

cooperative **REVIEW**

for members of Southern
Maryland Electric Cooperative



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SMECO partners with CSM to prepare electric utility professionals

The Cooperative is frequently asked about possible opportunities to become a SMECO lineman. Building and maintaining electric facilities can be hazardous work and it requires a skilled workforce to perform the necessary duties safely in often less-than-ideal conditions. Individuals who perform this work must be well-trained to ensure their safety and the reliability of the electric system.

When the Cooperative needs more linemen to expand its workforce or to fill vacancies, it hires new apprentices who are trained in groups. Each class of linemen goes through four years of training, following eight steps that take six months each. The apprentices move up the steps based on tests of their knowledge and their skill in line work. This process gives apprentices hands-on time and experience in the field while they work with experienced crews to prepare to work safely on their own.

When SMECO opens up the application process for a new

lineman training class, we receive hundreds of applications, but too few of the applicants have the skills necessary to even begin to learn the job.

“Some have no idea how to properly climb a ladder or use a shovel,” said Jason Atherton, technical training manager at SMECO. “All utilities are having a hard time finding qualified applicants.”

SMECO and the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) worked together to create the Pre-Apprenticeship Program to provide practical electric utility worker training. The 12-week program of courses, which will be offered at CSM’s new Regional Hughesville Campus, focuses on skills candidates need to enter utility training programs, as well as skills that are desirable in any of the trades. Students who complete the program will earn a continuing education certificate from CSM and will be prepared to begin an Apprenticeship. SMECO reached out to all regional electric utilities and contractors to alert them to this new resource and encouraged them to support the program.

“SMECO has been collaborating with CSM on a program of study to meet a very important need. What they have come up with is truly exciting,” said SMECO President and CEO Joe Slater, announcing the Pre-Apprenticeship Program at the April 25 dedication and ribbon-cutting for CSM’s new Center for Trades and Energy Training (CTET) at the Regional Hughesville Campus.

“Students will spend 12 weeks learning core construction skills and safety practices here in the CTET,” Slater said, “and then they will go across the road to SMECO’s lineman training yard for basics in electric utility work, including pole climbing, which is the great leveler. SMECO will be providing the electric utility practicum as a community service and good partner with CSM.” Atherton will serve as the SMECO instructor for the 40-hour field practicum portion of the course.

“It involves a lot of safety training,” said CTET Director Bruce Posey about the certificate requirements. The courses required for the certificate will cover topics such as excavation

safety, working in confined space, first aid, and CPR and core construction skills.”

SMECO has also funded two scholarships to assist promising students who demonstrate financial need and are from an underserved population for the fall 2017 semester. In addition, scholarships are available through the CSM Foundation.

Employers who hire students from this pool are getting a new employee with the training necessary to be placed on the job site almost immediately.

“If you don’t have any skills, it’s tough to find a job,” Posey said. “We can help you get the skills needed to be considered for employment.”

Class begins in late summer/early fall. To learn more about the scholarships, contact the CSM Foundation at 301-934-7649. For information on CSM’s Pre-Apprenticeship Program, visit <http://bit.ly/2sGBrfp>.



Apprentice group 21 using the SMECO lineman training yard.



Plant the right tree at the right place

Fall is around the corner and it's a great time to plant trees and shrubs. Beautifying your landscape is a wonderful project, but it's important to consider the electric equipment near your home and the future of your plantings to ensure that when the plant is fully mature it doesn't cause damage or outages.

Plan for the future when planting a tree

Trees are the major cause of power interruptions, both prolonged and momentary, for SMECO customer-members. We devote much of our resources to cutting and trimming trees that threaten electric service.

When carefully selected and placed, a tree can provide your family with many years of enjoyment without threatening your electric service. It can even help you conserve energy by providing shade in the summer and protection in the winter.

Look up first before you plant a tree. At its mature height, a tree planted under or too close to a power line may cause costly trimming and maintenance problems for you and SMECO to prevent trees from contacting power lines. Here's a quick guideline on tree size and spacing from power lines.

Zone A: Small trees

Zone A is the area within 30 feet of any side of the power line. For this zone we recommend planting trees that reach no higher than 20 feet at maturity.

Zone B: Medium trees

Zone B is the area 30 to 75 feet away from the power line. For this zone we recommend planting trees that reach no higher than 50 feet at maturity.

Zone C: Large trees

Zone C is the area 75 feet or more away from the power line. For this zone you may plant trees of any height.

Underground lines

The biggest danger to underground lines occurs during tree planting. Before you dig, call Miss Utility by dialing 811.

Transmission lines

Unlike the power lines located in most neighborhoods, transmission lines use much taller poles and carry much greater voltages. If your property is near a transmission line, please leave the area within 50 feet of the line clear of any trees.

Pick the right tree

There are many things to consider when selecting trees and landscaping for your home. Good tree placement and landscaping can enhance your property's value and prevent costly maintenance or damage to your home.

- Large trees should be planted at least 35 feet away from your house for proper root development and to minimize tree damage to the house.
- When planting a tree, consider your view, your neighbor's view, the location of your flower or vegetable gardens, and environmental conditions such as drainage, soil type, and sunlight penetration.
- Windbreaks should be evergreens planted on the west or north side of the house, about 100 to 150 feet and no more than 300 feet from the house.
- Deciduous (leaf-dropping) trees planted on the south or west side of the house will provide shade in the summer to cool the house and allow sun to enter the house in the winter.

Hundreds of species and trees can be grown in Southern Maryland. Do your research before you plant. If you have questions about planting trees near power lines, call SMECO.

