

# Current Communicator



MEMBER NEWSLETTER  
OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

July 2023 VOLUME 31, NUMBER 2

## System Upgrades Maintaining a Reliable System

## Transforming Lives

Fiber Broadband Impact

## Reaching Communities

One Training at a Time

## A Letter from the CEO

Strategic planning is in full swing at CVEC and we are committed to growing and improving our processes to better serve our membership and our community! The feedback gathered from our member-owners, employees, managers, Board of Directors, and the Member Advisory Council members has helped define our initiatives and guide conversations for our employee work groups, who are busy **mapping an action plan that will be executed over the next three to five years.**

CVEC strives to deliver the safest and most reliable electric service for our members and **we are on target to meet our reliability goal for this year.** The milder weather was a welcome change from 2022 and we continue to see the benefit of our robust vegetation management plan, which includes field inspections and right-of-way clearing to neutralize threats to power lines and poles. Maintenance and upgrades across the system continue to improve reliability by identifying and addressing potential problems before outages occur.

In April, CVEC and Firefly Fiber Broadband<sup>SM</sup> **celebrated 20,000 customers connected and the conclusion of the construction portion of the fiber build.** All CVEC members have the option to subscribe to gigabit speed internet service that is reliable and affordable: an amenity that has been inaccessible for far too long. CVEC will leverage the fiber to improve operations and reliability, helping to contain costs to members.

Members are reminded that **the Annual Meeting will be held in September this year** and will take place at CVEC's headquarters building in Arrington. Please be sure to save the date and plan to join us virtually or in person. Your vote matters and we encourage all members to participate in the director elections.

CVEC strives to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electric service that powers our members and our communities. As a company, CVEC invests in its employees so that they have the necessary training to better deliver on that promise, as well as in our communities so that employees can share their talent and knowledge to keep others safe. Together we transform lives.

Gary Wood  
President & CEO

## System Upgrades are Underway

CVEC is continuously working throughout the system to perform maintenance and upgrade equipment so that members have access to safe and reliable electricity. A large project for this year involves upgrading the transmission line that runs from Gladstone to Tower Hill.

CVEC is a distribution electric cooperative - meaning we purchase the majority of the power that we provide and just rely on transmission lines owned by Appalachian Power or Dominion Energy to get that power from the generating source to our substations for distribution to our members. This also means that our substations and equipment have to be adequately sized to receive the electricity coming in.

Appalachian Power announced plans to retire their current 46 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that serves CVEC's Gladstone delivery point and replace it with a 138kV line. As a result, CVEC must upgrade our equipment to handle the higher voltage. In early April, CVEC contract crews began a project to replace our own 46kV line that connects the Tower Hill substation in Appomattox county to the Gladstone substation in Nelson county so that it will continue to be able to receive power from Appalachian Power. Both substations are being rebuilt in order to accommodate the higher voltages.

When work is being done on the system, outages are often necessary so that crews can perform the work safely. We make every effort to limit the number and duration of any outages, as well as try to schedule them during the night when it will have the least impact on our members. We appreciate your patience and understanding when outages are necessary.



## Warm Weather Brings New System Maintenance

Maintenance crews and contractors are as busy as bees inspecting the electric infrastructure throughout our system. You may see the following activities in your area.



- ⚡ **Pole Inspections** - Contractor crews test poles for signs of damage or decay. If a pole is rejected, construction crews will be back at a later date to replace it.
- ⚡ **Right-of-Way (ROW) Vegetation Management** - CVEC clears the corridor beneath and around its power lines to keep the lights on, as well as to keep your family and our line crews safe and sound. Read more about CVEC's ROW program at <https://www.mycvec.com/outage/reliability/right-of-way-management>.
- ⚡ **Drone Inspections** - CVEC utilizes a drone contractor to perform a detailed aerial patrol of electric lines annually to locate potential problems on lines and line components before outages occur.

Watch for notices in the mail when crews will be working in your area or are performing work that may affect your service. Contractors will always have a magnetic sign identifying them as an authorized contractor for CVEC.



