



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Wheeler Receives Distinguished Service Award** *Statewide Association Recognizes Co-op Leader's Legacy*

**Greenwood, De.** – Layton Wheeler has been honored by the Virginia, Maryland and Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) as the newest recipient of the Electric Cooperative Distinguished Service Award.

Wheeler, who served as Vice President of Member Services for Delaware Electric Cooperative from 1979 until his retirement in 2014, was honored at VMDAEC's annual meeting held July 24 in Norfolk, Virginia.

In presenting the award, VMDAEC President and CEO Richard Johnstone noted the significant contributions Wheeler made to both the cooperative and the local community it serves.

“In the early 1970s, Layton was instrumental in improving the finances and operations of Delaware Electric Cooperative, helping repair the co-op's relationship with its members and expand community outreach. After serving as interim CEO, he began building a modern customer service mechanism and was responsible for attracting and hiring most of the current management staff,” Johnstone explained.

Rob Book, DEC's current Vice President of Member Services, wrote in his nomination statement, “Layton was a deft talent scout and able to hire what we believe to be some of the most energized, dynamic and innovative employees among our nation's cooperatives. He served as a mentor to ambitious managers, pulling in his own experience of helping save a struggling cooperative to guide new employees in all departments.”

Bill Andrew, DEC's current President & CEO, explained how he owes his career at DEC to Wheeler. “Layton wasn't just a skilled talent scout, he was a life-long mentor, providing prudent counsel to the executive-level staff and board of directors,” Andrew said. He added, “Layton was one of the driving forces behind our nationally recognized and trademarked ‘Beat the Peak’ program, which is being used by more than 100 utilities across the country. He helped organize the campaign for DEC to become self-regulated, stunning state officials and further enhancing DEC's strong relationship with its member owners. And he also was a wonderful advocate for non-profits and community colleges in southern Delaware.”

Andrew concluded, “Layton's hat with ‘Coach’ stitched on it says it all. His personality and positive attitude were as much an asset to our co-op as his expertise in marketing, communications and member relations.”

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The 2017 Distinguished Service Award resolution cites Wheeler's many contributions his community, which include serving on the board of Family and Children's Services of Delaware and the Boys & Girls Club of Western Sussex, chairing the Management Advisory Committee and capital campaign for Delaware Technical Community College, and service on the board of Management Services Association of Electric Cooperatives, Seaford Rotary Club, the Catholic Charities Advisory Committee and the Business Industry Education Alliance.

**About DEC:** Delaware Electric Cooperative is a member-owned electric utility serving 94,000 member-owners in Kent and Sussex Counties, Delaware. For more information, visit [www.delaware.coop](http://www.delaware.coop).

**About VMDAEC:** Founded in 1944, VMDAEC is the trade association for 15 consumer-owned not-for-profit electric distribution cooperatives that serve Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The Glen Allen, Va.-based Association provides its member cooperatives with employee, director, and safety education and training, government relations and legislative support, and communications services, including the publishing of *Cooperative Living* magazine. For more information, visit [www.vmdaec.com](http://www.vmdaec.com) or [www.co-opliving.com](http://www.co-opliving.com).



**Caption:** Layton Wheeler, who served Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) for 35 years until his retirement in 2014, received the Electric Cooperatives' Distinguished Service Award at VMDAEC's July 24, 2017 Annual Meeting in Norfolk, Virginia. From left: VMDAEC President and CEO Richard Johnstone, DEC President and CEO Bill Andrew, Layton Wheeler, Layton's wife Beverly, and VMDAEC Board Chairman James Huffman.