

January
AROUND TOWN CALENDAR

23

Appraiser Fair at St. Clement's Island Museum

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
St. Clement's Island Museum.
301-769-2222
Facebook.com/SCIMuseum

Sponsor: St. Mary's County Museum Division

SMECO holidays

January 1:
New Year's Day

January 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. 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.

Scholarships are available

SMECO is offering four \$2500 scholarships to eligible high school seniors who want to be prepared for what the future has to offer.

Application deadline: April 6, 2021

Visit smeco.coop/scholarships for eligibility requirements and to download the application.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy bills can increase during winter for a variety of reasons, like houseguests, more time spent at home, and shorter days and longer nights. Small actions, like turning down your thermostat, replacing old bulbs with LEDs and washing clothes in cold water can help you save.

Source: energy.gov



SMECO installs public EV charger

In late October, SMECO broke ground for the installation of a level 2 electric vehicle (EV) charger at the St. Mary's County Library in Leonardtown. This is the first of up to 60 public EV charging stations the cooperative will be installing in Southern Maryland in the next five years.

In partnership with Greenlots, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shell New Energies, SMECO has been working with state, municipal, and local governments to determine locations for the public EV chargers. These installations will include level 2 chargers and direct current fast chargers available for public use.

EV owners will be able to 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.

Keep an eye on our website at smeco.coop/recharge as SMECO announces additional upcoming locations.



Track energy use in Account Manager

Projections are favoring a mild winter, but if temperatures drop, energy use will go up. The amount of energy you use changes from day to day based on the weather and your household activities. SMECO has tools available that make it easier than ever to monitor your energy use and forecast your electric bill.

Use Account Manager to avoid surprises on your electric bill and take steps to save. When you log in to view or pay your bill, review your account, or update your Notification Preferences in Account Manager, your energy use data will appear.

Energy use data is collected from your meter. If you have a smart meter, your usage is shown in 15-minute intervals. Accounts that don't have smart meters have monthly data available. (Most of the information provided is geared toward residential accounts and may not apply to commercial accounts.)

Under the Energy Use Details tab, you will find graphs that show your energy use and monthly bill information, along with average temperatures, to provide insights into how much energy you use and when you use it.

Account Manager also provides bill forecasting so you can keep an eye on how much you are spending. Under the Bill Forecast tab, you can review how much energy you've used to date in your current billing period.

After at least seven days of the billing period, you will see what you are projected to spend for the remaining days in the billing period. The dollar amounts are estimates. Your bill will vary based on actual energy use, taxes, and fees.

If you are looking for ways to save, you will find handy tips to help you reduce your bill on this tab, too.

Learn more at smeco.coop/account/online-billing.



- 1 Cooperative highlights from 2020.
- 2 Scholarships are available.
- 3 Energy efficiency tip: take small actions to help you save this winter.
- 4 SMECO installs public EV charger.
- 5 Track your energy use in Account Manager and find ways to save.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

A new president takes the helm

SMECO announced in January 2020 that **Sonja Cox** was awarded the position of SMECO president and CEO. Prior to her promotion, Cox was the senior vice president of Finance,



Sonja Cox

Economic, and Employee Services and chief financial officer (CFO) for 14 years. She began her career with SMECO in 1999, and has served as financial reporting supervisor, business analyst, accounting and budgeting manager, and energy resource director.

Cox officially started in her new role as the fifth CEO of SMECO on March 1, 2020. Within three weeks, life at SMECO and throughout the country would look drastically different because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While Cox had mapped out her goals for the first year of her presidency, the coronavirus added a new and more immediate priority. A pandemic team was put together and within two weeks, the landscape of daily life started to change. Information about the pandemic was changing daily and there was a constant shift in how people were being advised to handle the crisis as it took shape.

Cox and the pandemic team instituted plans for the cooperative to navigate the pandemic with the health and safety of the SMECO employees and members in mind, while also maintaining reliable customer service.

