

# cooperative REVIEW

for members of Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative

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## Big changes in 2013 enhance service at SMECO

The past year has shown continued momentum for growth and advancement at SMECO. Each year SMECO works to improve service and reliability for its customer-members. Many projects reached their conclusions in 2013, while many will continue to progress into 2014.

**Changes**

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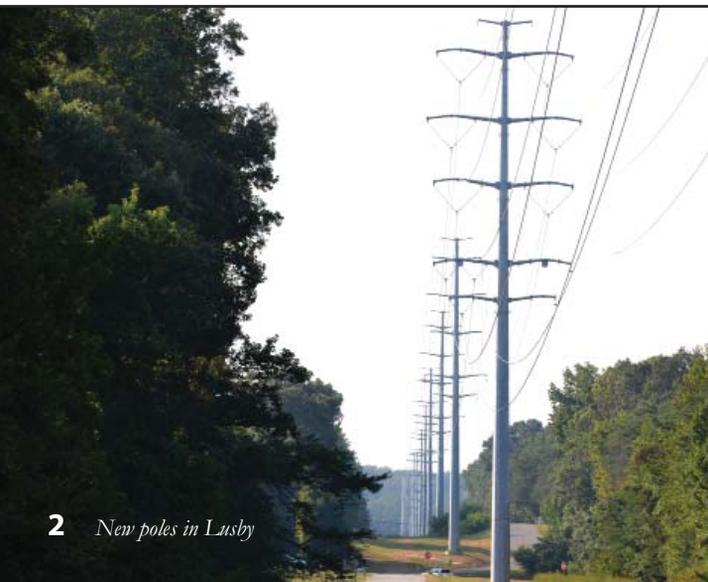
*On November 5, 2013, SMECO honored its veterans with a breakfast and plaque thanking them for their service. Pictured here, Bernadette Lewis presents the plaque to SMECO lineman, Zachary Reynolds.*



## Southern Maryland Reliability Project moves forward

Work continues on the Southern Maryland Reliability Project. In 2013, Phase One was completed, the new Sollers Wharf switching station was energized, and the Phase Two section of line began. Phase One consists of an 18-mile segment that connects the Holland Cliff and the new Sollers Wharf switching stations. Phase Two consists of the section of line that goes from the Sollers Wharf station south to Solomons and the Navy Recreation Center, under the Patuxent River to Town Creek in St. Mary's County, and to the Hewitt Road switching station. All poles in Calvert County should be set by January 2014.

The most complicated and costly portion of the project is in Phase Two, which involves SMECO crossing under the Patuxent River to connect the Calvert and St. Mary's sections of the Southern Maryland Reliability Project. The new line is located north of the bridge and at least 50 feet under the river bottom. The distance of the underwater drilling is approximately 4,500 feet.



2 *New poles in Lusby*

The entire project is 30 miles, including 28 miles of overhead line and two miles of underground line. The 280 new 230-kV poles will replace the existing 430 69-kV poles. The completed project will enable SMECO to meet the region's requirement for reliable electric service.

## New Engineering and Operations Center is now in use

SMECO completed construction of the new Engineering and Operations Center in Hughesville during 2013 and moved in the employees slated to work in the new facility. Local officials were on hand October 15, 2013, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate its completion.

The 165,000 square-foot building houses the contact center and the operations center. It supports approximately 240 employees, including the construction crews from the now-sold White Plains office, along with apparatus crews, security personnel, engineering and operations personnel, and master stores. Indoor loading docks for line trucks make up a large portion of the building, along with an expanded warehouse for materials management.

The new facility is designed to meet the platinum standard of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. The building is modern, energy-efficient, employee-friendly, and hurricane-proof.



*Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Engineering and Operations Center*

## **SMECO continues to surpass EmPOWER Maryland goals**

SMECO launched EmPOWER Maryland programs in November 2009 with a lighting discount kick-off. Since that date, many other programs were added to help customer-members save energy and save money in order to support the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act of 2008. The Act seeks to encourage Maryland residents to reduce energy consumption by 15 percent by the end of 2015.

By the end of October 2013, SMECO's customer-members had saved 146,973 MWh through the EmPOWER Maryland programs—surpassing our goal of 83,870 MWh.

## **Technology advancements make doing business with SMECO easier**

SMECO expanded the options available to communicate and do business with them. The “Pay My Bill Now” option was added to SMECO's website for a quick and easy one-time, on-line bill payment option for customer-members. This enables customers to make a payment with no login or password information needed. It is now also possible to pay bills with mobile devices. For those who like automated billing features, SMECO introduced AutoPay and e-bill with FiServ.

In addition to bill payment features, SMECO also made it easier to report an outage. On April 15, 2013, SMECO launched the new outage reporting feature that enables customer-members to report an outage online through a tablet, smart phone, or computer. All that's needed is the account number or phone number and the zip code where the outage is located.

This new feature is in addition to our revised outage page, which now shows where an outage is located, how many people are affected, if a crew is en route or on site, and when power is expected to be restored.

Even more exciting things are on the horizon for 2014.

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## **As the temperature turns colder, your bills may rise**

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It's that time of year when winter's chill descends on Southern Maryland. Cold weather means higher energy usage, which translates to higher energy bills.

There are several things you can do to control energy consumption when the weather is cold. To save energy and save money this winter, try these tips:

- 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.
- Make sure to clean or replace the filters on your heating system monthly.
- Do not set your heat pump to run in emergency heat mode or auxiliary heat mode, because the resistance heat elements cost more to operate.
- Keep exterior doors and windows closed.
- Keep window blinds and curtains open during the day to let in sunlight, but close them at night to keep cold air out.
- Use bathroom exhaust fans only when needed. They pull warm air and humidity out of the house.
- Keep snow and leaves away from the outdoor unit of your heat pump.
- Have your heating system professionally serviced on a regular basis to keep it operating efficiently.

