

cooperative REVIEW

for members of Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Get set, be ready, and go to school prepared 3

It's the cooperative difference 4

Plug into green 6

Around Town 6

Do you qualify for the Limited Income Energy Efficiency Program? 8

It's a beautiful day, so why is my power out?

The sun is shining, your bill has been paid, but your power is out. What happened? Most people expect the possibility of a power outage when there is inclement weather—like the torrential rains in September or last winter's heavy snowfall—but power outages can happen at any time.

Outages that happen outside of a weather incident can

Power

continued page 2

SMECO has received the J.D. Power Award in customer service for three straight years. This recognition proves that our adherence to the cooperative principles enhances the positive impact of the cooperative on the customers we serve.



Power

CONTINUED

occur for a variety of reasons, and one prevalent reason in Southern Maryland is squirrels. When

a squirrel causes a power outage, it will typically affect one transformer, which may serve one to five customers, leaving only a handful of homes in a neighborhood without power.

When SMECO crews arrive at a reported power outage and determine that a squirrel was the cause,



they will install wildlife protection, known as squirrel guards, which are designed to protect both our equipment, as well as little critters. All new installations completed in the last 15 years automatically have the wildlife protection included, and it is

SMECO policy to install this protection if it is needed whenever maintenance is done on existing equipment.

Another outage instigator is the errant tree limb. SMECO puts great effort into keeping trees trimmed and away from the lines, but sometimes the limbs can still interact with a line. When tree limbs are the problem, SMECO line crews will trim enough of the tree to fix the immediate problem and restore service. The crew then forwards the information regarding the problem area to SMECO's Forestry department personnel, who will ensure that any further trimming is performed. Tree limb outages can affect many customers, or just one.

Underground cable is a third source of potential outages during normal weather conditions. An underground cable can fault or can be cut accidentally. This can affect one customer-member, or it can take out an entire neighborhood, impacting hundreds of

OUTAGE HOTLINE
1-877-747-6326

customer-members. If the outage occurs because of a fault on the line, SMECO will make a record of where and when that fault occurred. After three incidents with the same line, we will generally replace the cable.

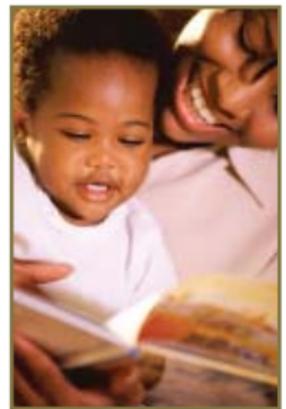
Accidentally cutting underground lines can be avoided if customer-members call Miss Utility at 811 before digging. When you call before you dig, SMECO and other local utility companies will come out and mark the location of any underground lines, preventing outages and potential injury.

If you have a power outage, whether it is caused by inclement weather or a renegade squirrel, make sure to call the SMECO outage hotline at 1-877-747-6326.

Get set, be ready, and go to school prepared

Ready At Five is a statewide nonprofit partnership dedicated to improving school readiness for Maryland's children. Founded in 1992 in response to the first national education goal, "all children will enter school ready to learn," Ready At Five utilizes state, jurisdictional, and local activities to ensure that Maryland's children receive the support and resources needed to enter school ready to succeed.

"Research shows that children who have access to high quality early learning experiences are more likely to complete high school, graduate college and become productive citizens. In addition, national studies show that for every \$1 spent on early childhood education, society saves as much as \$16 in remedial and corrective services. In Maryland, a state recognized for its leadership in the early childhood education arena, the return is at least \$8 for every \$1 invested. In essence, early childhood education is an economic imperative with the potential for positive social impact," according to their website.



Learn more about Ready At Five by visiting www.readyatfive.org or by calling 410-788-5725.

It's the cooperative difference

Cooperative is more than just part of our name, it's the difference in how we serve you.

There are three types of electric utilities: municipal systems, investor-owned utilities (IOUs), and electric cooperatives. The main difference among the three types of utilities is how they are governed.

A municipal system is usually owned by a city, state, or federal government agency that purchases electricity at wholesale and distributes it to customers. Their customers are generally located in urban or semi-urban areas. Examples of municipal systems include Easton Utilities (Easton, MD), Hagerstown Light Department (Hagerstown, MD), and Orlando Utility Company (Orlando, FL).

An IOU is owned by investors, or stockholders, who may or may not be customers of the utility, and may not even live in the service area. They are profit-based organizations that pay dividends to and are governed by shareholders. The amount of say the shareholders have is determined by the number of shares they hold. Some IOUs include Allegheny Energy, Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE), and Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO).

An electric cooperative is owned by the customers it serves, which means that every customer is also an owner and member. As a non-profit organization, any revenue is either reinvested for capital expenses, including infrastructure, or distributed to customer-members in the form of capital credits. Each customer of SMECO is a member of the cooperative and an owner with equal rights.

