



Three Area High School Seniors Earn Electric Co-op College Scholarships

Three high school seniors from the service territory of Community Electric Cooperative have each received \$1,000 college scholarships awarded by the Education Scholarship Foundation of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

The 2022 scholarship recipients are:

- Alivia Garriss of Zuni, a student at Windsor High School
- Brett Holmes of Franklin, a student at Windsor High School
- Braxton Lewis of Suffolk, a student at Nansemond River High School

The students were eligible for consideration because their parents or guardians are members of Community Electric Cooperative.

"These scholarships reflect the strong commitment of electric cooperatives to advancing educational opportunities among our youth," said Russell Brown, chair of the Education Scholarship Foundation Board and chair of the board of directors of the VMD Association. "We commend these students on their academic success, knowing they represent a future generation of leaders in their communities."

The Foundation awarded Worth Hudson Scholarships of \$1,000 each to 50 students, including Garriss and Lewis. They are named in honor of Hudson, the first chairman of the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation.

Holmes is among three seniors awarded \$1,000 scholarships in memory of Bill Sherrod, the former editor of *Cooperative Living* magazine. They plan to pursue a career in journalism, English, communications or related fields.

Garriss will attend Paul D. Camp Community College and study nutrition. Her career goal is to become a nutritionist and personal trainer. "I am so honored by those who have chosen to contribute to

my college education. I am truly grateful and appreciative of their generosity," Garriss says. "I will work hard to make the organizations proud of supporting me."

Lewis will attend Virginia Military Institute and major in civil engineering. "I was ecstatic upon receiving this scholarship because it pushes me closer to my goals. I am so happy that scholarships like these are made possible for students like me who do not want a pile of student debt after graduation," Lewis said. He quoted the renowned U.S. wrestler Dan Gable, an Olympic gold medalist and two-time NCAA national champion, to describe his career aspirations: "My valleys are higher than most people's peaks. I am not inferring that I am better than anyone, just that I have such high goals for myself."

Holmes will attend Virginia Tech and major in sports media and analytics. He described the Bill Sherrod scholarship opportunity as a "big red shiny ball" that aligned perfectly with his career goals. "Most scholarships are very broad, and everyone is applying for the same ones. This scholarship made so much sense for me, and I'm very, very grateful," Holmes said.

"We're extremely proud to be able to help these deserving young people from our service area continue their education, whether at a college or university, or in learning a trade," said Steven Harmon, president and chief executive officer of Community Electric Cooperative.

Since 2001, the Education Scholarship Foundation has provided approximately 840 scholarships totaling more than \$860,000 to aspiring college students as well as to the next generation of electric lineworkers. The Foundation is supported through tax-deductible donations and bequests from individuals, proceeds from fundraising events and CoBank's Sharing Success Program. One hundred percent of donations go to students for scholarships. For information on donating to the Foundation, visit vmdaec.com/scholarship.

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Community Electric Cooperative is an Equal
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Community Electric Cooperative Provides ‘Live Line’ Safety Training to Region’s Firefighters

Public safety in western Tidewater got a boost when lineworkers from Community Electric Cooperative gave a two-hour “live line” training session last week to more than 25 members of local firefighting crews. The training session demonstrated the clear dangers posed by downed power lines and structure fires, as well as the less obvious — but still lethal — hazards that come with newer technologies like solar panel circuitry and battery energy storage systems, and with the rising use of standby power generators in homes and businesses.

Firefighters from the Carrsville Volunteer Fire Department, Franklin Fire and Rescue, the Hunterdale Volunteer Fire Department and the Windsor Volunteer Fire Department participated.

“Our goal in providing this training is the safety of first responders, which in turn means public safety,” said CEC Manager of Operations Glen Presson. “When first responders are out there trying to make an unsafe situation safe — whether it’s a structure fire, a car accident involving a downed power line, a storm or something else — we want them to be educated on how to keep themselves safe so they can assist the public.”



The training session was conducted at the Carrsville fire station. Its main elements included:

- a discussion of dangerous situations encountered by the first responders;
- the use of CEC’s mobile, live-line trailer to demonstrate the intensity of the flames and smoke that a live power line can generate when it ignites trees;
- the use of the trailer to show how a live line can “fry” a hot dog and, by inference, a human body; and
- a demonstration of the severity of a blown fuse on an electric transformer, a component typically located on a utility pole to transfer energy between circuits.

