

cooperative **REVIEW**

for members of Southern
Maryland Electric Cooperative



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Contact voltage testing continues

In 2013, SMECO filed a Contact Voltage Survey Plan in accordance with RM 44, a Public Service Commission (PSC) requirement for all Maryland utilities. The plan outlines proposed testing on objects and surfaces that are located in voltage risk zones.

The cooperative hired Osrose, a firm that specializes in safeguarding utility infrastructure, to do the voltage testing. Three crews from Osrose have been testing devices in Southern Maryland since fall 2013 and should complete this work by the end of 2014. The 57,000 individual devices are being tested to ensure a good ground exists on every pad-mount transformer and every metal light pole.

Osrose has tested more than half so far and no failures have been detected. If we determine that a contact voltage condition exists anywhere on our system, we would follow our standard business process and make the necessary repairs.

We plan to test all facilities for contact voltage every five years.



SMECO wins Innovation in Customer Service Award. Pictured here are Sylvia Welch, IT Applications Director, and Rose Brown, Customer Care Vice President, with the award. Read the full article on page 6.

Absentee ballots available for 2014 Annual Members' meeting

The 2014 SMECO Annual Members' Meeting will be held Wednesday, September 10, at the Blue Crabs Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf. Register and vote from 4 until 7:30 p.m. The meeting will run from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The nominating committee met on May 17, 2014, to choose candidates for the five available seats up for election on SMECO's Board of Directors. The list of nominations follows:

- **Calvert County** (one seat available)
Nancy W. Zinn
- **Charles County** (one seat available)
Victor B. Allen
Gregory V. Billups
- **Prince George's County** (one seat available)
Daniel W. Dyer
- **St. Mary's County** (two seats available)
J. Douglas Frederick
Patricia M. Robrecht
Joseph V. Stone, Jr.
George M. Thompson

In addition to nominations made by the Nominating Committee, any 15 or more SMECO members acting together may make other nominations by petition.

Members may vote in person at the Annual Members' Meeting on September 10, 2014.

Absentee mail-in ballots are available to members who wish to vote but cannot attend the meeting.

Requests for absentee mail-in ballots must be received between July 1 and August 29, 2014.

To request an absentee mail-in ballot, you can:

- Call 1-888-440-3311, extension 4722
- Complete an online form on the Co-op's website at www.smeco.coop.



- Mail a request for an absentee mail-in ballot to SMECO Annual Meeting, P.O. Box 670, Hughesville, Maryland 20637.

Your completed ballot must be received by SMECO by September 9, 2014, if it is to be counted at the annual meeting.

If you vote on behalf of a business or organization, you must bring its registration identification card to the annual meeting. If you don't have its registration card, you won't be able to vote on behalf of that entity.

SMECO will mail member identification post cards in early August. Your August *Cooperative Review* newsletter will feature biographical information for each candidate running for a seat on the Board of Directors, as well as proposed bylaw changes.

2014 SMECO Annual Members' Meeting
Wednesday, September 10, 2014
Registration and voting: 4–7:30 p.m.
Meeting: 7:30–8:30 p.m.

- Requests for Absentee Ballots must be received between July 1 and August 29, 2014.
- Completed Absentee Ballots are due back by September 9, 2014.
- Look for your Member identification post card in early August.
- Candidate biographies and proposed bylaw changes will be featured in the August *Cooperative Review* newsletter.

Four students receive college scholarships

SMECO awarded four \$1,500 college scholarships to local high school seniors who live in the cooperative's service area for 2014. Scholarships are based on the applicants' scholastic achievement, financial need, and school and community involvement. Over the past 21 years, SMECO has awarded scholarships to 88 students.

The following students each received a \$1,500 college scholarship this year.

Josiah Manning, son of David and Marilyn Manning of Huntingtown, graduated from Huntingtown High School. He plans to attend the University of Maryland and to study biochemistry. Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. says this about Manning: "An aspiring Eagle Scout and recipient of many awards, Mr. Manning devotes much of his non-classroom time to support local civic activities. Using his passion for agriculture, he participates in a variety of 4-H events that donate their proceeds to organizations like the Goldberg Breast Cancer Center of Calvert Memorial Hospital, countywide food drives, scholarship programs, and local families. His commitment to the community is exemplary and he shows a great dedication and desire to serve fellow citizens." Manning's ambition is to become a veterinarian, physician, or biomedical engineer.

Jabrena Milburn, daughter of Charles and Marion Milburn of Lexington Park, is a graduate of Chopticon High School. Milburn served as the historian for Best Buddies and secretary for the National Honor Society, and she participated in Dance Team and Future Business Leaders of America. Milburn plans to study Special Education at Delaware State University. According to Elizabeth Privette, Special Education teacher at Chopticon, "Jabrena's actions have demonstrated that she has a compassionate heart and a talent for looking at an individual and being acceptant of their uniqueness. She is dependable and displays a strong work ethic. She went beyond her responsibility as a

student aide in the classroom and extended her involvement with the SAIL (Supporting Academics and Independent Living) population into the general community of Chopticon High School. Jabrena is a giving, kind-hearted, responsible young woman."

Rachel Potts, daughter of Jill Potts of Chaptico, is a graduate of Chopticon High School. Potts has received many honors, including Academic Achievement awards, Principal's Citizenship, Science Fair, Student of the Month, and field hockey athletic awards. She plans to study accounting at the College of Southern Maryland. Sandra Tolson, Counselor at Chopticon High School, says, "Within the community, Rachel has been honored to serve and give back to those less fortunate. She volunteered her time in support of a fund-raising event for Vacation for Vets, prepared materials for the Child Support Awareness campaign sponsored by Social Services, and participated in the Relay for Life Walk. Rachel speaks fondly of her desire to make a difference in the lives of others. I have worked with many students throughout my career and I can truly say that Rachel is exceptional."

