



## Keepin' Up with Jones

Meet Robert 'Brian' Jones Sr., CEC's Newest Director

by Laura Emery, Field Editor

**B**y day, the clang of construction and beeping of work vehicles is a constant refrain for Robert "Brian" Jones Sr. By night, the operations of Community Electric Cooperative occupy his time.

Jones is the newest board member at CEC and he expects his experience with logistically complex, multimillion-dollar projects at Newport News Shipbuilding will be an asset as he joins the already-capable board of directors leading CEC.

"I know I have a lot to learn, but I'm looking forward to finding out how to best serve CEC's members through my role on the board," he says. "I do think my work at the shipyard, which has a heavy focus on safety consciousness and quality assurance, will help me, as I know the cooperative has similar large projects and extremely high safety standards."

A CEC member since June 1982, Jones has been impressed with the cooperative's dedication to member service since he joined the board in August.

"The employees at CEC really care about the work they do. It's good to see the CEC folks quickly respond when there is an outage, and I always look forward to the capital credits check we get every year," he says.

The 59-year-old started his career at NNS in 1982 when he moved to the Isle of Wight area with his wife, Mary Eva, a registered nurse. Jones started as a welder and worked his way up to an engineering manager in the facilities division specializing in cranes.

The largest industrial employer in Virginia, NNS is the sole designer, builder and refueler of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and one of two providers of Navy submarines. "I'm really proud of the projects I've managed here, and having a dedicated team of skilled employees is my greatest asset."

The work of Jones and his team is now a part of the local skyline. "When you come across the James River Bridge, you see these large cranes. It's pretty neat to have been a part of making that happen," he says.

As Jones explains, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers undergo a four-year refueling and overhaul when reaching 25-year service life. Aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN-73) is currently in the shipyard for hull and freeboard blast and paint, repairs, and defueling and refueling of its power plants.

"In order to overhaul the USS George Washington, we have to put the ship in drydock and take it apart and rebuild it. Well, we've had a gantry-style crane there for 51 years that has

exceeded its service life, so the company made the Capitol investment to build a new goliath crane in 2016," he explains.

And this is no small crane. It's 243 feet tall, spans 440 feet, can hoist more than 315 metric tons and weighs in at a whopping 3,000 tons.

"It's been a large project that my team has been involved in for the last seven years. We designed it, fabricated and erected it, and put it in service October of last year. We are now in the process of dismantling the old crane that has served since 1969. The new crane is much taller, thus changing the skyline of the shipyard."

Born in Chuckatuck, Jones was always mechanically inclined as a child, and still enjoys building things in his spare time. But did Jones ever expect to one day be working in a major shipyard and managing projects in the crane engineering department involving more than 600 cranes, ranging from a quarter-ton to 1,050-tons? "No, probably not," he says, with a laugh.

His career trajectory formed after he went to apprentice school for welding. "Then, in 1991, I earned my engineering degree from Old Dominion University," he explains. He is a registered professional engineer in the state of Virginia. His two sons, Rob and Travis, also work for NNS. "Rob and I drive to work together, and I enjoy that."

At the end of a long, exhausting day at NNS, Jones is always happy to return home to rural Isle of Wight, where he can trace his paternal family roots back to 1664. "It's quiet here.

I know my neighbors and have good, quality people around me. I like hearing the cows in the fields and enjoy the security that we all look out for one another around here," he says.

"I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Brian Jones with his wife, Mary Eva.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRIAN JONES

## Life-Sustaining Devices

Do you have medical equipment that utilizes electricity in use at your home? If so, we'd like to know. CEC will attempt to give those members advance notice of any planned outages and priority in the restoration of electric service whenever reasonably possible. Please note that this does not guarantee that your electric service will not be interrupted.

To be included, provide a completed Serious Medical Condition Form (found on our website or by contacting our office) to the cooperative. A new Certification Form will be required annually or upon the expiration of the anticipated length of time that the serious medical condition will persist if such time is less than 12 months. Your account must also be kept up to date so that service is not disconnected for non-payment.

The possibility does exist that you may be without electric service for an extended period when there is major damage to the electrical system. In preparation for this type of situation, you may want to obtain an alternate power source, such as a generator, or be prepared to relocate until power can be restored.

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Community Electric Cooperative President and CEO Steve Harmon welcomes co-op directors and staff to the annual meeting, which was livestreamed to members.

## Annual Meeting Conducted via Facebook Live

One week after devastating effects from Tropical Storm Isaias, Community Electric Cooperative hosted a virtual annual meeting. The co-op livestreamed the event on its Facebook page the evening of Tuesday, Aug. 11, from the co-op's warehouse.

Board Chairman Jeannette Everett began the meeting with a brief introduction and invocation. A financial update was provided by Diana Beale, CEC secretary-treasurer. John Butler, retiring from the board of directors, and Josh "Pret" Pretlow, who recently retired as CEC's general counsel, were each presented with resolutions in appreciation of their years of service.

Jeannette introduced William L. Holt, who will succeed Pretlow as the co-op's general counsel, and also introduced new director Robert "Brian" Jones Sr.

CEC retired more than \$342,000 in capital credits in 2019. The co-op also continues to see positive results from its subsidiary, RECORE; both entities earning net margins in excess of \$300,000. Pretlow brought the 15-minute meeting to a close after determining a quorum was met and the election of Brian Jones to the co-op's board was approved.

"Although the meeting was brief and very direct, everyone attending seemed to enjoy the time together," says CEC President and CEO Steve Harmon. "We have received positive feedback from members watching the meeting via Facebook."

## Second-Party Notice

Community Electric Cooperative offers second-party notice. This service allows for a second party to be notified of the potential discontinuance of electrical service. This service can be utilized by the elderly or disabled to ensure that a friend, neighbor or relative is notified if service is nearing disconnection. The contact person is under no obligation to pay the member's bill.

If you are not taking advantage of this service but wish to do so, please complete and return this form or visit [comelec.coop](http://comelec.coop) and click on the "Manage My Account" tab.

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Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Second Party to be Notified

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Signature for Authorization: \_\_\_\_\_