

August AROUND TOWN CALENDAR

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Vendors wanted—
Summerseat Farm
September Artisan
Market

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. 26655 Three
Notch Road, Mechanicsville.

301-373-6607
summerseat.org

Sponsor: Summerseat Farm

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30th Anniversary
L'il Margaret's
Bluegrass and
Old Time Music
Festival

Noon to 10 p.m. Goddard
Farm, 21810 Clay Hill
Road, Leonardtown.

301-737-3004
lilmargaretsbluegrass.com

Sponsor: Jay Armsworthy

11

171st Annual
Festival Dinner
of Old Durham
Church

Noon to 5 p.m. Old Durham
Church, 8700 Ironsides Rd.,
Nanjemoy.

301-743-7099

christchurcholddurhamparish.com

Sponsor: Old Durham Church

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SMECO Annual
Members' Meeting

6 p.m. SMECO Headquarters,
15035 Burnt Store
Road, Hughesville.

888-440-3311

smeco.coop



Congratulations to the SMECO teams of journeyman linemen who brought home a first-place trophy and a stack of other awards from the 2018 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo in May.

Join CoolSentry to save

SMECO's load management program—
CoolSentry—helps save energy and money
during the summer months.

Signing up

- CoolSentry is an opt-in program. Members of the cooperative who would like to participate can call **1-866-921-9474** or visit smecocoolsentry.com to enroll.
- When you enroll, you will select a participation level. This level determines the amount of the credit you will receive from June through September. The participation levels depend on the cycling of your A/C compressor during a conservation event. Regardless of which level you choose, the A/C fan operates continuously throughout the conservation event to circulate air throughout your home.
 - » **Cycling at 50 percent: \$50 in bill credits**
The compressor will operate half the time it did prior to the conservation event.
 - » **Cycling at 75 percent: \$75 in bill credits**
The compressor will operate for a quarter of the time it did prior to the conservation event.
- New CoolSentry participants will receive a free programmable thermostat, professionally installed, or a digital cycling unit (DCU) installed on the outdoor central A/C unit.

Conservation events

- SMECO schedules conservation events **during times of peak demand**. Peak demand times occur when everyone uses a lot of electricity at the same time, usually on the hottest days.
- During a conservation event, a wireless signal is sent to the CoolSentry thermostat or DCU and places the central air conditioning units and heat pumps into conservation mode. The signal will coordinate your A/C or heat pump with others in the neighborhood to reduce electricity use. The temperature in the home may rise slightly, but will stay comfortable.

Practice boating safety around power lines

Boating is a popular activity in Southern Maryland and SMECO would like to remind sailing enthusiasts to be aware of power lines. Check out these safety tips to ensure safer sailing this summer.

Mind your mast

Many sailboats have masts of 30 feet or more. Most of these masts are made of aluminum, which conducts electricity. When rigging or aluminum masts come into contact with electric power lines, a lethal hazard is created.

Before you sail, be sure to step the mast in an area clear of power lines. Ensure that the path you take to the launching ramp will not allow your mast to come into contact with overhead lines.

The National Electrical Safety Code requires that power lines maintain a certain clearance over water or posted launching areas suitable for sailboats. This doesn't guarantee that your mast will not come into contact with the lines. Take the responsibility yourself to see that your mast and rigging stay **at least 10 feet away from all power lines**.

Once you are on the water:

- Continue to keep an eye out for overhead lines because power lines do cross over waterways.
- Make sure that your boat has proper clearance from any overhead lines.
- Your mast must never make contact with power lines.

When you are removing your boat from the water, be sure to inspect the area for possible power lines that may come into contact with the mast as you step it and store it for travel.

Practice safe sailing and enjoy!



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Improvements to your monthly bill and the Account Manager portal can give you more power over your energy use.

2

Keep your family safe around power lines by practicing some simple tips this summer.

3

Join CoolSentry to help reduce peak load on hot days and receive some cool bill credits.

4

Practice boating safety around power lines.

Redesigned bills and online enhancements improve communications to members

The first thing you've probably noticed is the complete overhaul of your monthly SMECO bill. The new design helps make it easier to find the information that you need.

