



## SEC urges members to participate in November balloting

Are you registered to vote in next month's election? If not, there's still time.

Monday, Oct. 17, is Virginia's deadline to register to cast a ballot in the Nov. 8 election when Americans will choose a president and vice president and decide other national, state and local races. In Virginia, besides the presidential election, registered voters will select members of the House of Representatives, decide on two amendments to the state constitution and pick local leaders.



Electric cooperatives across the country, including Southside Electric Cooperative (SEC), are partnering with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) on a new campaign called **Co-ops Vote**. It's aimed at getting cooperative members registered to vote, making them aware of the key issues facing America's more than 900 electric cooperatives and encouraging them to vote for candidates that align with the cooperatives on these issues. The campaign doesn't endorse particular candidates.

**Co-ops Vote** relates directly to what Amanda Wolfe of Arlington-based NRECA says is a three-step process. Wolfe, a senior advisor for political affairs, notes that process involves registering to be eligible to cast a ballot and then voting. But, in the middle, she says is the important step of being educated on the issues and the candidates.

"So when you walk into the voting place, you make the decision that's best for you, your family and your community," Wolfe says.

Wolfe notes that voting on a national level dropped off in 2012 when compared to 2008. She says the decline in rural America

has been twice the national level. That's concerning for cooperatives that provide electricity to mostly rural Americans in 47 states.

Asked about the decline, Wolfe says voter apathy with candidates and the process is part of the problem all over America. More specifically, she says in rural America, it can be difficult getting to the polls. Through the **Co-ops Vote** campaign, NRECA and local cooperatives hope to educate potential voters about options to casting a ballot if they can't get to the polls on Nov. 8. One of those is absentee voting, which began Sept. 23 in Virginia. Voters who won't be able to get to their polling place on Election Day because of work, being a student, disability, religious obligation or other reason, can cast ballots early.

Cooperatives want their members to be aware of several important issues, including having affordable and reliable electricity, developing renewables for the energy mix, economic development, cybersecurity and expanding broadband coverage throughout rural America. Wolfe calls it "the issue of the future." She says like electricity brought development and enhanced living conditions in the 1930s, broadband is doing that now. As an example, she points to the wealth of online information about health and health care.

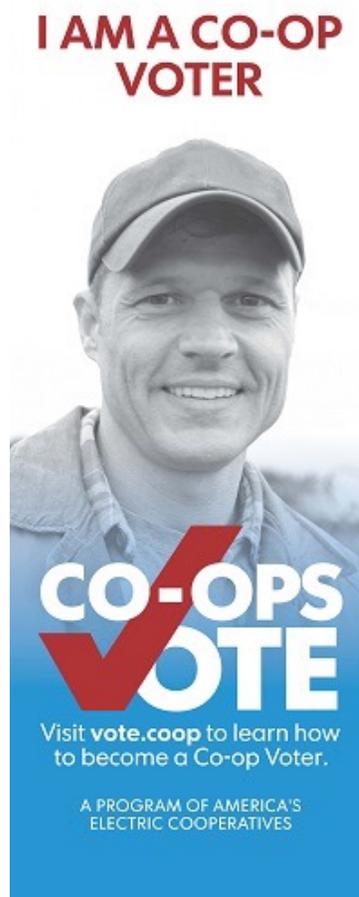
To register in Virginia, a person must be 18 on or before Election Day. That means 17-year-olds can register, provided they'll have a birthday before Nov. 8. Citizens can register in any locality in the state, but must vote where they live. They also can't have been convicted of a felony (unless rights have been restored by governor) or judged mentally incapacitated. There's no fee to register.

There are several ways to register to vote, starting with visiting a local registrar's office. There are 133 in Virginia, one in every county and city. Take a photo ID if registering at one of those offices.

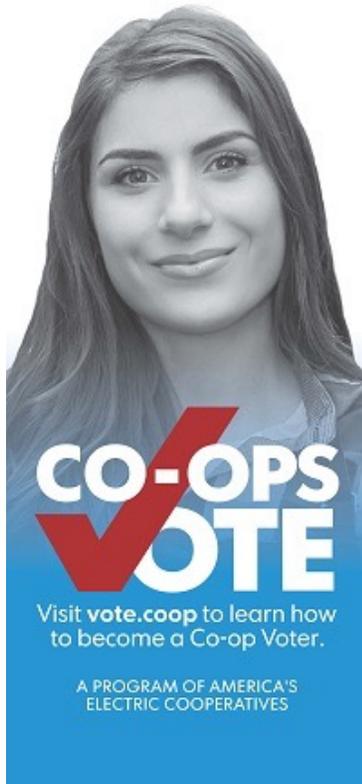
New voters can register at the Virginia Department of Elections' website, [www.elections.virginia.gov](http://www.elections.virginia.gov), or they can have an application mailed to them. Applications are also available at libraries, the Department of Motor Vehicles and other state agencies, including social services. Applications must be filled out and returned to a registrar's office by Oct. 17.

"Citizens need to not just register, they need to vote," says Karen Danos, the general registrar in Campbell County, located in the western part of SEC's 18-county service area. Danos says residents have a civic duty to participate in their government, and by voting, they're having their voices heard.

For cooperative members, Wolfe stresses how important it is for them to get involved in the process and have their say. That should not just happen at the polls, but also when they're talking to candidates and political leaders or being out in their



## PLEDGE TO BE A CO-OP VOTER



communities. She adds that staying on top of the issues and being an advocate for the cooperatives are year-round duties for members.

Danos reminds all voters if they haven't cast a ballot since the last presidential election in 2012 or longer, they should check with their registrar's office about their voting status.

On Election Day in Virginia, polls will be open from 6 a.m.-7 p.m. Voters should bring photo ID with them.

For more information about registering, finding your polling place, being an election official or related issues, call your local registrar's office or the Virginia Department of Elections at 1-800-552-9745.

*For more on Co-ops Vote, including making a pledge to vote next month, visit [www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop).*

---

Navigation: [Back to Newsletter](#)