Cooperatives are based mostly in rural or semi-rural areas and are guided by a set of seven principles known as the Cooperative (or Rochdale) Principles. Other local cooperatives include Choptank Electric Cooperative, Delaware Electric Cooperative, and Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC).



Cooperative principles

Voluntary and open membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

Democratic member control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. Members have equal voting rights—one member, one vote.

Members' economic participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. A cooperative business returns margins to their patrons. Any margins (or profits) are credited to each member's capital credit account. Each member's share of the capital credits for the year depends on the amount each individual paid into the cooperative during that year and on the total margins of the cooperative for the year. Capital credits are retained for a number of years and the money is used as operating capital. Retaining capital credits reduces borrowing needs. Capital credits are paid to all people who were members in a certain year. Each year members receive a notice showing the amount of capital credits that have been credited to their account for the past year.

Autonomy and independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Education, training, and information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

Cooperation among cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

Concern for community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work to improve the quality of life in the areas they serve.



plug into Green

Unplug and save! If you unplug electronics when not in use, the savings can really add up!

- A plasma TV left plugged in costs an estimated \$159.76 annually.
- Left plugged in, a laptop costs an estimated \$15.90 annually.
- A game console left plugged in costs an estimated \$25.73 annually.

Source: www.energy.state.md.us

around **TOWN**

December 1

Community Concert & Open House

Sponsor: Historic
St. Mary's City

Doors open at 6 p.m.,
Concert at 7 p.m.
Historic SMC State House
Harmonies by St. Maries
Musica and decorations
by the Mistress Brent
Garden Club.

240-895-4900
www.stmaryscity.org

December 3–5; 10–12

Madrigal Dinners

Sponsor: Historic
St. Mary's City

Fri. at 6:30 p.m., Sat.
and Sun. at 5:30 p.m.
Historic St. Mary's City
State House, Old State
House Road, Adults.
Reservations required. \$

800-SMC-1634
240-895-4990
www.stmaryscity.org

December 4

Family Plantation Christmas

Sponsor: Historic
Sotterley, Inc.

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sotterley Plantation

301-373-2280
www.sotterley.org

December 10–Jan. 11

Holiday Candlelight Tours

Sponsor: Historic
Sotterley, Inc.

First tour at 6 p.m.
Sotterley Plantation

301-373-2280
www.sotterley.org

December 11

Greens Sale & Beach Hayride

Sponsor: American
Chestnut Land Trust
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Warrior's Rest
Sanctuary, 1920
Scientists Cliffs Road,





Visit www.smeco.coop/community/aroundtown for more events.

Port Republic
410-414-3400
www.acltweb.org

**Christmas Market at
All Saints' Church**

Sponsor: All Saints' Episcopal Church
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
All Saints' Church, corner of Rts 2 & 4, Sunderland
Terrific local craftspeople.
Rain, snow, or shine!
No admission fee.

410-257-6306
www.allsaints1692.org

**Lunch
with Santa**

Sponsor:
Hughesville
V.F.D. and
Rescue Squad
Noon
to 3 p.m.
Hughesville
Vol. Fire House, Rain
date will be Dec.18, 2010.



December 17

Steak & Shrimp Dinner
Sponsor: American Legion
Post #221

5 to 8 p.m.
21690 Colton Point
Rd., Avenue. Platters &
sandwiches are both
available. Eat-in or
carryout service.

391-769-4346
www.alpost221.webs.com

December 18

**The Sanford Concert Series
Annual Christmas Concert**
Sponsor: The Sanford
Concert Series

7:30 p.m.
St. Andrew's Church,
44078 St. Andrew's
Church Rd., Members of
The Washington National
Opera, Cosmic Flute Choir
and Two Rivers Harmony.

301-862-9541
sanfordconcertseries.com

Do you qualify for the Limited Income Energy Efficiency Program?

If you are a SMECO customer-member who owns and occupies your own home, and you qualify for energy assistance, you might be eligible to participate in SMECO's Limited Income Energy Efficiency Program!

HOW IT WORKS

If you qualify for this program, an energy advisor will perform an energy audit to identify ways to improve your home's efficiency. The audit and any recommended energy improvements are included in your current SMECO service—which means improvements will be made at no additional cost to you!

Your energy advisor will:

- Evaluate your home and its current energy use.
- Choose the best ways to reduce your home's energy use and improve your comfort.
- Install the recommended energy improvements (with your approval).
- Verify results and ensure that your home meets important health and safety guidelines.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

To participate in SMECO's Limited Income Energy Efficiency Program, you need to qualify for energy assistance through the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) or Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP).

If you already qualify for MEAP or EUSP, call 1-877-818-4094 today to schedule your comprehensive home energy audit.

To apply for MEAP or EUSP energy assistance, contact:

**Southern Maryland Tri-County
Community Action Committee**

8371 Leonardtown Road (Route 5), Hughesville
Metro Line 301-870-3770

**Prince George's County
Department of Social Services**

805 Brightseat Road, Landover
Prince George's County 301-909-6300

For more details, visit www.smeco.coop/save.