- The amount you owe and the due date are clearly printed at the top.
- To acknowledge your monthly payment, you'll get a "thumbs up" and a "thank you!"
- We've added a "this month, last year" bill comparison to your 13-month history to help you understand your energy use pattern.
- Billing details are easy to find. We're making space on the front for important information by putting all the details of your bill on the back.
- We'll give you energy tips to help you save energy and save money.
- Important messages will be included on the front next to your account summary.
- To review your billing details, just look on the back. They're easy to read.

What's on the horizon?

One benefit of SMECO's new smart meters is the opportunity to see how much energy you've used **BEFORE** you receive your bill. New features will be introduced in the coming months that will give you even more information at your fingertips.

SMECO's online Account Manager will be enhanced so you can see how much energy you used yesterday or last week. Simply sign in to Account Manager to access a wealth of information. In addition to the account summary, payment information and notification preferences already available, you will also be able to see:

- Energy use details by the day and hour, along with weather data
- Bill forecast for current month and bill comparison to previous month

- Your energy usage compared to similar households
- Energy analysis of your home and ways to save

If you do not already have an online account, it's easy to sign up. Simply go to SMECO's website and select Enroll New User. The system will lead you through the steps of creating your online account.

Weekly updates via email

In addition to the new information available through Account Manager, you will receive personalized weekly updates via email with details about your previous week's energy use. An estimate of your upcoming bill—based on your current month's usage—will be included.

By monitoring your energy use, you can prevent a high bill surprise. Have a broken heat pump? Is your well pump running continuously? Did someone leave the hot tub running? Just review your weekly email so you can proactively respond to higher-than-normal energy consumption.

In addition, if your energy use is more than 30 percent higher than usual, you may receive a "high bill alert" via text if you choose. Just go to Notification Preferences in Account Manager to opt in.

The weekly emails will provide personalized weekly updates on your current usage for the billing period and your projected bill based on your current usage, the number of days left in the month, and the weather. The email will also break down the highest usage day to show you your hourly usage to give you more control over your electric bill.

SMECO knows that information is power and the cooperative wants to put that power in your hands.

Help children stay safe around power lines

It's time for fun in the sun as children are out of school and we are in the thick of summer. Warm weather brings a lot of children outside to play and SMECO wants everyone to stay safe.

Electricity always tries to find the easiest path to ground. The best way to stay safe around overhead power lines is to never become that easiest path. Help your children understand these safety tips to keep themselves and their friends safe:

- Never climb on or play in trees that are growing next to power lines.
- Never climb on power poles or transmission towers.
- Never touch a power line with a hand or with any other object, whether the line is in a tree or on the ground.
- Don't build a tree house, fort, or anything else in a tree that is next to power lines.
- Children should tell an adult if they see trees growing close to or touching power lines.
- If children see a power line that has fallen into a tree or onto the ground, they should stay away and tell an adult immediately.
- Don't climb the fence around an electric substation. If your child loses a ball or a pet gets inside the fence, they should tell an adult who can contact SMECO.
- Keep balloons, kites, fishing lines, and aluminum ladders away from overhead power lines. Any of these items may conduct electricity and can bring that electricity through the person holding the object on its way to the ground.
- Keep electrical appliances away from water.
- Do not sit on or play around the electrical transformer boxes found in neighborhoods.

Adults should be careful outside, too!

Overhead power lines carry high voltages and maintain only a coating of insulation to protect them from weathering. If your body or anything you are touching comes in contact with the power line, the results could be fatal. Electricity will course through your equipment and you, and that current can heat up and burn the tissue inside the body. If you become the easiest path to ground, the results could be deadly.

Some things to remember:

- If you are using farm equipment or other machinery, including metal ladders, and any part of it comes in contact with an overhead line, the equipment and you will become the easiest path to ground. If you are doing any work close to power lines—such as trimming trees, working on your roof, or doing exterior renovations—keep yourself, your ladder and anything you are handling a safe distance from the power line.
- Keep equipment away from overhead lines when carrying ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning tools.
- If a tree is in contact with an overhead power line and you attempt to remove the tree, you can become the easiest path to the ground.
- Contact SMECO to disconnect power if you are doing work that requires close contact with overhead lines attached to your home.
- Use a licensed electrician for all electrical work in and around your home or business.
- Plant trees at least 30 feet from overhead lines.
- In addition to overhead lines, SMECO has many underground electric lines. Call Miss Utility at 811 before you dig to have underground utilities marked.