**Remember:** energy use varies based on many factors, including the amount of insulation and the type of 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.

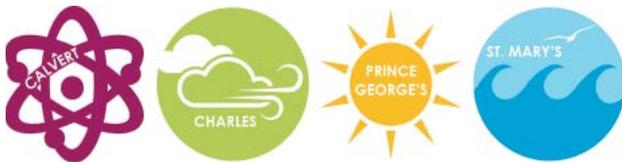


End the year on a high note by scheduling a **SMECO Quick Home Energy Check-up—** at no additional cost to you! A one-hour check-up will show you how to save energy and save money, and will even include at least three of the following six energy-saving items at no additional cost: 12 new CFLs, faucet aerators, efficient-flow showerhead, pipe insulation (installed on hot and cold pipes from water heater for six feet), electric water heater tank wrap (eligibility requirements apply), and smart strips.

Contact SMECO now to schedule your Quick Home Energy Check-up! Visit [SMECO.coop/save](http://SMECO.coop/save) or call 877-818-4094.

## It's not too late! Sign up for the energy challenge and show your hometown spirit

Don't forget about this season's Hometown Spirit Energy Savings Challenge, taking place until January 31, 2014. Residential customer-members can participate, save energy, and have the chance to win a \$200 Visa® gift card. See official rules and how to sign up at [www.SMECO.coop/saveenergy/savingschallenge](http://www.SMECO.coop/saveenergy/savingschallenge) or call 1-877-818-4094.



[www.SMECO.coop/saveenergy/savingschallenge](http://www.SMECO.coop/saveenergy/savingschallenge)  
1-877-818-4094



## aroundTOWN

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

### Jan. 1

#### 5K Resolution Race

Sponsor: Southern Maryland Community Network

9 a.m. to Noon  
305 Prince Frederick Boulevard, Prince Frederick  
Register on [active.com](http://active.com), on the morning of the race beginning at 8 a.m., or download a registration form from the website.

Race starts at 9 a.m. and is timed for one hour. Goodie bags for each participant. Awards by age group for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Hot soup and cider will be available after the race. **\$ Admission.**

Free for children age 9 and younger.

410-535-4787  
[somdnetwork.org](http://somdnetwork.org)

### Jan. 9

#### Eat Wings. Raise Funds

Sponsor: Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake, Inc.

5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Buffalo Wild Wings, 11215 Mall Circle, Waldorf  
On this day, 10 percent of all food purchases will be donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake. Please present a copy of this announcement to your server.

202-680-4138  
[biglitttle.org](http://biglitttle.org)

### Jan. 23

#### Eat Wings. Raise Funds

Sponsor: Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake, Inc.

5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.  
Buffalo Wild Wings, 46370 Lexington Village Way, Lexington Park  
Everyone is invited to gather for dinner or a snack. Proceeds will benefit children and youth in St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert counties.

202-680-4138  
[biglitttle.org](http://biglitttle.org)

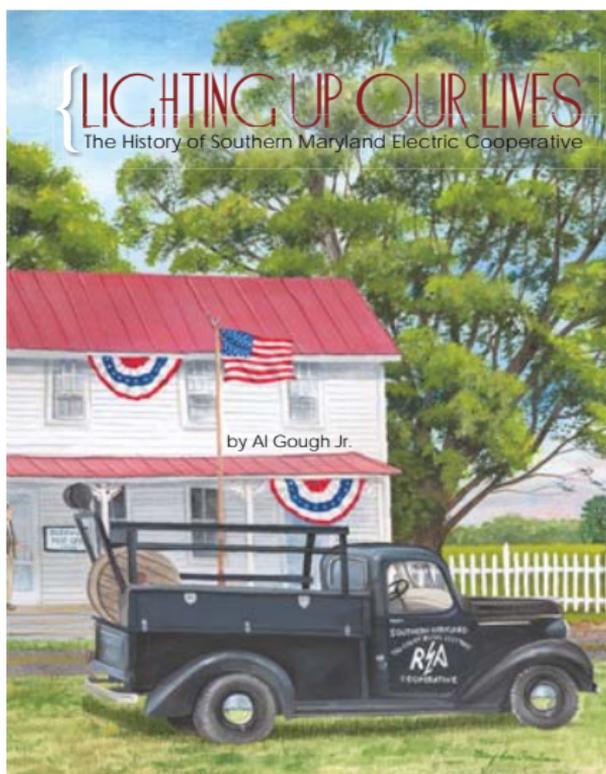
# Looking for a Southern Maryland gift idea?

The 75th anniversary book produced by SMECO is a perfect gift idea for the friend or family member who likes Southern Maryland history.

*Lighting Up Our Lives: The History of Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative* by Al Gough Jr. is a journey through the history of the electrification and transformation of Southern Maryland from rural farm land to its modern-day incarnation. Through political maneuvering, blood, sweat and tears, natural disasters and lucky breaks, the people who built these lines and Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative throughout the years will come to life on each page. The book is available for \$8.48 per copy.

Order yours at [www.smeco.coop/75years](http://www.smeco.coop/75years) or mail a check (please add \$5 for shipping and handling) to:

SMECO, 75th anniversary  
P.O. Box 1937  
Hughesville, MD 20637



[www.smeco.coop/75years](http://www.smeco.coop/75years)