Thank you, Christine, for your leadership

In March, VEC accepted the resignation of CEO Christine Hallquist after benefiting deeply from her visionary leadership for the better part of two decades. Her focus on financial stability, innovation and organizational culture has helped transform VEC into a national leader in the electric distribution industry. Christine led the co-op through a critical time. She joined VEC in 2000 as a consultant and was then brought on as Engineering and Operations Manager before being named CEO in 2005. After VEC expanded its service territory by acquiring Citizens Communications Company’s Vermont Electric Division in 2004, she spearheaded the effort to successfully merge the two companies and overhaul VEC’s technological systems. Thanks to her leadership, VEC was an early adopter of advanced metering infrastructure, which provides the framework for the transition to a cleaner, smarter electric grid. Christine helped VEC capitalize on federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to implement smart grid technology. She also led the co-op in procuring a grant from the Economic Development Administration to build the NEK Connector, a 23-mile project that modernized a critical stretch of line in the Northeast Kingdom.

VEC’s financial outlook improved considerably during Christine’s time as CEO. VEC now has an A+ bond rating from Standard and Poor’s, which enables VEC to secure access to capital at low interest rates as well as lower-cost power supply contracts. VEC has not had a rate increase since 2014, and VEC’s average annual rate increase since 2009 has been less than one percent.

Christine believed that VEC was only as strong as its people and worked hard to develop a culture of distributed leadership and excellence. She met one-on-one with employees on a regular basis to hear their thoughts and concerns and learn what she could do to help engage them to their full potential. She was extremely accessible not only to employees but to VEC’s member-owners as well. As a strong believer in the cooperative model, she was keen to hear from VEC members about what they want to see from their co-op. She was always happy to take a phone call, email or meeting and loved connecting with members every May at the VEC Annual Meeting of the Membership.

Part of her commitment to people was reflected in VEC’s safety culture. From VEC’s perspective, safety isn’t just about personal protective equipment and a strong training program - it’s about fostering a mindset that keeps us tuned into safe practices in all aspects of our lives.

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In 2017, VEC maintained a strong financial performance. Despite upward pressure on rates, we were able to complete 2017 using rates that were first adopted in January of 2014. Standard & Poor’s continues to rate VEC A+ with a stable outlook. Our financial strength has translated into real benefits for our members, including stable rates, improved system reliability, and the return of patronage capital to members for five consecutive years. Since 2010, our average annual rate increase has been less than one percent per year, which is equivalent to a one-time rate decrease of nearly five percent.

VEC bylaws, along with Internal Revenue Service regulations, govern how patronage capital may be distributed. The bylaws require that VEC’s balance sheet must show a minimum equity level of 40 percent before patronage capital can be returned. Because VEC exceeded this important milestone, the board of directors developed a plan to return a portion of equity to members, while still maintaining the minimum 40 percent equity balance. It’s important for members to understand that, to protect the co-op’s financial stability, patronage capital cannot be returned all at once. Patronage capital cannot be applied to electric bills or cashed in until the board of directors determines that VEC’s financial condition is strong enough, and specifies which years will be returned. When this happens, VEC members in good standing who were members during the selected years will receive a portion of their patronage capital balance, as a bill credit for active members and by check for inactive members.

Every year, VEC updates members’ bills with their new patronage capital balances. Very soon we will be reporting an update to members’ pa-
Candidates for VEC's Board of Directors

**District 3 — TERM EXPIRES 2022**

Albany, Craftsbury, Glover, Greensboro, Irasburg, Jay, Lowell, Newport Town, Troy, Westfield

Carol Maroni - Craftsbury

Fellow Members,

Thank you for allowing me to be your District 3 Director for the past seven years. My goal as Director has always been to represent you, answer your questions, address your concerns, and bring your voices to the VEC Boardroom.

I am currently the only woman on the Board. I have been elected annually to the position of Second Vice President for the past four years and Chair of the Communications Committee for the past six years. As a member of the Finance committee, I am proud of our A+ bond rating, the return of patronage capital payments to members, and the four year absence of a rate increase.

