



Appreciating Employees ... AND the Members They Serve

One of the truths of business is that employee appreciation is linked to higher job satisfaction. Because we at Community Electric Cooperative believe that satisfied employees, in turn, help create satisfied member-owners, we endeavor to express appreciation within our workforce on a daily basis.

Every now and then, we try to go above and beyond that, too, which is why we held a cooperative-wide Team Appreciation Event on a Friday evening last October at Topgolf in Virginia Beach. More than 75 employees and guests took advantage of the opportunity to socialize, share some food and drink, and show off their golfing skills.

"It was a real treat to get together with our employees and their families in one place at one time, especially after all we've faced over the past two years," says CEC President and CEO Steven Harmon. "If it weren't for our employees and the amazing jobs they do — in circumstances that often require long hours and sacrifices from family members — Community Electric and our subsidiary, RECORE, plain and

simple wouldn't fulfill its mission and service to our member-owners as effectively as we do."

Safety and quality service are at the core of CEC's mission, Harmon says, noting that the cooperative has nearly 12,000 residential and business accounts and nearly 1,600 miles of electric distribution line.

"We're not the largest electric cooperative around, and I feel that makes us even more determined to serve our members at a high level," Harmon says. "Appreciating one another, as well as our members, is a huge part of getting the job done safely, cost effectively and on time."

Member satisfaction with Community Electric Cooperative is high, according to a recent evaluation provided by one of the nation's leading customer satisfaction companies. CEC received a score of 87 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index, which has a maximum score of 100. Community Electric's score is significantly higher than the 2022 benchmark satisfaction score (73) for all cooperative energy utilities. More than 500 CEC members were asked to participate in the June survey that yielded the ACSI ranking. Areas for which Community Electric received particularly high scores include:

- Reliability of electric service (93);
- Restoration of service when power outages occur (90);
- Courtesy and helpfulness of staff (91); and
- Efforts to support the local community (87).



"I'm proud and privileged to lead our team," Harmon says. "They're good people who care about their jobs and about the families, businesses and communities we serve."

Many of the employees attending the Topgolf event said they welcomed the opportunity to converse with a sizable number of colleagues and their significant others in an informal setting.

"Community Electric does a great job of making us feel appreciated," says Mitch Simmons, manager of information technology. "I know I speak for a lot of my coworkers when I say we take pride in the special mission and services that CEC — like all electric cooperatives — provides to member-owners. Topgolf was a nice place for us to be able to unwind as a group away from the responsibilities of the office at an event that was designed especially for us."

CEC gave away a wide range of raffle prizes during the outing, and attendees played a game of trivia in between their whacks at golf balls.

The father of one CEC team member said the appreciation event surpassed anything he'd experienced at numerous employers during his career. "I'm happy my son works for such a great company," he said.

Office Closures

Jan. 2 and 16
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Professional Development Brings Two Employees to New Positions

Professional development continues to be a hallmark of Community Electric Cooperative's workplace culture, as evidenced by the movement of two employees into new roles in the organization last November.

Evan Wagensomer, who joined CEC seven years ago as an apprentice lineman and four years later advanced to journeyman status, has transferred to an engineering position in the Engineering and Operations Department. Also, Meghan Cole, hired as a member service representative four years ago, has joined the Engineering and Operations Department as an administrative assistant.

"I'm really thankful to be working for the company I do, in the fact that for such a small company I've been given a lot of support and a lot of room for growth," Wagensomer says. "CEC helps pay for schooling and activities if it pertains to our job, and having that support is an incentive in itself to go to school and to better myself and to grow professionally."

Wagensomer looks forward to applying his years of experience in the field — supplemented by the associate's degree he received as an industrial maintenance technician since joining CEC — to the engineering side of construction projects.

"I expect it to be a fairly smooth transition," he says. "Once I get a handle on the department's processes, I'll be able to look at a job on paper and imagine how it's going to be built. I believe my experience will be of good value to the company."



Evan Wagensomer



Meghan Cole

Cole says of CEC, "It's truly a great company to work for. I love the members and our team; we're like family."

Noting that CEC has a Team Member Development program through which one can learn what other employees' jobs entail, an intensive annual course examining all aspects of the cooperative and its community involvement. Cole says her interest in the Operations Department was piqued during her time in the course and continued through her maternity leave.

"I was able to get my foot in the door through TMD, so when the opportunity arose for the administrative assistant position, I didn't hesitate to apply. I look forward to learning even more about Operations," she says. "Although I won't be working with the members quite so much, which I will miss, I'm taking on this new adventure with enthusiasm."

Electric Cooperatives Announce College Scholarship Program

Electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware are preparing to accept applications for their scholarship from high school seniors who intend to pursue higher education studies.

