



Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



December SVEC Major Outages

Dec. 8 Briery Branch area
500 members out for 1 hour
Cow rubbing pole and guy wire

Dec. 9 Clear Brook/Brucetown areas
600 members out for 1 hour
Line on protective setting to protect workers

Dec. 21 Fox Drive area
975 members out for ½ hour
Line on protective setting to protect workers

SVEC offices will be closed all day Friday, March 25, for Good Friday. Offices will reopen Monday, March 28.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 236
147 Dinkel Avenue – Hwy. 257
Mt. Crawford, VA 22841-0236
800-234-SVEC (7832)
Office Hours: M-F, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.svec.coop

President & CEO
Myron D. Rummel

Board Chair
Robbie F. Marchant

Local Pages Editor
J. Michael Aulgur

Writers
Cammie Tutwiler
Preston Knight

For all questions concerning advertising, contact Cooperative Living at 804-346-3344.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. SVEC supports our armed services and veterans in employment opportunities.

2016 Nominating Committee Selected

The Board of Directors of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has selected its Nominating Committee for the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting. It is the duty of this Committee to select candidates for the election of directors to be held during the business portion of the Annual Meeting.

During the 2016 meeting member-owners of SVEC will elect two directors from Rockingham County.

The incumbents from Rockingham County are Stephen Burkholder, who resides in the Broadway-Timberville area, and Larry Garber, who resides in Pleasant Valley.

If you, as a member-owner of the Cooperative, know someone you feel should be a candidate for the SVEC Board of Directors, contact one of the Nominating Committee members. Listed below are the members of this Committee and their addresses.

Potential candidates for the 12-member Board must be members of SVEC and bona fide residents of its service area. The Cooperative's bylaws say that candidates must be at least 21 years of age and may not, in any way, be employed by a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative.

The only other method for putting an individual up for election, other than through the Nominating Committee, is by petition. Section 4 of Article IV of the Shenandoah Valley Electric Bylaws states that, "Any two hundred fifty (250) or more Members acting together may make other nominations by petition" Nominations made by petition, if any, must be received by the Secretary at least twenty (20) days before the Annual Meeting for a name to be placed on the official ballot.

Remember, this is YOUR electric cooperative, so take an active role, and be sure to attend the 2016 Annual Membership Meeting, June 9 at the James Madison University Convocation Center.

2016 NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rockingham County

Name	Address
Dennis L. Cupp	7422 Community Center Road Bridgewater, VA 22812
Dwight W. Newman	5240 Pleasant Valley Road Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Susan B. Phillips	9578 Brady Lane Harrisonburg, VA 22802
Dewey L. Ritchie	10191 Acorn Lane Broadway, VA 22815

SVEC Braves Winter Storm

During the January winter snow that was commonly called Jonas, parts of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative's service territory received more than 30 inches of snow over a two-day period, from Jan. 22-23. Snow started late morning on Friday, Jan. 22, and finally ended the evening of Saturday, Jan. 23, with some winds adding to drifting of the fluffy snow that had piled up.

Fortunately, SVEC reported only a small number of outages related to this storm system. Though the storm brought 20-30 inches of snow, the consistency was airy and light, and winds were enough to prevent the snow from weighing down trees and allowing any accumulation to lay on the lines. While we strive to not have any member-owners without service, we were fortunate that, given the severity of the storm, only a small number of outages did occur.

SVEC's employees work extremely hard throughout the entire year trimming trees, clearing rights-of-way, talking to consumers, and establishing lines of communication so that events like this are minimal as it pertains to the impact on our system and members.

SVEC made sure to have the personnel in place to respond safely and quickly to any outages, including our linemen, as well as more than 100 contracted workers



Crews from Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative braved deep snow west of Winchester in January.

to assist throughout our service territory. Many other Cooperative employees, including CSRs, managers, and senior staff, also spent much of Jan. 22-24

working to ensure that member-owners' needs were met, in keeping with our stated mission of: "We Exist to Serve Our Member-Owners."

Brighten Your Day with Eazy Pay

A quick and easy way to make a payment, with no fee, is to sign up for the SVEC Eazy Pay program. With Eazy Pay, the amount of your electric bill is automatically deducted from your financial institution account. This convenient program is secure and safe, and means that you will no longer need to write a check, go to a payment center, or worry about late payment. You will also be able to save on postage rates, which seem to increase every year. There are a couple of ways to sign up for Eazy Pay: enroll online at our website, www.svec.coop; print an authorization form online, pick up a brochure at your local district office, and fill out the information and return it to SVEC with a voided check (checking account) or deposit slip (savings account).

Please call your local district office if you have any questions regarding the Eazy Pay plan.

