

cooperative **REVIEW**

for members of Southern
Maryland Electric Cooperative



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SMECO sponsored the 20th annual MATHCOUNTS on Feb. 1, 2014. Pictured above are the first and second place countdown round winners. Left is Jim Kong, who placed second and to his right is Nathan Hayes, who placed first. Both students were on the winning team from Northern High School. Read more on page 4.

It's time for the 12th annual Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo

The 12th annual Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo will be held on April 5, 2014, at the Caroline County Agricultural Fairgrounds in Ruther Glen, Virginia. Free to the public. SMECO linemen compete while exhibiting the challenging and vital work they perform on a daily basis.

The Gaff 'n' Go Lineman's Rodeo is an opportunity for linemen to test their skills against those of their peers and provides an opportunity for members of the community to see what it takes to be a utility lineman—skill, strength, and respect for electricity.



Scott Gagliardi participates in the 2013 Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo.

This will be the tenth year that SMECO linemen will compete in the Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo. Each team consists of two Journeymen and a Groundman, and they participate in five mandatory events, including the pole climb, hurt-man rescue, and three mystery events.

Apprentices also compete. They are judged on the pole climb, hurt-man rescue, a written test, and two mystery events. A person is considered an Apprentice for up to four years after he enters the apprenticeship.

SMECO's linemen perform with safety and consistency, and competition between the different utility crews is fierce. Utility supervisors and previous rodeo contestants judge the events following very strict criteria based on correct work procedures and safety practices. The top three teams and top three apprentices will receive paid entry to the International Lineman's Rodeo to be held October 15–18, 2014, in Bonner Springs, Kansas.

SMECO linemen Brent Hancock, Doug Hancock, and Daniel Hutchins advanced to the 2013 International Lineman's Rodeo held in Kansas City.

Join our linemen at the 12th Annual Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo. If you would like more information on attending the Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo, please visit gaff-n-go.com or call 804-968-4073.



Scott Gagliardi and Brian Thomas, SMECO linemen, at the 2013 Gaff 'n' Go Rodeo.

Scams are prevalent— be aware and stay safe

Many customers from around the country, including Southern Maryland, have received emails and phone calls from people claiming to represent their electric utility, often threatening to disconnect service. If you receive suspicious correspondence regarding your electric bill, be careful and follow some simple steps to protect yourself.

- Do not open emails from an unfamiliar source. SMECO's emailed bills contain account-specific information and distinctive orange and green colors.
- If an email looks suspicious, it may contain malware or links to a virus-infected website. Simply delete the suspicious email and contact SMECO by phone or log on to SMECO's bill payment website.
- Never provide personal information, credit card, debit card, banking information or user names and passwords in an email.
- Only give payment information over the phone if you initiate the call.
- Callers who give short deadlines and threaten to cut off service within an hour or two are probably running a scam. The cooperative has a set routine for collecting payments from customers.
 - SMECO will mail a termination notice if a bill is past due.
 - SMECO only calls customers who owe a past due balance.
 - SMECO usually uses an automated phone system with a recorded message; rarely will SMECO employees make personal "collection" phone calls.
 - Collection calls are made about 10 days before service is to be terminated. SMECO does not require payment at the time of the call.
 - SMECO does not make collection calls or terminate service on weekends or holidays.
 - If service is going to be terminated, a SMECO collector will knock on the customer's door before turning off service.
 - SMECO collectors will accept credit card payments, checks, or money orders, but they do not accept cash.

The 2014 MATHCOUNTS winners announced

The 20th annual regional MATHCOUNTS competition brought together more than 120 students from 17 schools throughout Southern Maryland to test their math skills at Theodore G. Davis Middle School in Waldorf on Saturday, Feb. 1.

The event aims to boost student interest in mathematics by making the subject challenging and entertaining, so that students have a foundation for success in science, technology, and engineering. Middle school students across the country compete in more than 500 regional competitions each year, with winners advancing to state competitions and then to the national competition.

During the three-hour event, there is a series of rounds featuring mathematics problems to challenge students one-on-one and as teams. The top 12 scorers finish the competition by facing each other in the countdown round, a single-elimination tournament with the fast-paced excitement of a sports event.

In the individual competition, which is based on combined scores in the target and sprint rounds, Nathan Hayes placed first and Will Longworth placed second; both attend Northern Middle School in Calvert County. Finishing first in the countdown round was Nathan Hayes, followed by Jim Kong in second, both from Northern Middle School.