## CVEC Lineman Compete in Gaff-N-Go Rodeo

The Gaff-N-Go Lineworkers Rodeo attracts the best lineworkers from the east coast to compete in traditional lineworker tasks and this year was no exception!

On May 20, seven CVEC apprentice linemen tested their skills against other cooperatives, investor-owned utilities, municipals, and contractors at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell, Virginia. Each participant was scored on safety, work practice, neatness and ability, equipment handling, and time as they competed in challenges that are required in everyday work.

The CVEC apprentices did a great job showcasing their skills while competing against 100 other apprentices from seven different states. Travis Burnett and Graham Hughes placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively in the Hurtman Rescue event and Travis also placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Insulator Change-Out event. Great job to all of the competitors!



*CVEC apprentice linemen Travis Burnett (L) and Graham Hughes (R) receive their awards*



*L to R: Clay Umbarger, Scott Chisholm, Mike Reynolds, Graham Hughes, Travis Burnett, Zach Morris, and Blaine Cunningham*



*Travis Burnett (L) and Clay Umbarger (R) compete in the 2023 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo*

## On-the-Go Savings: Co-op Connections

Co-op Connections is a free program for co-op members providing discounts on everyday items and expenses.

There is no sign-up fee and no annual fee. You are eligible simply by being a Co-op member. Here are just some of the ways you can save money!

- Cash Back online shopping at over 3,000 retailers
- Hotels savings at over 400,000 hotels
- Save 10% on all concerts, sports events, and theaters
- Insurance savings to protect your family
- National discounts to help you save money

Before you hit the road this summer, download the Co-op Connections app and start saving!



# Save The Date



CVEC's 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 20.**

*More information coming soon!*

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](http://www.mycvec.com).

# Transforming Lives Through Fiber Broadband

CVEC celebrated the conclusion of its rural broadband project and reaching the milestone of 20,000 connections in early April!

Four short years ago, remote work or school, streaming movies, or simply accessing the internet was inconceivable in many central Virginia counties. In 2018, CVEC launched a fiber broadband project that would transform lives by bridging the digital communications gap in rural communities. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Firefly Fiber Broadband<sup>SM</sup>, CVEC members now have access to affordable and reliable highspeed internet.

When COVID hit and many families had no choice but to go remote for work and school, CVEC accelerated the efforts to make broadband service available to all 39,000 members. Over 4,000 miles of fiber construction was completed at the end of 2022, with a total cost of \$150 million. The project was scheduled to be completed at the end of 2023, but construction concluded a full year early. Over 20,000 subscribers are already in service and final connections for CVEC members will continue over the next few months in remaining project areas.

Senator Creigh Deeds, Virginia District 25 remarks, "Bringing fiber broadband to rural communities is life-changing for the residents and a game changer in terms of remote learning and telework opportunities. We have been so fortunate for the vision and leadership of Gary Wood, the Central



*CVEC President & CEO, Gary Wood, celebrates with Firefly's mascot, Flash.*

Virginia Electric Cooperative team, and the Board of Directors. When I think about Firefly's 20,000<sup>th</sup> connection, I think about the number of school children who can more readily access outside learning materials, the small business owner who can now operate with lower overhead, and the older couple who can now video chat with their grandchildren. It is indeed worthy of a celebration."

To celebrate the completion of the fiber build, CVEC donated \$10,000 to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank (BRAFB). Founded in 1982, the BRAFB has grown to serve eight cities and 25 counties, 10 of which are in CVEC's territory.

S&N Communications, the fiber construction partner for CVEC's fiber build, graciously matched CVEC's donation to the BRAFB.



*L to R: S&N Director Chair, Allen Powell; BRAFB Director of Development & Community Engagement, Millie Winstead; and Firefly Chairman, George Goin*



# CVEC Employees Strive for Excellence!

Education and training is a guiding principle for electric cooperatives. We take pride in ensuring our employees have the necessary tools to be the best they can be when serving members.