SVEC Continues Food Drive Through March 10



The most-needed items are:

- Cereal
 - Peanut Butter
 - Canned Meats
 - Canned Soups & Stews
 - Canned Fruits & Veggies
 - 100% Juice
 - Boxed Mac & Cheese
 - Spaghetti Sauce
 - Pasta & Rice
 - Paper Products
 - Personal Care Items
- Please do **NOT** donate glass items.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) is holding a food drive for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank through March 10. All of our district offices, and the headquarters office in Mount Crawford, will have barrels inside the front door for SVEC member-owners to drop off food for the hungry. All locations are open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank serves nearly 120,000 people each month in 25 counties and nine cities. All jurisdictions that SVEC serves are also served by the food bank, which is based in Verona. Food from SVEC's drive will be donated to the food bank's Winchester and Verona area branches.

We appreciate your help in feeding the hungry during this winter season. For more information on the food bank, visit www.brafb.org. For more information about the SVEC food drive, you can contact Cammie Tutwiler at Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

Underground vs. Overhead: Outages

Story and Photos by Preston Knight, SVEC Writer

In the article last month, “Underground vs. Overhead: Cost Matters,” it was explained why underground power lines haven’t completely replaced their overhead counterparts. Despite the fact underground lines tend to be more reliable and are less likely to fail, they generally have higher installation and maintenance costs than the overhead alternative.

Another notable disadvantage for underground lines is the ability to find the source of an extended outage when power is lost from beneath the surface. That’s because the problem is most likely buried about three feet underground.

For Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) line crews, it can be a tedious process of elimination to identify what needs repair.

“Everything that leads up to [restoration] takes so much time,” Manager of Distribution Systems Ben Cash said.

The most obvious difference in restoring power to underground lines versus overhead is the visual component: You can’t fix what you can’t see.

For underground troubles, it’s instead a matter of fixing what you hear or feel first. Crews use a “thumping” device to connect to failed underground line sections that will send signals over the line to pinpoint the exact location of the problem, Line Superintendent Scott Austin said.

“At this time you could start your repairs,” he said.

Even as fault-indicator technology and sectionalizing equipment decrease the time it takes to isolate a problem, Austin said line crews could still have about a three-hour delay in digging since they might have to wait for Miss Utility. The restoration could then require digging down several feet to create space large enough for a lineman to handle the underground cable.

That’s a pretty complicated solution compared to the relatively simple eye test used for overhead issues that can lead to an almost immediate fix. It’s easy to spot a downed wire, a bad insulator or transformer, or a tree on the line caused by weather or human error of someone cutting a limb onto the line.

“They will be able to find these issues with a visual inspection of the lines, and

once the problems are found, they can start the repairs,” Austin said.

Cash said, “At least when bad weather hits, with ice and trees hanging on lines, that weather does not affect the underground cable.”

It’s important to understand that underground lines aren’t foolproof. They are more vulnerable to soil corrosion, the movement of moisture into the cable and animals that may find their way in to wreak havoc. Age is also a factor in causing outages. Underground lines don’t last as long as overhead wires, though technological advancements have been made over the years.

Flooding can also be a major issue for buried wire, and lightning still has an impact, too, the U.S. Energy Information Administration notes on its website.

“Underground distribution circuits are typically still linked to above-ground facilities, such as substations and transmission lines, so homes and buildings served by underground infrastructure will not necessarily be spared in the event of system-wide outages from a major storm,” the agency states.

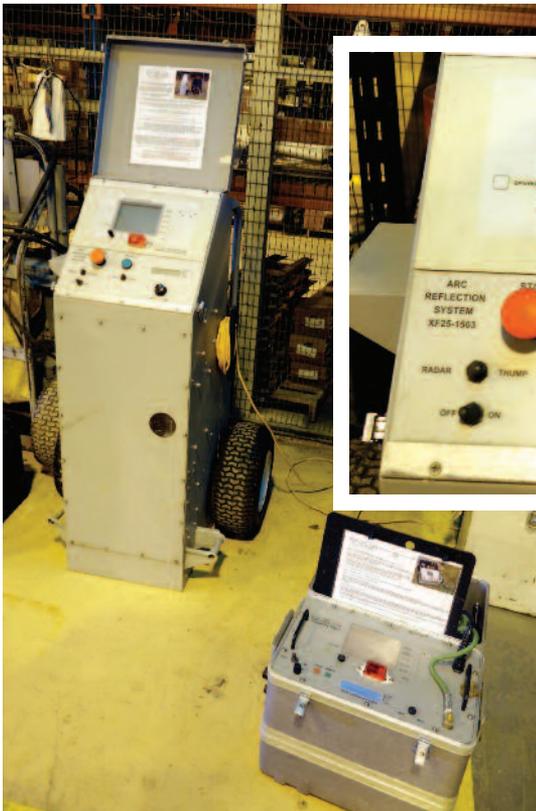
At SVEC, underground-related outages are fairly uncommon since these facilities are protected from most dangers. Since December 2012, only about 2 percent of the overall time that SVEC member-owners have been out of power has been linked to underground components, Manager of District Operations Greg Rogers said.

