

August AROUND TOWN CALENDAR

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Pitch Card Party
7:30 to 10 p.m.
Knights of Columbus Hall,
16441 Three Notch Rd. Ridge.
301-872-5114
Sponsor: Ridge Lions Club

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National Lighthouse Weekend at Piney Point Lighthouse
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Piney Point Lighthouse Museum.
301-994-1471
Facebook.com/1836Light
Sponsor: St. Mary's County Museum Division

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Dinner and a Cruise at St. Clement's Island Museum
4 to 8 p.m. St. Clement's Island Museum and Morris Point Restaurant.
301-769-2222
Facebook.com/SCIMuseum
Sponsor: St. Mary's County Museum Division

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Children's Day at St. Clement's Island Museum
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. St. Clement's Island Museum.
301-769-2222
Sponsor: St. Mary's County Museum Division

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SMECO Annual Members' Meeting
6 p.m. Middleton Hall,
4045 Renner Road, Waldorf.
1-888-440-3311
smeco.coop/annualmeeting
Sponsor: SMECO

Your 2019 annual meeting ballot will be mailed around July 22.

You can vote online or by mail.

All completed ballots must be received by August 22, 2019.

Make bill paying easier

Month after month, it's the same thing. Stacks of bills jammed into your mail box, hours spent paying bills; or worse, you get caught up in the busy day to day, forget to pay a bill and then end up with late notices and fees to pay. Set it and forget it with SMECO, and let bill payments manage themselves.

Sign up for AutoPay

Avoid late fees and the hassle of writing your monthly check by signing up for AutoPay (smeco.coop/autopay). Once you have signed up for AutoPay, your SMECO bills are paid automatically each month: smeco.coop/autopay

Budget your electric bill

Wish you knew how much your electric bill would be each month? Sign up for Budget Billing and you will. The Budget Plan (smeco.coop/budget) averages out the fluctuations in monthly bills by evening out the payments. Instead of high bills in the winter and summer months, and low bills in spring and fall, you will pay the same amount each month—no surprises. (Residential customers only.)

Go paperless!

Join in on online billing and stop receiving monthly paper bills. Your current bill will be emailed to you and your old bills are available online.

Your feedback is requested

Do you have a home or business in Charles County? If so, please take a few minutes to respond to a questionnaire regarding internet service. The questionnaire can be found on the front page of the County's website at www.charlescountymd.gov.

Charles County Government is currently gathering information to pinpoint areas where high-speed internet service is not available. The information collected from the questionnaire will only be used to analyze areas in the County that have access to internet service and those that do not.

If you would like a copy of the questionnaire mailed to you, please contact the County at BroadbandTaskForce@CharlesCountyMD.gov.

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 heat pump or AC unit.

Conservation events

- SMECO operates 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.



1

Learn how to keep children and adults safe around power lines this summer.

2

Budget your bill and sign up for AutoPay to make paying your monthly bill even easier.

3

Charles County residents, your feedback is requested.

4

Join CoolSentry to save.

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 power poles or transmission towers.
- Never climb on or play in trees that are growing next to power lines.
- Don't build a tree house, fort, or anything else in a tree that is next to power lines.
- 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 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.



- Do not sit on or play around the electrical transformer boxes found in neighborhoods.
- Never touch a power line or contact it with any other object, whether the line is in a tree or on the ground.

- 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.
- Keep electrical appliances away from water.

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.

- If you are using farm equipment or other machinery, including 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.