CEC has conducted public safety training in various forms and settings for decades, but in recent years has “stepped up” a



Manager of Operations Glen Presson leads electrical safety training for local firefighters at the Carrsville fire station.

training regimen that historically focused on safety precautions around downed power lines and “pulling” meters to disconnect the flow of electricity into structures when fighting fires, Presson said. During last week’s training, as was the case a year ago in a session conducted for the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department, representatives of Community Electric’s RECORE subsidiary demonstrated the procedures for safely de-energizing structures with standby power generators like those that RECORE sells and leases. The equipment is capable of activating automatically when it senses power interruptions. CEC and RECORE team members also discussed safety procedures to address circuitry that “daisy chains” through solar panels now commonly installed in residences and businesses.

The recent session resulted from a conversation that Presson had with Devin Butler, a lieutenant with the Carrsville squad that receives about 350 calls for service each year.

“We want to maintain a safe area when accidents occur or trees are down with live wires. Plus, they’re sharing suggestions with safety rules for alternative energy. We’re blessed to have Community Electric close to us to provide this service and increase our safety awareness,” Butler said.

Butler is a 33-year veteran of the Carrsville department and said volunteers “truly have to have their hearts in it” to answer calls at all times of the day and night. Even experienced firefighters like himself benefit from the safety training, Butler said. He last participated in a similar session — which predated the widespread deployment of alternative energy technologies — about 15 years ago.

Despite resource constraints, the live-line training is a public service that Community Electric is eager to provide more frequently given the emergence of new technologies and the turnover among first responders, Presson said.

“Time and resources are in short supply, but really and truly, this is a service that all local first responders every three or four years need to go through. Even emergency medical technicians, sheriff deputies and police officers could benefit from a program like this from time to time,” Presson said.



Plan Ahead – and Act Now – for Hurricane Safety

Many experts will tell you that extreme weather is “the new normal,” and there’s plenty of evidence to support their argument. Closer to Virginia, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration determined that 2021 was the Atlantic Hurricane Season’s “third most active year on record in terms of named storms.”

As we head deeper into another hurricane season that won’t end officially until November 30, it is highly advisable for homes and businesses to make safety preparations. NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management has reported that, over the past 40 years, the average cost of damages from hurricanes is \$20.5 billion per year, and, over the same period, hurricanes also are responsible for the highest number of deaths (nearly 6,700) among the more than \$300 billion weather disasters that have occurred.

The key elements of a sound hurricane safety strategy, according to utility and emergency response experts, are listed below:

- Put together an emergency kit and plan. Communicate the plan with your family.
- Know the elevation level of your property. This will help you prepare for the storm surge and any tidal flooding.
- Secure your home: cover all windows and bring all outdoor furniture indoors.
- Learn your community hurricane evacuation routes.
- If you receive medical treatment or home health care services, work with your medical provider to determine how

to maintain care and service if you are unable to leave your home or have to evacuate during the storm.

- Make a record of your personal property by taking photos or videos of your belongings. Store these records in a safe place.
- Prepare for possible power outages.
- Ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working and have fresh batteries.

- Consider purchasing a generator to provide power during an outage. CEC’s RECORE Energy subsidiary sells standby power generators for residential and commercial use; they all are covered by a five- to 10-year warranty.

- If you have life-support devices or other medical equipment or supplies that depend on electricity, notify your utility and work with your medical provider to prepare for power outages.

“Community Electric wants each and every one of our members to be well prepared for hurricanes. If the supply chain disruptions and extreme weather events have taught us anything, it is that we can’t wait until the last minute to better safeguard our families, homes and livelihoods,” CEC Manager of Operations Glen Presson said.

For more tips on planning before, during and after the storm, visit ready.gov/hurricanes. More information on RECORE’s standby power solution is available at RECORE.energy.



CEC EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Danielle Beale

Manager of Accounting & Finance

5 YEARS
OF SERVICE

What was your first job?

Teller at Farmers Bank

What is your favorite thing about working at CEC?

The cooperative world is like no other. I haven’t met a person/cooperative yet that isn’t willing to help or go out of their way to help another. The resources and the amount of information is endless.

What does your job mean to you?

To me my job is an answered prayer helping me use my abilities for the benefit of the organization. I give my best in my job.

What is your favorite thing to do when you're not at work?

Spending time with my husband and three kids doing some type of activity together whether it be riding bikes, playing outside, or just hanging out at home.

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Changing the Way
the World Is Energized