Two CVEC System Operators, Chelsea Gardner and Denise Zambrotta, graduated from the Virginia, Maryland, Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives System Operator Certification Program (OTAP). These graduates completed six 32-hour workshops along with on-the-job training over the past three years, learning about electrical systems, power delivery, substation automation and more.

Line Technicians Blaine Cunningham and Travis Burnett both completed the Virginia, Maryland, Delaware Association of Electric Cooperative's Lineworker Technician Apprentice Program (LTAP). The four-year program consists of eight 32-hour steps scheduled at six-month intervals. As the workshops progress, the materials become more difficult and challenge the student to grow in their craft. It takes a lot of hard work and a lot of hours of training to achieve this accomplishment.

**Congratulations to all!**



*L to R: System Operator, Denise Zambrotta; CVEC Safety & Training Specialist, Randy Golladay; System Operator, Chelsea Gardner*



*L to R: Todd Butcher with Line Technician Blaine Cunningham and CVEC Operations Manager Jay Palmer*



*L to R: Line Technician Travis Burnett with VMDAEC Safety Training Manager, Todd Butcher*

## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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**Amy Shepherd**  
Financial Analyst

*Thank You*

FOR PROVIDING

**14 YEARS**

OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO  
CVEC AND ITS MEMBERS!

# Reaching Communities One Training at a Time

CVEC employees have been busy educating students and first responders about electrical safety and careers in the cooperative industry.

Division Superintendent, Josh Golladay and Foreman, Scott Clarkson visited 8<sup>th</sup> grade students during Nelson County Middle School's career day to talk about life as a CVEC lineworker. Golladay and Clarkson explained the training and education requirements, what a typical day looks like, and what it takes to restore power after a storm. CVEC is thankful for the opportunity to talk to students about cooperative career options and inspire future lineworkers.



*Superintendent Josh Golladay speaks with students .*



*Lineworker Travis Massie teaches students about electrical safety.*

CVEC employees attended Science Day at Cumberland Elementary in late March.

With the help of our very special character props, Joe the Crow and Merle the Squirrel, students learned about the path of electricity, what causes power outages, and about electrical safety. CVEC would like to thank the staff at Cumberland Elementary for inviting us out. We had just as much fun as the kids did!

In early April, CVEC employees conducted an electrical safety training seminar for first responders at the Concord Volunteer Fire Department. Attendees included fire department members from Concord, as well as from Rustburg and Appomattox. CVEC's Training and Safety Specialist, Randy Golladay, explained electrical safety during the classroom portion before heading outside for a life-sized

live line demonstration. Linemen Coty Painter and Travis Massie assisted Golladay in providing an up-close view of how electricity travels and the dangers responders can face when answering calls.

"We are a 100% volunteer organization that serves the community. The training provided by CVEC will help our firefighters perform our duties safely and help make sure everyone returns home to their families," stated Fred Davis, volunteer with Concord Volunteer Fire Department. "CVFD is grateful to CVEC for providing this training and working with local first responders to educate them on the hazards associated with power lines." Davis is employed by CVEC as an Electrical Engineer and has led safety courses at the cooperative on fire safety for employees.

Safety is the top priority at CVEC and our employees are proud to serve their communities by educating first responders and even our youngest school-aged members in their classrooms. For more information about CVEC and electrical safety instruction, contact us at [comm@mycvec.com](mailto:comm@mycvec.com).



