

# Building Stronger Communities

**C**ooperatives, like BARC, operate with core principles and values. Concern for Community is the seventh Cooperative Principle and the reason why cooperatives focus on the communities we serve.

BARC members operate and work together with these same values and are shining examples of the cooperative spirit. The growing partnership between Visit Bath and the Bath County Chamber of Commerce shows that working together helps promote economic development, strengthen community identity and boost local businesses.

## A UNIFIED VISION FOR GROWTH

The shared mission between the Bath County Chamber and tourism is clear: Focus on purpose.

"The businesses, organizations and individuals we represent are the backbone of our community," says Rachel Camacho, executive director at the Chamber. "I don't take that lightly." Camacho grew up in Bath County and, from a young age, was active in community events and theater.

"Throughout those years, I was given a heightened appreciation for Bath and those who reside in it, but it also provided insight as to what businesses and residents wanted



Families take advantage of the expanded Jackson River Trail (above). Rachel Camacho, Chad Williams, Josh Taylor and Mark Shore gather at the dedication for the Cedar Creek Trailhead on the Jackson River Trail (left). [jacksonrivertrail.com](http://jacksonrivertrail.com)

and needed," Camacho explains.

Recently, Visit Bath and the Bath County Chamber moved to a new office space, called The Hub, with hope of becoming a community hub for meetings and collaboration in Bath County. These new offices utilize the internet services of BARC Connects. "Having BARC Connects, and reliable power through BARC Electric creates a space where meetings and day-to-day office operations occur with high-speed internet connections and access for multiple users," says Mark Shore, president and CEO of Visit Bath.

Shore is no stranger to the value tourism departments provide. He has worked destination marketing for more than 30 years, most recently as the director of tourism marketing for Visit NC, North Carolina's office of tourism. Shore came to Bath County to help with the launch of Visit Bath as a not-for-profit, under contract with Bath for the purpose of promoting tourism to the area.

Visit Bath represents the belief that two separate organizations working together can offer the community better synergy.

## CONNECTING AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

On May 1, collaboration and hard work brought together two BARC communities when the fourth Cedar Creek Trailhead opened on the Jackson River Trail, uniting two counties: Bath and Alleghany. Chad Williams, director at the Alleghany County Parks and Recreation, and his team spearheaded the entirety of the Jackson River Trail, beginning in Covington and

now extending into Bath County today.

"The trail is one of the most visited places by tourists in the Alleghany Highlands," explains Josh Taylor, executive director at Visit Alleghany Highland. "Virginia Tourism just named it a Top 10 rail-to-trail path in Virginia."

Shore and Williams worked together to provide a safe environment. Partnering with BARC Connects, they oversaw the installation of Wi-Fi at the trailhead, allowing visitors and hikers a place to connect. Cellphone service is not available at the trailhead.

According to Shore, the collaboration with BARC Connects provides more than a safety boost for the area. "Visit Bath is also able to collect data regarding who is using the trail and communicate with these guests for feedback and trail updates," he says.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As the communities served by BARC continue to grow, the integrated efforts of tourism departments and chambers of commerce working with its members will be crucial. "We proudly represent BARC within our chamber, but with all they do for us, it further proves this is a team effort," says Camacho.

BARC CEO Bill Buchanan supports these efforts by serving on the chamber's board of directors and encouraging time for BARC staff to help in the community. "We're not just members," says Buchanan, "we're building together a stronger, more connected community."

### BARC ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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# BARC Annual Meeting Announcement

**B**ARC will hold its **2025 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, July 16 at 2 p.m.** The meeting will take place at the Rockbridge office, located at **1972 Big Spring Drive, Lexington, VA 24450, in the solar room.** If you are unable to attend the annual meeting, you may return a signed proxy, found on the back cover of July's *Cooperative Living* magazine. Members returning a signed proxy prior to the meeting will be eligible to participate in a prize drawing for \$150 in free electricity.

On May 19, 2025, a district meeting was held in District 1. On May 23, 2025, a district meeting was held in District 5. The purpose of these meetings was to select nominees to serve on the board of directors for a period of three years.

Listed below are the names of the nominees from their respective districts whose names will appear on the official ballot. Members may make additional nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

• **District 1** – Michael Sandridge • **District 5** – Kae Zulager •

## Bylaws Pertaining to Election of Directors

**ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4.5: DIRECTOR ELECTIONS.** Not less than seven days before an Annual Member Meeting or a Special Member Meeting at which Directors are to be elected, the Secretary of the Cooperative shall be responsible for mailing to each Member a list of the candidates selected at all District Meetings, the names to be arranged by districts. This list may be included with the notice of the meeting. At the meeting the Secretary of the Cooperative shall place in nomination the names of the official candidates of each district.