Nathan Tyndall, son of Ransom and Amanda Tyndall of Port Republic, graduated from Calvert High School. Tyndall participates in the National Honor Society and Foreign Language Club, and he is a founder of the Chemistry Club and plays varsity soccer. In addition to playing the trumpet in the Calvert High School Band, he enjoys playing the guitar, saxophone, and piano. According to Jennifer Andreasen, Advanced Placement Specialist at Calvert High School, "Nathan is a very mature young man with a thoughtful outlook on life. His sense of irony and his sense of humor are welcome additions to the classroom. Yet, he is also very kind. He is quick to rise to the defense of others, and he does not use his humor at the expense of others." Tyndall plans to study chemistry at St. Mary's College of Maryland in St. Mary's City.

SMECO provides scholarships to local students who excel academically and who show promise in their chosen field of study. Past scholarship winners include teachers, nurses, and a medical doctor.

SMECO wins Innovation in Customer Service Award

SMECO consistently strives to provide superior customer service through useful technological innovations. These efforts were recently recognized by CS Week during their Expanding Excellence Awards ceremony, where SMECO received the Innovation in Customer Service Award for small utilities.



Sylvia Welch, IT Applications Director, and Rose Brown, Customer Care Vice President, with the award.

Each category had two winners, one for small utilities and one for large utilities. The utilities were selected based on the complexity, innovation, improved service levels, improvements to customer service, and a cost/benefit analysis of the submitted project or program. SMECO submitted the winning application for its Contact Center Workforce Optimization program, which included implementing automated tools for quality monitoring, coaching, lessons management, strategic planning, and speech analytics. In addition, SMECO implemented an automated Email Response Management System to more efficiently handle the increasing email traffic from its customer-members. We also implemented a Computer Telephony Integration platform to streamline the average handling time of customer calls to the Contact Center.

Stay in touch with SMECO

Report your outage, view our outage map, and pay your bill with our free app.

For more information, visit
www.smeco.coop/SMECO247



aroundTOWN

August 1-2
Governor's Cup
Yacht Race
 Sponsor: St. Mary's
 College of Maryland

The Governor's Cup Yacht Race is the oldest and longest overnight race on the Chesapeake Bay.

240-895-3039
smcm.edu/govcup

August 2
Summer Supper
 Sponsor: All Saints
 Episcopal Church

3 p.m. to 7 p.m. 100 Lower Marlboro Road, Sunderland. Homemade crab cakes, ham, and fried chicken. Carry out available. Home-baked goodies and handmade crafts. Proceeds benefit community and church ministries. Free for children 5 and younger. Handicapped accessible.

410-257-6306
allsaints1692.org

Beach Party on the Square
 Sponsor: Leonardtown
 Business Association

4 to 9 p.m. Leonardtown Square. Music, games, sand volleyball, fire truck hose-down, and the Annual Running of the Balls in the Square, and historic Buyboats at the Leonardtown Wharf.

301-475-9791

August 15-23
Shakespeare on the
Green: "As You Like It"
 Sponsor: Historic St. Mary's City
 and Newtowne Players

State House Lawn. Shows are August 15, 16, 21, 22, and 23.

\$ Admission. Grab a blanket and picnic and enjoy Shakespeare's comedy "As You Like It" on the State House green.

240-895-4990
stmaryscity.org/visit/calendar

August 23
Downtown Tunes
 Sponsor: Leonardtown Business
 Association

6 to 9 p.m. Leonardtown Square. Enjoy the acoustic sounds of award-winning duo Deer Park Avenue. Sisters Sarah and Stephanie Snyder are the winners of Hard Rock Rising, Washington D.C., a battle of the bands.

301-475-9791

Warrior Fun Run and Sail
 Sponsor: Patuxent Habitat
 for Humanity

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Solomons Island Boardwalk. Supports the Veteran Critical Home Repair program. Live entertainment, refreshments, and food available.

301-863-6227
patuxenthabitat.org

August 29-30
Extravaganza Yard Sale
 Sponsor: Mt. Zion United
 Methodist Church

7 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days. 27108 Mount Zion Church Road, Mechanicsville. All proceeds benefit the Hungry Team, which provides food, clothing, furniture, payment of critical utility bills, and other critical needs for the less fortunate.

301-884-4132
mtzionmech.org

August 30
Chaptico Classic
 Sponsor: Chaptico Classic

8 to 11 a.m. Christ Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 37497 Zach Fowler Road, Chaptico. Run a 5K or 10K T.A.C.-certified course. Receive a commemorative t-shirt and other goodies, and enjoy healthy snacks. Register by visiting www.active.com.

301-475-2886
chapticoclassic.org



SMECO offers tips for renters

Moving can be a very stressful experience—but transferring your utility service should be a snap. SMECO has created a page on its website for renters detailing tips on how to apply for new service, how to disconnect service when you move out, and ways to reduce your monthly bill while you live in the home.

Visit www.smeco.coop/renters for advice for renters.

Small changes can have a big impact on your utility bill. Renters and owners can save. Visit www.smeco.coop/save for ways to save energy and save money through the EmPOWER Maryland programs. Even if you rent your home, there are rebates and tax incentives available.

Tax incentives

Tax incentives for renters are available from the State of Maryland. The Renters'



Tax Credit Program provides property tax credits for renters who meet certain requirements. The application deadline is Sept. 1 of the year that the credit will apply,

and the credit is paid as a direct check from the state. If you are interested in learning more about this credit, visit www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/rtc.html for more information and detailed eligibility requirements.