Before you dig, call 811

Call Miss Utility by dialing **811** before you plant a tree or shrub, start a garden, or install a fence. SMECO will mark the location of underground power lines on your property.



One call will save you a lot of time, trouble, and money. It could also save your life!

Report your power outage

As we continue to deploy smart meters, please continue to report power outages. SMECO is invested in providing reliable service to the community in Southern Maryland. This investment includes improving, maintaining, and upgrading the electric system, proactive right-of-way clearing, and increasing protective equipment. Although SMECO works hard to provide greater reliability, outages will happen.

In the future, smart meters will be able to improve outage detection and power restoration capabilities but SMECO reminds its members to always report their outage through one of the many convenient outage reporting options available.

October 4

Little Explorers: Printer

Sponsor: Historic St. Mary's City

10 to 11 a.m. Historic St. Mary's City, meet at The Shop at Farthing's Ordinary, 47414 Old State House Road, St. Mary's City.

Designed for children 3–5 years old and an accompanying adult. \$Admission; one accompanying adult free. Full-day admission included.

240-895-4990

hsmcdigshistory.org

City. Learn to prepare deer skin Yaocomaco-style. This is a hands-on event; dress for work. Ages 14+. \$ Admission. Reservations required.

240-895-4990

hsmcdigshistory.org

October 6

First Friday in

Leonardtown: Pink Friday

Sponsor: Leonardtown Business Association and the St. Mary's County Arts Council

6 to 9 p.m. Leonardtown Square. Benefits local breast cancer efforts; Bra Art contest; Hook, Line and Sinker performs

301-475-9791

Recycling Turn-In Event

Sponsor: SMECO

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Great Big Home Show, Capital Clubhouse, 3033 Waldorf Marketplace, Waldorf. Turn-In your old working window A/C unit or dehumidifier for recycling and receive a \$25 reward. We'll even unload it from your vehicle, making drop-off easy and convenient. See the link below for details.

1-888-440-3311

smeco.coop/save-energy-and-money/recycle-refrigerators

October 7

Hide Tanning Workshop

Sponsor: Historic St. Mary's City

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Historic St. Mary's City, Woodland Indian Hamlet (meet at the Visitor Center), 18751 Hogaboom Lane, St. Mary's

October 8

Antique Tractor and Truck Parade

Sponsor: SOMD Antique Power Association

1 to 4 p.m. Leonardtown Square. Restored and working tractors and trucks from Southern Maryland's yesteryear.

301-475-9791

To report an outage:

- **Call:** 1-877-74-SMECO (1-877-747-6326)
- **Online:** www.smeco.coop/outage
- **Mobile app:** Report your outage or view outages from the mobile app. You can download the app for free from Apple iTunes or Google Play. Type SMECO 24/7 in the search field.
- **Text:** Report outages, receive power restoration updates, and request outage status updates through your phone. To sign up, simply text REG (for register) to 76326 (SMECO). Standard data rates may apply.



aroundTOWN

October 14

Treasures Sale

Sponsor: All Saints Episcopal Church

8 a.m. to noon. All Saints Parish Hall, 100 Lower Marlboro Rd, Sunderland. Featured will be gently used items, tools, and antiques. Free admission; free parking.

443-964-4344

allsaints1692.org

October 19

23rd Annual

“When the Hammer Falls” Crab Feast

Sponsor: Susan Vogel

2 to 8:30 p.m. Captain Billy’s Crab House, 11495 Popes Creek Rd, Newburg. Platters or all-you-can-eat crabs. There will be raffles and the infamous cake wheel. Children 5–12 will have choice of kid’s meals and under age 5 eat free. Funds raised will support the Medical Center’s plans for a new Center for Breast Health to provide hope, support, and care for family, friends, and community members as they cope with breast health issues.

301-609-4319

charlesregional.org

October 21

Trick-or-Treat on the Square

Sponsor: Commissioners of Leonardtown

3 to 5 p.m. Leonardtown Square. Trick-or-treating, pet costume contest, crafts and face painting.

301-475-9791

October 28

Bluegrass For Hospice—2017

Sponsor: Hospice of St. Mary’s

Noon to 8 p.m. Flat Iron Farm, Highway to Heaven Lane, Great Mills. Performers will include Sister Sadie, Virginia Ramblers, Patuxent Partners, The Martin Brothers, and Recycled Bluegrass. Featured will be a silent Auction, door prizes, raffles, vendors, and food. Interested vendors can call or visit the website below.

301-737-3004

bluegrassforhospice.com



Prepare your home for cold days ahead

Take advantage of cooler temperatures to get your house ready for the cold months coming. Little changes can make a big difference in the comfort and energy efficiency of your home.

- Weatherize doors and windows with caulking and weather stripping to prevent cold air from entering your home. Use locks on your windows to make them tighter and draft resistant.
- Have your HVAC equipment serviced professionally at least once a year.
- Make sure ductwork is sealed and insulated.
- Keep the area around the outdoor unit of your heat pump clear by removing leaves or snow that can build up and impede the airflow.
- Change your air filter regularly, at least every three months, preferably monthly.
- Install a programmable thermostat.

Small changes add up and every effort made to save energy and save money counts. Make sure to keep lights and appliances turned off when not in use.

If you aren't sure what your house might need, you can sign up for a Quick Home Energy Check-up at no added cost to you. A Check-up professional will perform a one-hour walk-through of your home and provide a summary of important findings, recommended improvements, and opportunities to reduce your energy use and costs.

Find more ways to save energy and save money at smeco.coop/save.