

## January AROUND TOWN CALENDAR

1

### New Year's Day 5K Run/Walk with Virtual Option

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. 305 Prince  
Frederick Boulevard, Prince  
Frederick.

410-535-4787

active.com/prince-frederick-md/  
running/5k-new-year-s-day-run-  
walk-2020

Sponsor: Southern Maryland  
Community Network Inc.

Find more events  
at [smeco.coop/  
aroundtown](http://smeco.coop/aroundtown).

19

### American Legion Bluegrass—The Grascals

2 to 5 p.m. American Legion  
Post 238, MD Rt. 381 and 231,  
Hughesville.

301-737-3004

[americanlegionbluegrass.com](http://americanlegionbluegrass.com)

Sponsor: Sons of the  
American Legion

January 1:  
New Year's Day

January 20:  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
SMECO offices closed. Customer  
Care Center is available 24/7.

1-888-440-3311  
[smeco.coop](http://smeco.coop)

## Sign up for Members Helping Members and get a gift

As a thank you, those who sign up for  
Members Helping Members **between  
November 15, 2019, and February 15,  
2020**, will receive a reward based on their  
level of giving.

- Sign up for the \$1 level (\$12 annually) to receive a safety vest (one size fits most).
- Sign up for the \$5 level (\$60 annually) to receive a retractable LED lantern.
- Sign up for the \$10 level (\$120 annually) to receive a solar address sign.

For more information, visit [smeco.coop/mhm](http://smeco.coop/mhm)

## Small changes can help you save money this winter

Cold weather directly translates into higher energy usage, which results in higher energy bills. For members who want to save money, these small changes can help reduce energy use when the weather is cold.

- Keep window blinds and curtains open during the day to let in sunlight, but close them at night to keep cold air out. Use cellular blinds and insulated curtains.
- Heating systems account for a significant portion of a residential customer's energy use, so wear warm clothes inside and turn down the thermostat. SMECO recommends 68 degrees.
- Make sure to clean or replace the filters on your heating system monthly.
- Do not set your heat pump to run in emergency heat mode or auxiliary heat mode, because the resistance heat elements cost more to operate.
- Do not change your heat pump thermostat manually more than two degrees at a time. Find the coolest comfortable setting and leave it there. Moving the thermostat setting up by more than two degrees manually may cause your auxiliary heat to come on, which costs more to run.
- Use bathroom exhaust fans only when needed. They pull warm air and humidity out of the house.
- Keep outdoor heat pump unit free from leaves, snow, ice, and other air blockages.
- Have system serviced by a licensed HVAC technician annually to ensure peak efficiency.

Energy use varies based on many factors, including the amount of insulation and the type of heating system in the home. Adjusting your energy use on cold days can help control winter electric bills. Find more ways to save this winter at [smeco.coop/save](http://smeco.coop/save).

## SMECO weathered major storms during Slater's presidency

- 2003:** Sept. 18, Hurricane Isabel knocked out power to more than 74,000 members.
- 2005:** A major snow storm causes about 25,800 outages in February. Tropical Depression Ernesto caused outages to over 25,000 in September.
- 2007:** February brought two winter storms that caused major damage, and then a windstorm blew through in April causing more than 47,000 outages.
- 2010:** Starting with a blizzard on Feb. 5, winter delivered a one-two punch to Southern Maryland. There were a total of 1,232 incidents from Feb. 5 to Feb. 11; 85 percent had service restored within one day.
- 2011:** On Aug. 27, Hurricane Irene devastated Southern Maryland and plunged more than 70 percent of SMECO members into darkness. All service was restored within seven days.
- 2012:** On June 29, a "super derecho" left a 700-mile trail of destruction. The derecho gave almost no warning. Almost 84,000 customers experienced a sustained interruption in power related to this event.
- Hurricane Sandy brushed Southern Maryland on Oct. 29. All power was restored by Oct. 30.
- 2018:** Winter Storm Riley brought damaging winds on March 2, causing extensive damage to SMECO's electric system. In total, the cooperative experienced 114,000 customer interruptions.

Irene, Riley, and the derecho were some of the most devastating storms in SMECO's history.



