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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Mary Howell, 804.968.4070, mhowell@vmdaec.com
Jay Diem, 757.787.9750, jdiem@anec.com

Manna Café founders recognized with the Electric Cooperatives' Good Samaritan Award

(Chincoteague, Va.) — A&N Electric Cooperative members Fran and Bill Lytle have been honored with the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives' (VMDAEC) Good Samaritan Award for their success in establishing the Manna Café.

Since January 2017, this weekly gathering in Christ United Methodist Church's social hall has proved wrong the saying, "there's no such thing as a free lunch," offering a no-cost meal to area residents each Monday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

VMDAEC Board Chairman James E. Huffman of Craig Botetourt Electric Cooperative and Board Vice Chairman Herbert R. Patrick of Prince George Electric Cooperative, who is also chairman of the VMDAEC Awards Committee, presented the Lytles with their award March 26 during the prayer gathering held prior to that week's meal.

Given to individuals whose body of good work has been so selfless and life-changing to others that it is held up as a "gold standard" of community service, the Good Samaritan Award was established in 2010, with nominations solicited from electric co-op members across Virginia through promotion in *Cooperative Living* magazine.

"What began as a service for barely a dozen people has grown to providing as many as 300 people each week with good company as well as a hot meal," explained Carol Meyers, a Manna Café volunteer who nominated the Lytles for this award.

Added Lou Bender, another volunteer, "Nourishing both body and soul is Fran and Bill's vision and passion. In addition to the Manna Café, they've led several "Food for the Hungry" meal-packing events, as well as our yearly Harvest Basket drive."

The Rev. Joe Carson, pastor of Christ United Methodist Church, explained that Manna Café attracts people of all ages and walks of life, including watermen, hotel employees, contractors and senior citizens. "The growth and popularity of this program has stimulated a number of Accomack County businesses to donate products used to prepare each meal, and many of our church members are now volunteering, as well," he said.

In their nomination letter, Mark and Jackie Mentzer wrote, "Bill and Fran enlist local offerings from the community, such as fresh greens and tomatoes from residents' gardens, meats and staples from local grocers, and delicious desserts made by volunteers or donated by community businesses. Their time and effort to be good stewards of both food and monetary donations is evident in everything they plan."

VMDAEC Chairman Huffman added, "Bill and Fran are living examples of the Good Samaritan, working tirelessly to follow the Biblical principle, 'do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit; however, consider all others more important than yourself.' We are proud to recognize their dedication that has made such a difference for Eastern Shore residents."

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The Lytles recently formed Manna Café C.I., Inc. as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, to be able to network with other community meal programs and further expand their efforts. Belvin “Butch” Williamson Jr., president and CEO of A&N Electric Cooperative that serves residents of Virginia’s Eastern Shore, applauded their initiative.

“Fran and Bill’s vision provide both food and fellowship in a welcoming setting embodies the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community,” he noted. “We’re very proud to have members like them.” A&N Electric Cooperative Board Chairman Addison W. Nottingham Jr. and Vice Chairman Christopher D. Bott were also on hand at the award presentation to support the Lytles.

Headquartered in Tasley, A&N Electric Cooperative provides power to more than 35,000 homes, farms and businesses in Accomack and Northampton counties. In 2009, the cooperative established Members Helping Members, Inc. a 501(c)(3) organization to assist area families in paying their electric service bills. To learn more, visit www.anec.com.

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 publication of *Cooperative Living* magazine. For more information, visit www.vmdaec.com and www.co-opliving.com.



From left, A&N Electric Cooperative (ANEC) CEO Butch Williamson, ANEC Board Vice Chairman Christopher Bott, VMDAEC Award Committee Chairman Herbert Patrick, Fran and Bill Lytle, VMDAEC Board Chairman James Huffman and ANEC Board Chairman Addison Nottingham, Jr. during the 2018 Good Samaritan Award presentation in Chincoteague.