There are challenges ahead. Vermont's Renewable Portfolio Standard, (RPS) is one of the toughest in the Country, requiring utilities to not only provide renewable energy but also shift member fossil fuel use to renewable electricity. Going forward, I will continue to work for you; to meet the RPS, use the grid more effectively, keep rates down, and minimize outages.

I'm a RN with a background in patient care, project management, quality, compliance, and risk. As always, feel free to contact me at 586-7758 or district3@vermontelectric.coop. I would sincerely appreciate your vote.

**District 4 — TERM EXPIRES 2022**

Bakersfield, Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Hyde Park, Johnson, Morristown, Stowe, Waterville

Jody Dunklee – Fairfax

As a seventh generation Vermonter, I have an innate appreciation for our natural resources and co-operative communities. I feel fortunate to live in a place where we can still uphold these values, even within our utility programs. The non-profit model utilized by Vermont Electric Co-op is a service to us all. I am glad to do my part to keep it going strong.

With over 18 years of professional work in electrical engineering, I believe I am uniquely positioned to understand the utility systems, especially within the changing technology landscape. As a board member, it would be my goal to support and establish a robust framework for the future, when electricity will come from many and variable sources, and require new technological and policy approaches. I would advocate strong partnerships with groups such as Efficiency Vermont, VECAN, and community solar providers, in order to leverage programs, share knowledge, and foster community participation for those who want to get involved, have ideas, or express concerns.

Please feel free to contact me for discussion or questions: jody.dunklee@gmail.com 802-356-6052.

**District 5 — TERM EXPIRES 2022**

Bolton, Essex, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, Shelburne, Starksboro, St. George, Underhill, Westminster, Williston

Schuyler Jackson – Hinesburg

I studied the rural electrification program and VEC's history with a grant from the Chittenden County Histori- cal Society. VEC is a well-managed, efficient utility with superior leadership and an actively engaged Board of Directors. Reliability, cost containment, security, and transition to renewables are major issues –VEC's cooperative membership mission should be fostered. One particular interest, generated by my Green Mountain Messenger travels through central Vermont, is the possibility of a long-term undergrounding initiative, especially for beautification of Vermont's by-ways, such as Route 100.

I have experience, as a lawyer, in regulatory matters, served as Assistant Secretary of the Agency of Environmental Conservation, and Chair of the Act 250 Environmental Board. Private sector experience included litigation and land use, management, and development. I have the time to learn and am eager to participate in deliberations regarding VEC's management, performance, and challenges. I have received the encouragement and endorsement of Louise McCareen, previously Director of the Public Service Department and Chair of the Public Service Board.

District 5 members may contact me at schuyler.jackson@gmail.com.

**Voting is an important way to exercise your voice as a member of your cooperative!**

Co-op members elect local representatives to serve on VEC's twelve-member board. These directors participate in setting policies and making decisions and are expected to represent the interests of the VEC membership.

The 2018 Director Election will be open to online and mailed ballots from noon on April 17, 2018 to noon on May 11, 2018. Members can also vote in-person at VEC’s Annual Meeting on May 12, 2018 at Smugglers’ Notch Resort. Your ballot, along with voting instructions, will arrive by mail after April 17. If you need help voting, please contact us at 1-800-832-2667 or support@vermontelectric.coop.

This year there will be elections for seats in three of VEC's districts. In District 3 the candidate is running unopposed, and in Districts 4 and 5 two candidates are vying for the single seat in each district.

Note that if you do not live in districts 3, 4, or 5, you will not receive a ballot. We hope you will join us at the Annual Meeting of the Members on May 12 at Smugglers’ Notch!

(Statements on this page were submitted by the candidates.)
Victoria Brown Named Interim CEO

With the departure of CEO Christine Hallquist in March, Victoria Brown has taken over as VEC’s interim CEO. Since 2011, Brown has served as VEC’s General Counsel and previously worked in private practice, where her work focused on electric utility issues. Her experience and the personal relationships she has developed at VEC have ensured that she has the full confidence of the board and employees as VEC transitions to new leadership. “With Vickie Brown at the helm, and with great staff and a strong senior leadership team working with her, the co-op is in extraordinarily capable hands. Our member-owners can be assured that there will be no interruption in the cost-effective and reliable service they are accustomed to,” said Board President Dan Carswell.

