

September
AROUND TOWN CALENDAR

1

Yard Sale

7 a.m. to noon.
Children's Aid Society,
3000 Huntington
Circle, Waldorf.
301-908-1680
childrens-aid-
society.com

Children's Day
at St. Clement's
Island Museum

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
St. Clement's
Island Museum.
301-769-2222
Facebook.com/
SCIMuseum

Sponsor: St. Mary's
County Museum
Division

National
Lighthouse
Weekend at Piney
Point Lighthouse

10 a.m. to 5 pm.
Piney Point
Lighthouse Museum.
301-994-1471
Facebook.com/
1837Light

18
Rochelle Rice—
Coming Home

7:30 to 9 p.m.
St. George's Episcopal
Church, 19167 Poplar
Hill Lane, Valley Lee.
301-481-9929
musicfrom
poplarhill.org

Sponsor: Music from
Poplar Hill

Sponsor: St. Mary's
County Museum
Division

15

Run for the Arts
Virtual 5k

You pick the location.
301-743-5159
mattawomanart.org
Sponsor: Mattawoman
Creek Art Center

September 7:
Labor Day
SMECO offices closed.
Customer Care Center
is available 24/7.
1-888-440-3311
smeco.coop

Find more events at smeco.coop/aroundtown.
Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, some events
may be cancelled or postponed.

EV charging stations coming to SOMD soon

SMECO has partnered with Greenlots, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shell New Energies, to install up to 60 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the cooperative's service area in the next five years. The first charging station should be operational within the next few months.

SMECO's EV charging station pilot program was approved by the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) in 2019. SMECO is working with state, municipal, and local governments to determine locations for the public electric vehicle chargers. These installations will include level 2 chargers and direct current fast chargers.

EV owners can use a driver-friendly mobile app—the Greenlots Mobile App—to find the nearest station, start and end charging, easily make payments, and receive real-time notifications.

The cooperative has received great interest from local governments looking to provide stations for public use. Keep an eye on our website as SMECO announces the upcoming locations.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Installing a smart power strip is a quick and easy way to start saving money while making your home more energy efficient. Smart power strips can actually cut power off to save energy since they are able to detect when a device is in standby mode.

Source: energy.gov



Need help paying your bill?

SMECO knows that many of our members continue to be impacted by COVID-19. We want you to know that you may be eligible for help from the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) or the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) offered by the state.

Do you qualify?

If you need assistance, funding is available for those who qualify. Maryland's Department of Human Services offers assistance through the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). Apply online at www.dhs.maryland.gov/energy. If you need assistance, call 1-800-332-6347. For info about assistance, visit dhs.maryland.gov/office-of-home-energy-programs/how-do-you-apply/

Be advised that EUSP participants are required to be enrolled in a monthly budget payment plan. MEAP customers have the option to participate in a special budget payment plan offered through the Utility Service Protection Program (USPP). If you fail to make your monthly payments after being placed on a payment plan, you can be dropped from the program and your service can be turned off.

Payment arrangements

If you are not able to pay a past due balance, call SMECO at 1-888-440-3311 to inquire about payment plan options, or go online and log in to Account Manager. You can use the "payment arrangements" link to select a one-month, three-month, or six-month option. If your online request is not accepted, you can follow up with our customer care center or use the chat feature on our website.

www.dhs.maryland.gov/energy
1-800-332-6347



- 1 Be prepared for hurricane season.
- 2 Electricity brings everyday value.
- 3 EV charging stations are coming to Southern Maryland soon.
- 4 Energy efficiency tip of the month—install a smart power strip to help you save.
- 5 If you need help paying your bill, resources are available.

Be prepared for hurricane season

With all of the events of 2020, it might be easy to forget that we are in the heart of hurricane season (June to November). Southern Maryland residents should take measures to plan and prepare.

While hurricanes in Maryland are unusual, the state sometimes sustains damage—and some fatalities—from these powerful storms.

Tropical storms frequently cause flooding, coastal storm surge, and wind damage and often spawn tornadoes and thunderstorms. Widespread power outages may result. Residents are urged to learn their vulnerabilities and take action to reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster.

You should be able to answer the following questions before a hurricane threatens:

- What are the hurricane hazards most likely in your area?
- What does it mean to you?
- What actions should you take to be prepared?

Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community. Listen to local announcements about evacuations in the event of an emergency and heed the warnings of local officials.

For additional information on hurricane preparedness, visit the National Hurricane Center at nhc.noaa.gov.

Be prepared

Whether facing a hurricane or a summer storm, it's a good idea to always be prepared for a power outage. Visit smeco.coop/safety and select *Preparing for a Power Outage* for a list of ways to prepare for a power outage.

Please note: if you plan to use a portable generator, place the generator outside, not in the house, crawl space, basement, or attached garage. Make sure your generator is connected safely as an improperly connected generator can cause serious injury or death. When your power comes back on, turn off and disconnect your generator immediately.

During an Outage

If you experience a power outage, turn off all the major appliances in your home, especially the heat pump. This will prevent damage to the appliances once the power is restored. When power is restored, try not to turn everything back on at once; turn on appliances gradually so the electric demand does not jump suddenly.

Make sure the oven and stove are off to prevent fires if the power comes back on while you're away. Do not set dishes, towels, or paper on the stove; these may catch on fire if a burner is on when the power comes on.

Leave the freezer and refrigerator closed so food will stay cold longer.

Never touch downed power lines or attempt to remove trees from power lines. Contact with live lines may result in serious injury or death. Let qualified SMECO crews handle the clearing and repair work. Please report downed power lines to SMECO immediately by calling 1-888-440-3311.

If you experience an outage at any time, call SMECO's Outage Hotline at 1-877-74-SMECO or 1-877-747-6326. You can also download the SMECO 24/7 app (visit smeco.coop/247 for info). To sign up for text alerts, simply text REG to 76326 (SMECO). Visit smeco.coop/textme for more information or manage text messages by going to Notification Preferences in Account Manager.

Electricity brings everyday value

Most people don't think much about the electricity they use. We expect the lights to turn on when we flip the switch and the coffeemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Many of us have been spending more time at home over the past few months and we have likely been using more energy. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out or perhaps when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Many people have a cell phone to stay connected, and a lot of us subscribe to cable channels so we can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we're getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our budgets. For comparison, consider that the average rent increase was nearly 4 percent (from 2014–2019) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI). The cost of medical care was increased 3 percent during this time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6 percent. So, where did electricity rank? According to the CPI, electricity increased by less than half a percentage point, 0.4 percent.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. In fact, SMECO members experience an average of 1.23 outages lasting just 1.52 hours each year. Considering that electricity is something that we all use around the clock, we're very proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions, and reduce costs. We are continually working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and exploring more renewable energy options where possible.

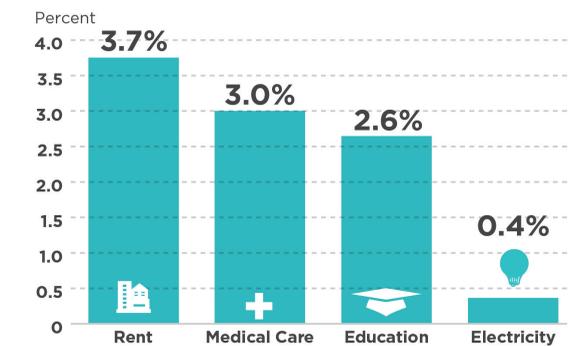
SMECO provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the cooperative. And as your trusted energy advisor, we want to help you save energy and money.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save energy at home, please give us a call. SMECO is your electric cooperative and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index