The first major step was to move as many employees out of the buildings as possible. Getting a majority of SMECO's employees transitioned to teleworking was an amazing effort on the part of the SMECO team. Within 12 business days, SMECO's IT department had transitioned 241 employees to teleworkers. The

speed and efficiency of the shift was possible because of the cooperative's investment in technology and its employees.

In some positions, teleworking was not an option and these essential on-site workers needed to be kept safe as well. Crews were provided with face coverings and additional vehicles so they would not be sharing the enclosed space of a vehicle. Employees in SMECO's operations center—an extremely critical group that can't work from home—were isolated from the rest of the business. They were given a separate entrance and exit to limit their exposure to other people. Among many other measures put into place to help keep employees safe, entrances have hand sanitizer or cleaning stations.

Even as Cox navigated the constantly shifting landscape of the pandemic, with a tropical storm or two as well, she was still able to accomplish some of her early goals. She promoted a replacement for the vacancy created when she left her former position, hired a Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, and is currently working on several other initiatives.

SMECO promotes and welcomes new senior staff

In the October *Cooperative Review*, SMECO announced **Campbell Hawkins** as the cooperative's senior vice president and chief strategy and innovation officer.

In addition to welcoming Hawkins, two employees were promoted to vice president.

Beth Kennedy was promoted from controller to vice president of financial services & CFO. Kennedy began her career at SMECO as a clerk typist in the Leonardtown service department in July



Beth Kennedy

1999. From clerk, Kennedy moved up to cashier, accounting clerk, chief accounting clerk, energy accounting and credit specialist, and energy procurement manager before becoming controller of the cooperative in August 2014.

Kennedy has a bachelor of science degree in accounting and a master of science degree in international management from University of Maryland University College. She is also a Certified Public Accountant licensed in the state of Maryland.

Cindy Rauner became the vice president of human resources. Rauner began her career with SMECO 11 years ago as the employment manager.



Cindy Rauner

Rauner holds a bachelor of science in economics and a master's degree in human resource management. She has worked for more than 20 years in human resources and organizational development, with expertise that includes labor relations, performance management, recruitment, training and development, diversity, benefits, and wellness administration.

Employees raise \$55,700 for area hospitals

In October, SMECO donated \$55,700 to three local hospitals in Southern Maryland to support hospitals' care providers and operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The three hospitals were CalvertHealth in Prince Frederick, University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UM CRMC) in La Plata, and MedStar St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown.

Each organization received \$18,566. SMECO selected these three organizations as this year's recipients because their services are vital to our communities, and their budgets and personnel have been stretched thin during the pandemic.

The cooperative planned to hold the annual charity golf outing and bike ride, but determined that the health risk was too great. SMECO's employees would like to express their

immeasurable appreciation to the vendors who whole-heartedly agreed to honor their donations to the charitable events.

Major bike ride contributors include Adams, Jenkins and Cheatham; Booth and Associates; Community Bank of the Chesapeake; Duncan Weinberg Genzer Pembroke; Glen and Barbara Ives; ICF International; McNees Wallace and Nurick LLC; New River Electrical Corporation; Penn Line; Prudential; Schiebel Construction; Sumter Utilities; TRC Solutions; UDC; and VFP; and we thank them for their support.

The cooperative's employees would also like to thank the Golf Outing sponsors for their generous contributions. Platinum Sponsors include Altec, Anixter, AUI Power, Brandywine Power, ICF International, Irby Utilities, New River Electrical Corporation, The Okonite Company, Sargent & Lundy LLC, Southern Maryland Cable, and Wesco Utility. Gold Sponsors include SMO Energy. We rely on them for their donations and appreciate their assistance.

The ninth bike ride is planned for fall 2021. For eight years, SMECO held the event on the first Saturday in June, and many of the cyclists participated in all of our annual rides. By hosting the event in the fall, SMECO hopes to avoid any concerns about the pandemic next year.



Accepting a contribution from SMECO on behalf of the hospital are, from left, Craig Renner, Director of Marketing and Communications for the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UM CRMC) and Leanne Lakes, Chair of the UM CRMC Foundation. Natalie Cotton, at right, SMECO's government affairs and community relations director, presents the contribution of \$18,566 to the hospital.