

# cooperative REVIEW

for members of Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

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## Moving forward for our customers

### A year-end message from President & CEO Austin J. Slater, Jr.

The past year has been a time of growth for SMECO and our customer-members. A lot of work has been done to strengthen our network—enhancing reliability, maximizing opportunities for renewable energy, and tightening our operations to deliver quality electric service at the best rate possible.

### Growth

*continued page 2*

*SMECO employees Tommy Short, David Lindsey, Wayne Fowler, Eric Reardon, and Ray Gaskill worked with local scout troop member Jordan Foster to help protect local ospreys. Read more on page 4.*



## **Mother nature delivers one-two-three punch to the region**

Between an earthquake, hurricane, tropical storm, and flooding, our many system changes instituted over the past seven years were put to the test. Hurricane Irene alone caused more damage and more outages than at any time in the history of the cooperative. But the residents of Southern Maryland benefitted from our new outage management system and the improved processes that enabled us to restore service in only seven days, in the face of great devastation.

### **Taking control of renewable energy**

The State of Maryland requires electric utilities to purchase a portion of their electric supply from renewable resources. In an effort to meet these obligations while minimizing the financial impact on our customer-members, we have engaged in several projects that will provide clean energy at an affordable rate.

We signed a contract to purchase 30 MW of energy and the associated environmental attributes for the next 20 years from Mehoopany Wind Farm in Wyoming County, PA. The facility will be constructed, owned, and operated by BP Wind Energy and is expected to achieve commercial operations in late 2012. We like the clean and renewable aspects of wind energy, as well as the affordable rates this wind farm project provides for our customer-members.

Our new wholly-owned subsidiary—SMECO Solar LLC—is planning to build a solar generating facility in Hughesville on a 47-acre parcel near the Co-op's new Engineering and Operations building. The solar facility will produce nearly 8,700 megawatt-hours (MWh) of energy annually, which will power the new facility, provide renewable energy to our customer-members, and supplement our power portfolio.

We are making the most of our existing resources to increase our effectiveness as a cooperative: land that was once used to produce tobacco will now be used to produce clean electric energy. It will also help us fulfill our statutory obligation to purchase 0.1 percent of our load from solar energy resources in 2012 and save us from the costs associated with not meeting that obligation.

## **Technological advances make strides**

Our smart meter project advanced in 2011 and brings us one step closer to deploying to all of our customer-members. Installation began in March, and we now have more than 1,900 smart meters deployed. This technology enables SMECO to enhance our service delivery and achieve operational savings—work that used to require seven people all day to accomplish can now be completed in nine minutes. We are currently working to integrate the meter data management system (MDMS) with our existing operational and customer service systems. The MDMS, in conjunction with the smart meters, will give customers more options, information, and greater control over their electric consumption and energy bills.

## **Helping the community remains a priority**

We announced our new program, Members Helping Members, in December 2010. This program enables customers in Southern Maryland to help their neighbors who are struggling to pay their electric bills throughout the year. We saw immediate support from members of the community who wanted to contribute \$1 to their electric bill each month —helping 75 customer-members and their families by Thanksgiving of this year.

If you would like to donate just \$12 a year to help your neighbors, you can sign up to be a member who helps members. Just call 1-888-440-3311, visit the website at [www.smeco.coop/mhm](http://www.smeco.coop/mhm), or enroll in person at the customer service counter at a SMECO office. Larger donations are also accepted; simply send a check to Members Helping Members at P.O. Box 1937, Hughesville, MD 20637.

The past year has been a great reminder of the strong sense of community that thrives in Southern Maryland, where neighbors help neighbors after natural disasters and in simple everyday ways. Next year we celebrate 75 years of bringing electric service to Southern Maryland, and we look forward to continuing a tradition of bringing to our customer-members the technology that will continue to improve their lives while providing reliable service at the best rate.

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# SMECO works with local scout to help ospreys

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Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouts of America. The scout must earn at least 21 merit badges, demonstrate Scout Spirit by personal application of the Boy Scout Oath, and adhere to Law, Service, and Leadership principles. An extensive service project that the scout must plan, organize, lead, and manage until its completion is another major requirement.

Jordan Foster, from Boy Scout Troop 417, had completed all of the other requirements to obtain his Eagle Scout rank and contacted SMECO for assistance in completing his service project. Foster planned the construction of two new osprey platforms and two PVC deterrent devices. He helped coordinate their installation with Tommy Short, Environmental Affairs Coordinator at SMECO, who determined the best location for the protective devices would be on White Point Road in Leonardtown, Maryland. Many of the osprey platforms along that road were removed in 2010 because of deterioration and were never replaced. Citizens in the area had contacted Short to voice their concerns for the missing osprey nesting structures and requested new platforms.