- 1 SMECO's president and CEO announces retirement.
- 2 Sign up for Members Helping Members and receive a thank-you gift.
- 3 Small changes can help you save money this winter.
- 4 SMECO weathered major storms during Slater's presidency.

# SMECO CEO announces retirement

SMECO president and CEO Austin J. Slater, Jr., submitted his retirement letter to the Board of Directors at the monthly board meeting held Tuesday, October 15, 2019.

In his letter, Slater recounted his tenure as CEO for the past 17 years as rewarding. "I have proudly worked for our cooperative for more than 33 years," Slater said. "It is impossible for me to imagine my life without the time devoted, relationships made, and rewarding accomplishments I've experienced and shared with so many people here at SMECO and in the Southern Maryland community."

Slater joined SMECO in 1979 as senior vice president of the Finance and Accounting Department. He left in 1995 to become the lead for utility management practice for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He served as CEO and general manager of Tideland Electric Membership Corporation in North Carolina before returning to NRECA as vice president of national consulting and training. Slater returned to SMECO in December 2002 as the CEO.



*Under Slater's leadership, the cooperative has increased reliability, improved its financial stability, and provided updated technological options to improve the member experience.*

Scott White, Chairman of the SMECO Board of Directors, said, "Joe's leadership of the co-op has been transformational. His impact on SMECO, our employees, our members and the Southern Maryland community has been truly noteworthy. We completed the Southern Maryland Reliability Project, installed smart meters throughout our service area, built a new engineering and operations facility, and invested in technological upgrades that benefit all of SMECO's members. It takes great leadership skills to run an organization like SMECO, and Joe has displayed courage, vision, confidence, inspiration, and dedication in his role as CEO."

To allow time for the board to select a replacement and ensure a smooth transition, Slater said that he would continue in his role as long as necessary, but that the process should be completed and a new CEO should be in place in March 2020.

## The cooperative has grown under Slater's presidency

	2003	2019
Total customers	128,046	166,275
System peak	720 MW*	1,010.7 MW**
Total miles of line	8,909.1	10,345.4
Number of substations	44	54
Capital credits refunded to date: General refunds	\$42,767,565	\$82,381,682
Capital credits refunded to date: Estates	\$8,173,000	\$19,864,927
Total full-time employees	450	471

\*January 2003

\*\* January 2018

## Major milestones under Slater's leadership

SMECO switched to a computerized outage management system so crews in the field could send and receive outage information instantly. The new system replaced printed outage tickets and radio-dispatched crews.

SMECO launched the mobile workforce, equipping key vehicles with computers to enable field employees to increase efficiency and response time.

The state-of-the-art Engineering and Operations Center in Hughesville officially opened.

The cooperative began construction of a new double-circuit 69-kV transmission line from La Plata to Waldorf.

SMECO Solar LLC went live on November 18.

SMECO deployed smart meters throughout Southern Maryland. The cooperative determined that installing smart meters would provide infrastructure that would benefit its members immediately and over the long term.

Annual meeting voting was held by mail for the first time.

In the fall, SMECO and the College of Southern Maryland launched Practical Electrical Utility Worker Training, a 12-week program of pre-apprentice courses focusing on the construction trade. During the first semester, five students began the program.

2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

Customers could now access bills and pay them online. Call center hours were extended to provide 24/7 access for customers.

*Implementing these many improvements increased reliability and outage response times for years to come.*

On May 1, SMECO took over responsibility for the electric systems at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, NESEA's Webster Field facility in St. Inigoes, and the Navy Recreation Center in Solomons.

SMECO launched Members Helping Members. SMECO celebrated one million hours worked without loss of time or a disabling accident.

SMECO completed the Southern Maryland Reliability Project. The project started conceptually in the '70s and construction on the final Calvert-St. Mary's section began in 2009. The seven-year, \$108-million project was constructed under budget and ahead of schedule and completed a 230-kilovolt (kV) loop throughout SMECO's service territory. On April 7, 2015, an insulator on a Pepco line failed and caused the Pepco transmission line to fall to the ground. Power went out for thousands of people from southern St. Mary's County to College Park, including the White House. Thanks to the completion of the 230-kV Southern Maryland Reliability Project, power to most SMECO customers was restored within about half an hour.

The cooperative launched the SMECO 24/7 mobile app and texting services.