The scholarships are awarded by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives Education Scholarship Foundation, which since 2001 has provided approximately 998 scholarships to graduating high school students totaling more than \$900,000.

The open date for applications is Jan. 30, 2023, while the application deadline is April 3. Award recipients will be notified no later than June 1. The online application and additional information is posted at vmdaec.com/scholarship.

Any high school or home-schooled senior graduating in spring 2023, and whose primary residence is served by a VMD member cooperative, is eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship to be applied to a two- or four-year college or trade school.

An applicant must be entering his or her first semester at a post-secondary or technical/trade school in the fall of 2023. Scholarship funds, which will be sent directly to the



educational institution, must be used toward tuition, student fees, room and board, or textbooks.

The Foundation's board of directors will select recipients based on these weighted criteria: financial need at 40%, academic achievement at 40% and personal statement at 20%. Questions about donations and the application process should be directed to scholarship@vmdaec.com.



Tears, Laughter Span Charitable Event

Cooperative employees help families fighting pediatric cancer

Emotions ranging from tears to laughter spanned the two hours that 20 employees of Community Electric Cooperative and Prince George Electric Cooperative devoted last week to a “Ready Bag Packing Party” held to support families whose children are afflicted with cancer.

During the packing party, the cooperatives’ 10-member teams placed toiletry items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, lotion, body wash and a digital thermometer into 50 bags that can help families meet tangible needs during unexpected hospital stays.

The community service event was held as part of the cooperatives’ partnership with the Roc Solid Foundation, a Chesapeake-based nonprofit organization founded in 2009 to build hope for every child and family fighting pediatric cancer. The Foundation partners with children’s hospitals across the United States to distribute Ready Bags containing essential items when children are diagnosed with cancer.

The cooperatives’ alliance will be a months-long endeavor that will feature a variety of “competitive” activities between their respective teams to help the Roc Solid Foundation sustain families under duress. Another event took place in December. Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of the seven core principles adopted decades ago by the International Co-operative Alliance.

“I have lost the majority of my family members to cancer, so any way that I can give back to help make someone else’s journey have a smile, I’m all in!” says Mitch Simmons, manager of information technology at Community Electric.

“Today happens to mark the eight-year anniversary of my father’s passing. Quite a coincidence, but also a humbling reminder,” PGEC Executive Assistant Debbie Grein says.

“I love how relentless Roc Solid is in giving back and providing hope to families during some of the most horrible moments,” said Jessica Parr, CEC’s manager of communications.

This charitable work exemplifies another of the core values — Concern for Community — that is a bedrock of electric cooperative operations throughout the nation. CEC President and CEO Steven Harmon and PGEC President and CEO Casey Logan participated in the packing party.

Approximately 16,000 children are diagnosed with cancer in the United States annually. Families and businesses that wish to support this project are welcome to drop off items that can go into the Ready Bags from Dec. 1 through Dec. 15 in the Community Electric Cooperative office lobby in Windsor and at the Prince George Electric Cooperative drive-thru window in Waverly.



Scan the code to read more online.



Take the Trip of a Lifetime!

Apply for the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour



Community Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 19-23, 2023.

Picture this: a free trip to Washington D.C., meeting nearly 2,000 other students from all over the U.S., a tour of Capitol Hill, meeting congressional representatives and so much more! All of this is available to three select high school students. All applicants must have their primary residence in CEC's service territory and must also be a current public, private or home-schooled sophomores or juniors in high school.

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

Youth Tour was inspired by Sen. Lyndon Baines Johnson when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in 1957. The senator and future president declared, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents." NRECA organized its first Youth Tour in 1964, and approximately 400 high school students from 12 states participated. Since then, thousands of high school students from electric co-ops in 47 states have gathered on Capitol Hill.

THE 2023 TOUR

After the Youth Tour Committee reviews applications, CEC will send emails to students who demonstrate an interest in history and government, in addition to leadership qualities and community involvement. These students, along with more than 1,900 students nationwide, will meet congressional representatives, tour museums, historic sites and memorials, and enjoy special events and entertainment.

Students may also apply for NRECA's Youth Leadership Council. Candidates will be interviewed on the first day of Youth Tour. YLC selects one student representative from each state. Those students will be recognized during the tour on Youth Day and later will attend the 2024 NRECA Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit comelec.coop/youth-tour or pick up an application at the office. Completed applications must be dropped off at the CEC office, faxed, emailed or postmarked by 5 p.m. Jan. 31, 2023.

Applications and letters of recommendation should be mailed to:

CEC, Attn: Jessica Parr
P.O. Box 267
Windsor, VA 23487

Virginia, Maryland and Delaware Youth Tour delegates in front of the U.S. Capitol in 2012.

Scan the code to apply now!