*Jordan Foster, center, and some of his fellow scouts from Troop 417.*

Electrocutions and line strikes are a particular threat to birds with large wingspans, such as eagles, hawks, and owls—all species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee, SMECO follows voluntary guidelines for protecting birds from electrocution and collisions with power lines.

Foster, with the help of fellow members of Boy Scout Troop 417, constructed the new platforms and deterrent devices, and SMECO installed them atop existing distribution poles where ospreys frequently nest. These simple deterrent devices have proven very effective in deterring ospreys from building nests and perching in unsafe locations.

The project was completed in October, prior to Foster's 18th birthday. A ceremony will be held honoring Foster for earning his Eagle Scout rank.

Since its introduction in 1911, the Eagle Scout rank has been earned by more than two million young men. Thanks to his work to help local ospreys, Foster



has now completed all requirements to obtain the Eagle Scout rank, which is a title held for life, giving rise to the phrase “Once an Eagle, always an Eagle.”





# plug into Green

**Save ENERGY and Save MONEY this winter.**  
Our top ten ways to reduce heating costs:

- Consider upgrading to high-efficiency heating equipment.
- Remove leaves and snow from around your heat pump.
- Open curtains and blinds during the day.
- Tune up your heating system annually.
- Insulate your attic and ductwork.
- Take advantage of SMECO's energy efficiency programs and rebates.
- Schedule a Quick Home Energy Check-up.
- Change your air filter once a month.
- Set your programmable thermostat to 68°F.
- Weather-strip around doors and caulk around windows.

## around**TOWN**

Visit [www.smeco.coop/community/aroundtown](http://www.smeco.coop/community/aroundtown) for more events.

### **January 2**

#### **New Year's Holiday**

SMECO offices closed

### **January 16**

#### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

SMECO offices closed

Call Center is available  
24/7: 1-888-440-3311



### **January 28**

#### **Appraiser Fair**

Sponsor: St. Mary's County  
Museum Division of  
Recreation and Parks

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. Clement's Island  
Museum, 38370 Point  
Breeze Rd, Colton's Point  
Expert appraisers will be  
on hand to evaluate (no  
certified appraisals) and  
offer information about  
antiques, collectibles  
or yard sale curiosities.

Limits and fees apply.

301-769-2222

[stmarysmd.com/recreate/  
museums](http://stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums)

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# Winter's chill can impact your energy bills

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November's warm temperatures lulled many from worrying about the pending winter chill. Severe weather can affect your electric service, but fluctuating temperatures will also impact your energy usage.

When it's hot, people use lots of energy. When it's cold, people also use lots of energy. As a co-op, we have to buy more energy in the summer and in the winter than we do in the spring or fall.

Each month's electric bill features a graph of the customer-member's most recent 12-month usage history with the actual amount of kilowatt-hours (kWh) used listed above each bar. Utilizing these graphs will help customer-members understand their own energy-use patterns. Many of our customer-members are unaware that they have an energy-use pattern—but most of the time that pattern is based on the weather.

SMECO has a feature on our website that enables our customer-members to determine how temperature fluctuations affect their energy usage by showing the average monthly temperatures.

Having the ability to track your energy usage patterns can enable you to make changes that will help you save energy and save money. In the winter, find the coolest comfortable setting (we recommend 68°F) on your programmable thermostat and leave it there. Manually changing your thermostat more than three or four degrees may cause your auxiliary heat to come on, which costs more to run because the resistance heat elements cost more to operate.

**Remember:** energy use varies based on many factors, including the amount of insulation and the type of electric heating system in the home, as well as the type of appliances you use. Adjusting your energy-use on cold weather days can help control winter electric bills.



## Scholarships available for high school seniors

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative is offering \$1,500 college scholarships to four high school seniors who are graduating in 2012 and who live with parents or guardians who are SMECO customers. The deadline for all completed scholarship applications is **March 1, 2012**.

For more information or to obtain an application, **visit [www.smeco.coop](http://www.smeco.coop)**, see your school career counselor, call SMECO at **1-888-440-3311, extension 4340**, or visit the customer service desk in SMECO's Leonardtown, Prince Frederick, and Hughesville offices.

Completed application packages (all items must be submitted as one package) may be taken to one of the SMECO offices listed above or mailed to:

Attention: Bernadette Lewis  
SMECO Headquarters  
P.O. Box 1937  
Hughesville, MD, 20637

*Applicants for Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative's scholarships shall be considered based on the cooperative's established guidelines without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, or handicap.*