Additional nominations for Director for a particular district may be made from the floor. Election of the Directors shall be by printed or mimeographed ballot. The ballots shall list the candidates selected at the District Meetings, the names to be arranged by districts. A candidate nominated from the floor of the meeting may be voted for by writing in the name of the official candidate of the particular district. Each Member of the Cooperative present at the meeting in person or by proxy shall be entitled to vote for one candidate from each district. The candidate from each district receiving the highest number of votes at the meeting shall be considered elected as Director.

**ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4.6: DIRECTOR TERMS.** A Director's term is three (3) years ("Director Term"). The Cooperative shall stagger Director Terms by dividing the total number of authorized Directors into groups of approximately equal number and members will annually elect an approximately equal number of Directors. Decreasing the number of Directors or length of Director Terms may not shorten an incumbent Director's Director Term. Despite the expiration of a Director Term, the Director continues to serve until a new Director is elected, or until the number of Directors is decreased. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Director Term of a Director filling a vacant Director's position is the remaining unexpired Director Term of the vacant Director's position.

## Electricity Rates in ODEC Cooperative Territory

**O**n June 1, 2025, members will see an increase in monthly bills. This reflects a direct pass-through of increased wholesale power costs from our not-for-profit power provider, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative.

### What is happening to electricity rates?

ODEC is increasing its Wholesale Power Rate by \$6.34 to \$45 per MWH on June 1, 2025. Extended extreme cold temperatures and a significant increase in natural gas prices have driven up the cost of generating electricity. January 2025 was the coldest January in 20 years, which drove up electricity use. Higher electricity use and colder temperatures impacted the price of natural gas. Natural gas is used to generate approximately 40% of all electricity.

### How does this impact electric cooperative members?

Eleven distribution electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware purchase power from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative and are experiencing a rise in monthly residential rates. When ODEC experiences higher costs for generating electricity, this part of the bill goes up for every distribution cooperative.

This is a direct pass through from increased fuel prices and increased costs for purchasing additional power. ODEC's rates are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which requires ODEC to regularly review its rates to ensure it is recovering its costs — no more, and no less.

### The cooperative difference: protecting ratepayers

Cooperatives are not unique in facing increasing electricity rates, but they are unique in how they handle them. Because cooperatives are not-for-profit, member-owned utilities, they provide power at cost and strive to meet the needs of their members by keeping costs down.

We take rate increases very seriously and are aware this will impact our members. We encourage members to visit [ee.odec.com](http://ee.odec.com) for energy savings tips and to consider levelized billing to manage costs. Members in need of financial assistance are encouraged to dial 211 to be referred to utility assistance and local community programs.

Cooperative members of ODEC benefit from hedging and other cost mitigation strategies including ownership of generation assets, long-term and block contracts for fuel, and daily market monitoring for forward thinking power purchases.



# BARC Communities

## An Uplifting Donation

In April, Unity 4 Kids, a nonprofit that serves children and families in Allegheny, Rockbridge and Bath counties, worked with BARC communities to donate 600 baskets for families in need. Local churches, businesses and community organizations donated time, money and resources to work together to deliver baskets to kids at Rockbridge County public schools, Valley and Millboro Elementary in Bath County, Rockbridge and Alleghany social services. BARC is grateful to support this organization that extends a helping hand to build bridges and impact lives.

"We strive to make an impact on the lives of those we serve," says Tammy Reid, Unity4Kids board member.

For more information, visit <https://sites.google.com/view/unity4kids/home>.



Tammy Reid helps deliver baskets to Valley Elementary (top). Billy Reid, BARC business manager and Brooke McMullen (wife of BARC lineman Shay McMullen) helped prepare baskets (bottom).

## Junior 4-H Camp

Each summer, youth from Bath County can participate in Junior 4-H Camp, a five-day, four-night overnight camp designed for children ages 9 to 13. This year's camp will take place July 7–11, 2025, at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Center located on Smith Mountain Lake.

Campers engage in a variety of activities, including swimming, archery, canoeing, high and low ropes courses, environmental education, crafts, and group games. These experiences help support positive youth development in a setting that blends structured learning with outdoor adventure.

Junior 4-H Camp is part of Virginia Cooperative Extension's 4-H youth development program and is open to all youth in the qualifying age range, regardless of prior 4-H membership.

Please help support by calling 540-839-7262 or visit <https://bath.ext.vt.edu>.



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