Sponsors for the local MATHCOUNTS competition are SMECO and the Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's county public schools, with the support of the National Society of Professional Engineers. Members of the Kiwanis of Charles County and the Westlake Key Club, along with SMECO employees and their families, volunteered their time to help score the tests.

Winners of the Southern Maryland competition will go on to compete in the statewide contest at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. State winners will progress to the national competition held in Orlando, FL.



First-place team, Northern Middle School

From left are Jim Kong, Will Longworth, Preston Southan, Nathan Hayes, head coach Carole Butler, and coach Lynda Ciardiello.



Second-place team, Milton Somers Middle School

From left are coach Jessica Stiver, head coach Jennifer Craigmile, Elizabeth Saoud, Ethan Walker, and Michael Gill. Not pictured, Sydney Marohn-Johnson.



Third-place team, Leonardtown Middle School

From left are Raymart Tuazon, Kaitlyn Ng, Danielle Gore, Rosa Bates, and coach Nicholas Cox.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

SMECO is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). Sonja Cox, SMECO Senior Vice President of Financial, Economic and Employee Services, is responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination efforts. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free 1-866-632-9992 (voice) or 1-800-877-8339 (TDD) or 1-866-377-8642 (relay voice users).

SMECO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Sign up today for the third annual SMECO 75 Bike Ride

Join us for the bike ride through scenic Southern Maryland.

Date: June 7, 2014

Time: Registration opens at 7 a.m. for packet pick-up/same-day registration

Early registration, June 6, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Place: 15035 Burnt Store Rd. Hughesville, MD

Cost: Register* by May 5: \$35
May 5–June 7: \$45

* Register by May 5 to guarantee receipt of a shirt.

www.smeco.coop/SMECO75

aroundTOWN

April 5

Treasures Sale

Sponsor: All Saints Episcopal Church

8 a.m. to Noon. All Saints Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 100 Lower Marlboro Road, Sunderland. Great buys, gently used items, and perhaps an antique.

301-855-7570
allsaints1692.org

7th Annual We're Looking for Trouble 5K Run/Walk and Kids Fun Run

Sponsor: Community Mediation Center of St. Mary's County

9 a.m. to Noon. Northern Senior Center, 29655 Charlotte Hall Road, Charlotte Hall. Run/Walk begins at 9 a.m. and Kids Run is at 8:45 a.m., held rain or shine. Register by April 1, 2014, for a chance to win an iPad Air. Early Bird Registrants entered to win an iPod Touch. Medals for top male and female in each age group category. Refreshments after the event. **\$ Admission.**

301-475-9118
looking4trouble5k.com/

April 10

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. Present a copy of this announcement to your server.
202-680-4138
biglittle.org

April 12

Global Youth Service Day

Sponsor: Tri-County Youth Services Bureau

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. 75 Industrial Park Drive, Waldorf. Participants

will focus on how they can make a difference in their homes, schools, and communities through community service projects. This year's theme is ending childhood hunger.

301-645-1837
tcysb.org

April 16

United Way of Charles County 17th Annual Back-to-Back Golf Tournament

Sponsor: United Way of Charles County

7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Swan Point Yacht and Country Club, 11550 Swan Point Blvd, Swan Point. Shotgun start times of 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Sponsorship and registration forms available on the website. There will be contests, a complimentary light breakfast, on-course beverages and snacks, a full meal in the clubhouse following play, and prizes for every foursome.

301-609-4844
unitedwaycharles.org/
Golf_Tournament.php

April 18

SMECO offices closed. Our Contact Center is available 24/7.

1-888-440-3311
www.smeco.coop

April 24

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. On this day, 10 percent of all food purchases will be donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake. Proceeds will benefit children and youth in St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert counties.

202-680-4138
biglittle.org



PSC issues news release regarding rates for retail energy suppliers

The Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) is alerting Maryland energy customers who have contracted with retail energy suppliers that the recent spate of extremely cold temperatures may affect their rates if they have contracted with retail energy suppliers through variable rate contracts. Therefore, the Commission urges all customers, particularly those with variable rate agreements, to review their contracts, as the continued frigid weather has increased both demand and the wholesale price of natural gas and electricity. See the full press release at bit.ly/1bk5zCm.

More information on retail supply choice can be found on the PSC's website, and on the Office of People's Counsel website.

Maryland PSC

**[psc.state.md.us/
ecm/home.cfm](http://psc.state.md.us/ecm/home.cfm)**

Office of People's Counsel

**[www.opc.state.md.us/
consumercorner/
RetailSuppliers.aspx](http://www.opc.state.md.us/consumercorner/RetailSuppliers.aspx)**