Vermont Electric Cooperative
80th Annual Meeting of the Membership and 2018 Election

Saturday, May 12, 2018
Smugglers’ Notch Resort
4323 Vermont Route 108 South
Smugglers’ Notch, VT

Program Agenda:
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Complimentary member breakfast and exhibitor showcase
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Business Meeting of the Membership, presentation Challenges and Opportunities of the Changing Energy Landscape, and questions and answers
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Voting results, door prize raffle, and exhibitor showcase

Join us to...
• Learn about current energy issues, VEC’s accomplishments during the past year, and upcoming projects
• Connect with your elected representatives on the board of directors
• Tap into energy information by visiting the exhibitor showcase
• Enjoy a complimentary breakfast buffet

Share your voice!

Be sure to RSVP to our event by May 9 by dropping your RSVP card in the mail or emailing us at annualmtg@vermontelectric.coop
Newly Arrived Tree Pest Adds Challenges for Utilities

The emerald ash borer (EAB), recently discovered in the towns of Orange, Barre, Plainfield and Groton and likely to spread across the state in the coming years, will pose added challenges for utilities including VEC as they work to keep affected trees from falling on power lines.

Across its wide northern Vermont service territory, VEC maintains rights-of-way along almost 3,000 miles of power lines, and that involves cutting and pruning trees that grow too close to lines. Dead and dying trees can fall unexpectedly near lines and pose additional risk to lines and line workers themselves.

“Tissues that grow too close to lines. Dead and dying trees can fall unexpectedly near lines and pose additional risk to lines and line workers themselves.

“Some pest represents a new threat to the reliability of our electric system in Vermont, and we will likely see an increase in hazard tree removal costs as we have to take down ash trees that are infested and become dangerous over time,” said VEC Manager of Forestry Sara Packer. She also said the dying trees can pose a risk to landowners who could be tempted to take them down. “Rotten trees are unpredictable and can be dangerous to cut down – the hazard becomes even greater when the tree in question is within striking distance of energized power lines,” she said.

VEC asks that landowners who see dead, dying, rotten or declining trees (of any species) that could threaten electric lines, call VEC so that we can dispatch trained crews to evaluate and potentially remove the tree.

EAB is capable of killing healthy ash trees larger than one inch in diameter. Once infested, ash trees rapidly decline and die in three to five years. Ash trees comprise approximately five percent of Vermont’s forests. There are no proven means to control EAB in forested areas, though individual trees can sometimes be effectively treated.

“Early detection and rapid response are key factors in treating and successfully managing EAB,” Packer said. “It’s extremely important to buy your firewood where you burn it and not transport wood, as the spread of this insect increases dramatically when people inadvertently move infested material such as pruned branches, firewood, timber or nursery stock to areas previously free of EAB,” she added.

Landowners with questions are encouraged to contact their county forester. You can find more information at vtinvasives.org.

Johnson Couple Travels Quickly, Quietly and Cheaply in New EV

Last fall, Johnson residents and VEC members Eric and Ingrid Nuse took the plunge into electric car ownership, and they’re happy they did.

“The car is wonderful – it’s a joy to drive – it’s comfortable, quiet, and plenty peppy,” Eric Nuse said.

The couple took advantage of a range of incentives, including a VEC bill credit, when they purchased their Nissan Leaf. The couple uses the car for a lot of local trips and notes that the cost to run the electric car overall has been significantly less than running a gasoline car. Maintenance has been negligible.

The couple says they do have to plan longer trips more carefully because charging stations are not as numerous as gas stations, and they also have to plan for the car’s decreased range when the weather is cold. In the summer, the couple has no trouble moving the tree.

Charging challenges notwithstanding, the Nuses are very pleased with their car – not only because it’s fun and costs less to run, but also because it has shrunk their environmental footprint.

Buy, and Get the Credit

This year, VEC members buying electric or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are eligible for the following bill credits:

• $250 one-time bill credit for purchase or $50/ year for a lease for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (e.g. a Chevy Volt or a Toyota Prius Prime).
• $500 one-time bill credit for purchase or $100/ year for a lease for a fully electric vehicle (e.g. Chevy Bolt or Nissan Leaf).