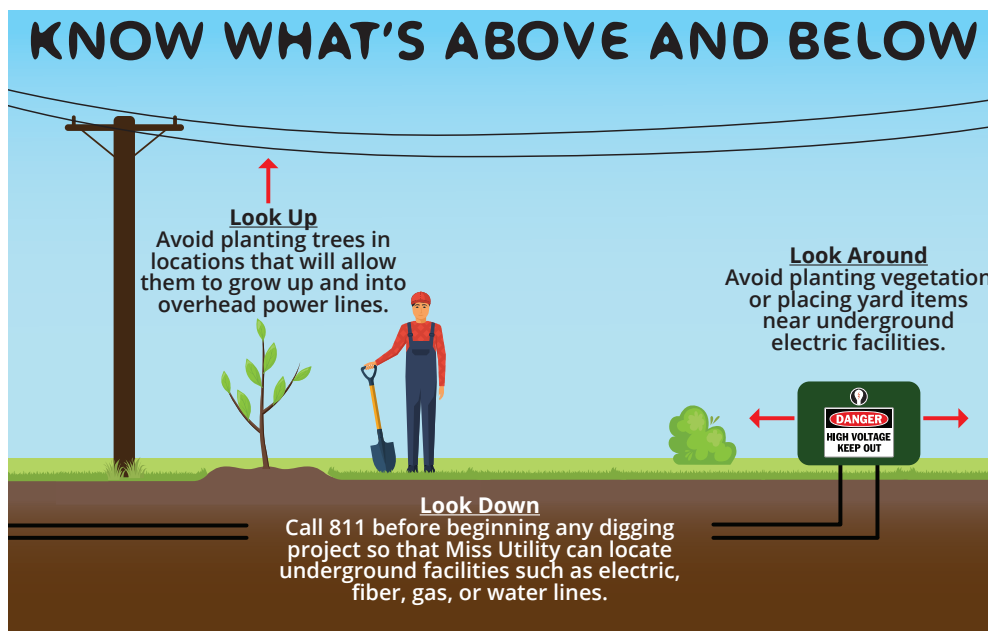
*CVEC employees with first responders from Concord, Rustburg, and Appomattox.*

# New CVEC Solar Array is Declared in Commercial Operation

The new 5 megawatt (MW) solar array, constructed and owned by Sun Tribe and Sol Systems, passed all testing requirements for the site to be declared in commercial operation on May 2, 2023.

The new solar array is located on a 62-acre site near CVEC's Cunningham substation in Fluvanna County. Now fully operational, the solar energy that is generated will feed directly into CVEC's power distribution lines and will produce enough energy to power roughly 600 homes.

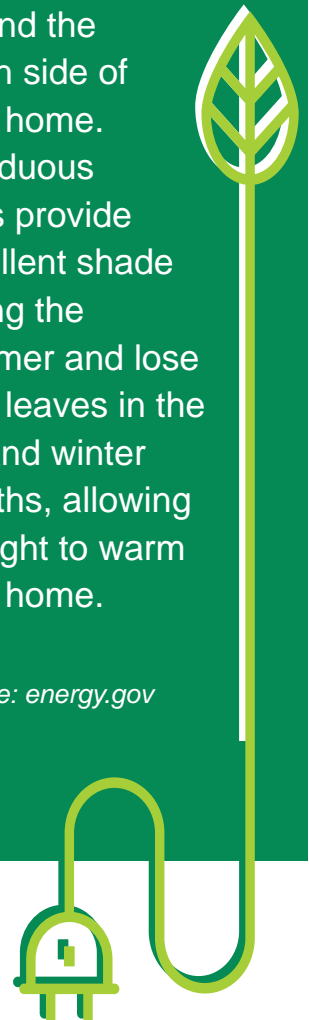
One of the many advantages of adding locally-sourced energy is that the electricity that is produced will be distributed to members by way of our power lines. This helps to contain power costs by eliminating the need to use the the transmission grid and pay wholesale transmission fees.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: *energy.gov*







## Central Virginia Electric Cooperative

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## Have You Enrolled in the Member Account Portal?

CVEC offers an easy, convenient, and secure way for members to access account information and make payments using the Member Account Portal.

The Member Account Portal provides user-friendly navigation and enhanced security to protect member information. It is optimized for easy access and viewing using any mobile device, giving members the ability to access their account anywhere from the palm of their hands.

Once enrolled, members have access to account information, including the itemized charges on the current bill and the previous month's bill. Members are also able to view payment history and usage data, enter service requests, report outages, update contact information, and sign up for account options such as paperless billing text notifications.

The CVEC Account Portal now offers a new "Quick Pay" option enabling members to make a payment without having to log into an account.

**Creating an online portal account is easy. Visit [www.mycvec.com](http://www.mycvec.com) to enroll today and start enjoying all that the CVEC Member Account Portal has to offer!**