However, it’s still a situation the Cooperative monitors closely.

“While the number is low, it is increasing,” Rogers said. “When it does affect consumers, it is significant in their minds due to the property damage of digging a new ditch in established subdivisions and the length of the outage they experience.”

The general lesson to take away is that underground lines provide a tradeoff when outages occur. Ice and wind aren’t factors as they are for overhead cable, but rectifying any problem can be time consuming and may require a considerable digging expense for the Cooperative.

If you missed last month’s article, view the February local pages at www.svec.coop/Cooperative-Living-Magazine.



SVEC crews use “thumping” devices, including a suitcase-sized version, to locate faults in underground lines.



STRENGTH IN PEERS

www.StrengthInPeers.org (540) 459-2511

Group Finds Strength in Peers

Story and Photo by Preston Knight, SVEC Writer

As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child.

But isn't that same infrastructure required for an adult in need?

Strength in Peers, a new support organization serving Page, Shenandoah and Rockingham counties, takes that approach in helping people overcome their experience with mental health and substance abuse problems. Through in-house peer-support specialists and a network of community organizations that assist in the cause, the group guides individuals to meet their personal goals and lead richer, healthier lives.

"We want to focus on communities we call home," Director Nicky Fadley said.

Strength in Peers serves people at risk of having unmet substance abuse or mental health needs, including veterans, first responders, low-income households and the area's homeless population. It opened last summer at 139 S. Main St. in Woodstock.

A second office in downtown Harrisonburg focuses on the needs of Rockingham County and Harrisonburg residents who are re-entering society after being jailed or imprisoned. That office works with the Harrisonburg Rockingham Page Reentry Council, which is a collaboration of law enforcement agencies, the district probation office, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Department of Social Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension of Rockingham County and more.

Strength in Peers is a member of the Future Generations Global Network of community-based organizations. Future Generations is based in Franklin, West Virginia, and strives to engage communities and build government partnerships to

"... create locally appropriate solutions that last," its website states.

Strength in Peers in Woodstock is funded by a three-year grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration, which is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The goal is to eventually become its own nonprofit, Fadley said.

The group's website states, "Engaging and developing the capacity of peers to provide support, mentorship, coaching and other assistance in a less costly and more effective way to improve service utilization and outcomes."

One of the starting points, officials say, is removing the stigma attached to behavioral-health needs, such as veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"It's becoming more accepted for veterans to say they have it," Fadley said.

To accomplish its goals for providing mental health and substance abuse programs, Strength in Peers organized and now coordinates the Shenandoah Mental Health Network. The network has helped the new peer-support agency foster partnerships with the United Way of Northern Shenandoah Valley, Valley Health System, Sentara RMH Medical Center, Shenandoah Community Health Clinic and the Northwestern Community Services Board, among others.

Fadley and Bobby Bush, the director of peer-support services, work out of the Woodstock office. Sandy Burner, with the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness (ARCH), shares space there, and refers many of her veteran clients to Strength in Peers.

"We're trying to deal with the whole problem. Find them jobs, help their needs, offer peer support. I think this is really exciting," she said. "[Some of my clients],



Strength in Peers opened at 139 S. Main St. in Woodstock last summer, serving people with unmet mental health or substance abuse needs. The organization offers a table full of resources on topics including suicide (pictured). The Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness shares space there, and refers many of its veteran clients to Strength in Peers.

no one would know they were homeless. They don't 'look' homeless. Many are veterans who just can't make ends meet. There's definitely a lot of need out there."

ARCH provides services to veterans and their families, whether the veteran is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Woodstock office serves the cities of Harrisonburg and Winchester, and Rockingham, Shenandoah, Page, Warren, Clarke and Frederick counties.

Strength in Peers takes several approaches to helping its clients. There's one-on-one peer support, peer-support groups, public education and training, including a basic eight-hour course to assist others on how to identify friends and family with possible mental health needs.

"We draw from our own experiences," Fadley said.

Bush brings a background as a firefighter and medic to the table. He pushes the fact that it isn't a "character flaw" to struggle with depression or anxiety. Within the culture of first responders, it's time to change the feelings of "manliness" and being "indestructible," Bush said.

"You can only fake it so long," he said.

The key is having people realize that an individual's problem does not require an individual solution. A village is there to help, and all villages share similar issues.

"No community is immune," Fadley said.

For more information, contact Strength in Peers at peersupport@future.org, or visit www.strengthinpeers.org.