VEC’s incentives are in addition to any federal and state tax credits offered. In order to claim credits, members must simply fill out a short form and send it, along with the proof of purchase or lease, to VEC.

VEC’s incentives for electric vehicles, as well as similar credits for pellet stoves, heat pumps, hot water heaters, and charging stations, are part of VEC’s Energy Transformation Program. This program stems from Vermont’s Renewable Energy Standard, which was passed by Vermont lawmakers in 2015. Under the law, Vermont’s electric utilities are required to implement programs to help their customers shift their energy sources from fossil fuels like gasoline or heating fuel, to electricity or other non-fossil fuel sources.

For more information about these incentives, please call 1-800-832-2667, email support@vermontelectric.coop, or visit www.vermontelectric.coop.
How About a Free Tree?

Vermont Electric Co-op is offering members free trees to plant this spring, through a partnership with Arbor Day Foundation’s Energy-Saving Trees Program. “Planted in the right place, trees can help VEC members save money on energy bills,” said Sara Packer, VEC’s forestry manager. “Trees provide shade in hot weather, which reduces use of air-conditioning, and a wind barrier in cold weather – that reduces the need for heating,” she said. Trees improve air and water quality as well, among many other benefits. Members can choose from five species: river birch, red maple, serviceberry, red cedar, and pin oak. The trees range in size from two to four feet tall (but, of course, they’ll grow much taller). At the pick-up points, VEC will offer instructions on how to plant and care for your tree and help load the tree into your vehicle. You can reserve your tree online at arborday.org/VEC and pick it up at VEC’s annual meeting May 12 at Smugglers’ Notch resort or May 19 at VEC’s Grand Isle, Newport, or Richford locations. The number of trees is limited, so act soon. For more information, visit arborday.org/VEC or call 1-800-832-2667.

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:
- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Spruce
- Pine

MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 15 to 40 feet, such as:
- Hawthorns
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods
- Serviceberries
- American hornbeam

SMALL TREES

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height /spread of no more than 15 feet such as:
- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac
- American elderberry

Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.
Should you switch to wood pellet heating?
A local, affordable, low-carbon fuel source with the hands-off convenience of oil or propane heat.

Advanced wood heating systems offer all the comfort and hands-off convenience that people have come to expect from traditional heating systems, but are fueled by local wood pellets instead of fossil fuel.

Top 6 reasons to consider a wood pellet boiler or furnace

1. Save on heating bills. Monters who switch to wood pellet fuel typically save $1,500 annually when compared to oil and propane fuel heating options.
2. Stable fuel prices. Local pellet prices are much steadier than the global fossil fuel market.
3. Cleaner and greener. Local wood pellets are sustainable, renewable, and low carbon. They are also safe to transport and store.
4. Support local jobs. Wood pellet production and delivery supports Vermont job growth. Wood pellets are made, sold, and delivered from locations throughout Vermont, so heating dollars stay in Vermont.
5. Hands-free and simple. Automated fuel feed systems make wood pellet heating as easy to use as propane or oil systems, and more convenient than cordwood.
6. Rebates and financing. Rebates and low-interest financing are available to cover the initial cost of purchasing and installing a central wood pellet heating system in your home or business.

A few things to know about central wood pellet heating systems

You will need to have room for pellet storage. Hoppers that store the pellets are often located in the basement near the boiler. Bulk pellets usually take up more space than oil or propane.

Ash bins must be emptied. You’ll need to empty the bin 3-5 times during the heating season. Wood ash consists of naturally occurring minerals and can be spread on wooded areas, lawns, or (depending on your soil) gardens.

Not ready for a central pellet system? Consider installing a pellet stove to cut down on your oil or propane usage.

Pellet stoves offer many of the same benefits as central pellet systems without the need to completely overhaul your heating system. When sized and located properly, a pellet stove can provide most of the heat your home needs.

