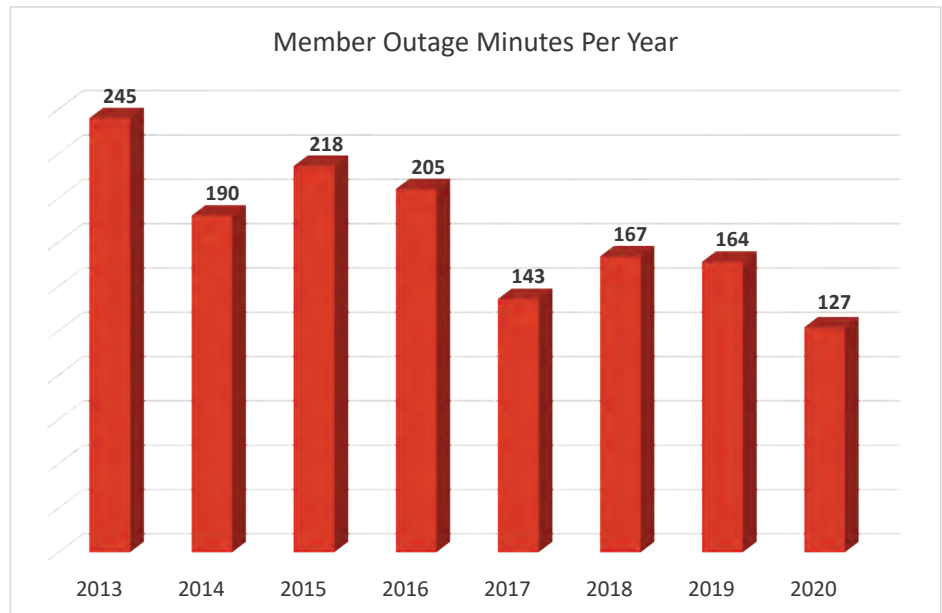
Members who are having trouble paying their energy bill are encouraged to call 211 to learn about local services and assistance in their area.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To view our statement of nondiscrimination, visit <https://www.mycvec.com/about-us/careers>.

Inspection & Maintenance Expected to Pay Large Dividends in CVEC Reliability

Reliability has improved dramatically over the last five years with changes to vegetation management, equipment upgrades, and field inspections.

In February 2020, CVEC started a new Inspection and Maintenance (I&M) program to identify and make proactive repairs to its transmission and distribution system. Like other years, CVEC crews patrolled the system and made necessary repairs to improve safety and reliability. However, the method by which information was acquired, viewed, stored, and organized this year changed thanks to advances in technology.

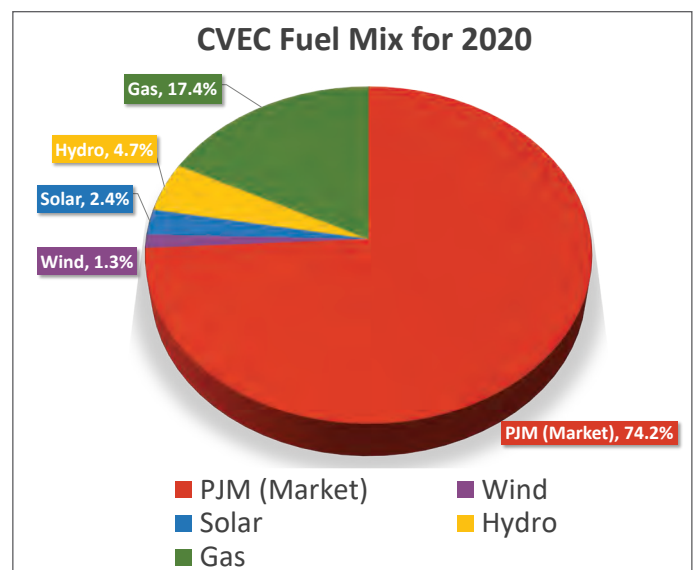


CVEC's average outage minutes per member has decreased significantly over the past several years.

This year, the electric system was organized by reliability trends, from least performing to best performing. Approximately 7,500 field assets (which include poles, wire, underground equipment, hardware, and vegetation growth within our rights-of-way) were assigned to each of our three operating divisions for inspection. The inspection data was acquired through foot patrols and drones, tracked by an iPad, and transferred to CVEC's Geographic Information System (GIS) server.

Drones have dramatically changed the way we identify problems. Estimated to be 65-75% faster than patrolling by foot, drones can obtain pictures quickly and allow our staff to view images at a later time if necessary. In addition, the elevated position of the images that are taken helps to identify problems that would not normally be seen from the ground, even with the use of magnification.

At the end of 2020, all data was compiled for analysis and will be organized into work packets. In 2021, CVEC will perform another 22,000 inspections and begin making needed repairs identified the previous year. The I&M program will strengthen CVEC's electric system and ultimately lead to less outages. CVEC will continue these inspections with drones, utilizing both our crews and contractors well into the future.





Central Virginia Electric Cooperative

CORRESPONDENCE: P.O. Box 247 | Lovington, VA 22949

PAYMENTS: Dept. 1340 | P.O. Box 2153 | Birmingham, AL 35287-1341

(800) FOR-CVEC | www.mycvec.com

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Harrisonburg, VA

Permit No. 312

Energy Tip:

Unplug appliances that draw energy even when they're not in use.



Cooperative Elves Give Back

Many CVEC employees are working remotely, but that didn't dampen our holiday spirit or the desire to help families in our community.

This year, CVEC employees provided gifts of clothing, toys, toiletries and special requests for 19 children in Amherst, Nelson, Appomattox and Fluvanna counties. In addition, they adopted a family in Louisa County and provided them with gifts and a holiday meal as well as donated 25 grocery gift cards to Buckingham Social Services for distribution to families in need.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

CVEC employees donated over \$1,413 which provided over 5,654 meals to local families in need. Donations were given to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, which serves 10 of the 14 counties in CVEC's territory.



Giving back to the community is what powers us!