VEC is currently offering a $150 bill credit to members with fossil-fuel heating systems who install a pellet stove. For more information, visit www.vermontelectric.coop/energy-transformation or call 1-800-832-2667.
Vermont Electric Co-op

Thank you, Christine from pg 1

VEC recently earned the highest level certification available in the Green Mountain Voluntary Protection Program, which is administered by the Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Christine was a strong supporter of the multi-year process it took to get VEC over the finish line to become the only power distribution utility in New England to have this recognition.

Without Christine’s leadership, VEC would not be the organization it is today. While we will miss her sense of humor, intelligence and vision, we know VEC will benefit from her legacy for years to come as we continue to develop excellence across the entire organization. We wish her all the best.

Financial Highlights from pg 1

Our members in an era of change in the electric industry. If you are interested in additional financial information, VEC’s financial reports can be found on our website at www.vermontelectric.coop/financial-reports.

Financial Highlights

We are proud of the work we’ve done to improve reliability while keeping rates stable in the face of significant upward cost pressures, and we will continue to strive to maximize value for our members.

We strive to maximize value for our members in an era of change in the electric industry. If you are interested in additional financial information, VEC’s financial reports can be found on our website at www.vermontelectric.coop/financial-reports.

VEC 2017 Financial Statement

Vermont Electric Co-op

Capital Spending (System Improvements)

Other capital credits & dividends 643,140

Our electric plant is a service $185,546,265

Less accumulated depreciation 47,653,736

Net electric plant in service 137,892,529

Construction work in progress 1,430,505

Net electric plant 189,323,034

Current assets:

Cash 1,418,514

Due receivable 65,097

Accounts receivable, less allowance for doubtful accounts of $224,267 in 2017 7,316,364

Unbilled revenue 5,613,710

Investments 5,461,765

Prepaid expenses 475,059

Total current assets 19,884,318

Other assets:

Nonutility property 85,097

Other investments 37,152,165

Deferred charges 128,304

Total other assets 37,352,385

Total assets $168,236,703

Liabilities and Equity

Equities:

Patronage capital assignable $74,653,167

Obligations under capital lease obligations 19,907

Deferred Compensation Plan 218,075

Current liabilities:

Current maturities of long-term debt 4,180,400

Current maturities of capital lease obligations 19,907

Revolving debt 1,553,224

Accounts payable 7,154,041

Customer deposits 2,084,897

Deferred credits 55,886

Total current liabilities 17,100,911

Total liabilities and equity $168,236,703

Board of Director's Attendance at Regular Monthly Board Meetings

April 2017 to March 2018

In accordance with VEC’s Board Policy B2 (Duties and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors), director attendance at regular meetings is to be reported annually. Additional information regarding director fees and expenses is available upon request and on VEC’s website at www.vermontelectric.coop/financial-reports.
Inside Spring 2018 Co-op Life

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Vermont Electric Cooperative
Board of Directors

District 1  Don Worth  802-723-6532
district1@vermontelectric.coop
P.O. Box 450, Island Pond, VT 05846

District 2  John Ward  802-334-6022
145 Mt. Vernon St, Newport, VT 05855
district2@vermontelectric.coop

District 3  Carol Maroni  802-586-7758
2426 Collinsville Rd, Craftsbury, VT 05826
district3@vermontelectric.coop

District 4  Mark Woodward  802-635-7166
110 Woodward Rd, Johnson, VT 05656
district4@vermontelectric.coop

District 5  This seat is currently open

District 6  Paul Lambert  802-310-2740
1758 Reynolds Rd, Georgia, VT 05478
district6@vermontelectric.coop

District 7  Rich Goggin 508-439-9166
30 Whipple Rd, South Hero, VT 05486
district7@vermontelectric.coop

Eastern Zone
Directors at large
P.O. Box 114, Derby, VT 05829
eastzone2@vermontelectric.coop

Western Zone
Directors at large
2439 Iron Gate Road, Cambridge, VT 05444
westzone3@vermontelectric.coop

Nothing says springtime in Vermont like the steam coming out of the sugarhouse and the mud, but we like that part less. When the sap is flowing, Lahar’s Maple Ridge Farm in Irasburg is in full swing, and that’s where you can find VEC’s Key Accounts Manager Dave Lahar. VEC is proud of all of the employees and members who take part in this Vermont tradition.