SVEC Offers Scholarship Opportunities

 Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) is pleased to offer ten $1,000 scholarships in 2017 to students whose parents or guardians are member-owners of SVEC.

 The eligibility requirements and judging criteria are outlined in the application form that is available online, at any SVEC office, or in the students’ school guidance department. All applications and essays must be hand delivered to one of SVECS’s district offices by Feb. 24, 2017, or postmarked no later than this date.

 If you have any questions concerning this scholarship opportunity, please check the website at www.svec.coop or contact Cammie Tutwiler or Preston Knight at Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative at 1-800-234-7832.

 SVEC Major Outages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
<th>NOVEMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/2 Harriston area</td>
<td>11/3 Shenandoah area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,100 members out for 1 hour</td>
<td>3,050 members out for 1.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment failure</td>
<td>Animal in substation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24 Mountain Valley area</td>
<td>11/11 Reynolds Store area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 members out for 45 minutes</td>
<td>500 members out for 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead tree fell on power line</td>
<td>Tree off right-of-way fell on power line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24 Mountain Valley area</td>
<td>11/22 Mt. Jackson area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 members out for 1.5 hours</td>
<td>2,200 members for 0.5 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead tree fell on power line</td>
<td>Buzzard in substation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/27 Northern Luray area</td>
<td>11/23 Back Rd. area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,450 members for 45 minutes</td>
<td>200 members for 7.25 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Device on sensitive setting to protect workers</td>
<td>Vehicle accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/24 Peach Grove area</td>
<td>11/24 Peach Grove area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500 members for 2 hours</td>
<td>1,500 members for 1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal in substation</td>
<td>Tree off right-of-way fell on power line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25 Buffalo Gap area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,150 members for 1 minute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree off right-of-way fell on power line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Facility Information Available Online

As construction continues on Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative’s (SVEC) new Rockingham Office Facility, member-owners can now keep track of the progress through a new page on www.svec.coop.

Found under the title of “New Facility” on the banner on top of the website, the page will regularly be updated to highlight various milestones reached during the construction process. Photos, videos and answers to frequently asked questions are also included.

The facility will be located on a portion of 18 acres of land that SVEC purchased north of Mount Crawford, at the northwest corner of Oakwood Drive and U.S. 11. The building will combine the Dayton office, which is located on Mosby Road, and the headquarters office, which is located on Dinkel Avenue in Mount Crawford.

SVEC is pleased to be working with Harman Construction, Mather Architects, and Valley Engineering on the project. The building is scheduled to open in the spring of 2018.

SVEC Holds Food Drive Feb. 1 – March 10

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) is holding a food drive for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Feb. 1 through March 10. All of our district offices and headquarters 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 about 118,600 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 by calling 1-800-234-7832.

The most-needed items are:

- Cereal
- Peanut or Almond Butter
- Canned Tuna and Chicken
- Canned Soups, Stews and Chili
- Canned Fruits
- Canned Veggies
- Boxed Mac & Cheese
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Pasta and Rice
- Beans, Canned or Dried
- Paper Products
- Baby Food, Formula and Diapers
- Soap, Toothbrushes and Feminine Products

PLEASE DO NOT DONATE GLASS ITEMS
More About Your Co-op:
The Steps to Restoring Power

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) works hard to bring you “reliable and safe electric service at the lowest possible cost...” every day of the year. There are many aspects of bringing you electric service — the generation, the transmission, the distribution and the maintenance of the system, to name a few. Additionally, there are the variables of Mother Nature, and the inevitable aging of equipment, that can lead to further challenges for the Cooperative. With dedication and hard work, though, SVEC is able to plan ahead to overcome many of these issues, but unfortunately, due to unforeseen events, outages and interruptions of electric service sometimes occur.

To begin, some background about your Cooperative’s role in delivering power to you, our member-owners (please refer to chart on the next page for correlating terms and illustrations):

**Step 1.** Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) is a distribution cooperative. SVEC purchases a majority of its wholesale power from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC). ODEC is an electric generation-and-transmission (G&T) cooperative, which provides power to its 11 member-owners in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. Though SVEC linemen do not perform the maintenance and repair of the generation facilities and transmission towers and lines, member-owners can still see increases in their bills when upgrades and improvements are needed, since the generation-and-transmission systems are part of the path that SVEC’s power must use to get to its member-owners. They are the “engine” and “superhighway” of our system.

Lineman First Class Blair Good noted that there is one main thing that SVEC can’t prevent.

“If our provider drops service, we will experience outages,” he said. “Additionally, if there are equipment failures, there is the potential for outages.”

**Step 2.** At the distribution substations, when outages occur, SVEC has the trained personnel — our experienced line crews and system operators — to resolve the problem and restore power as quickly and as safely as possible. At the substations, one of the causes for outages can be when various animals and birds get into the equipment, said Lead Lineman Mark Feltner.

“We have a lot of trouble with squirrels and birds getting inside the main equipment at a substation. We try to install protectors, but they still find ways to get in,” he said.

**Step 3.** Following the path to deliver electricity to your homes and businesses, the next paths take shape in the form of overhead or underground lines. Both types of these lines carry the electricity from the substation to a large group of member-owners.

Good said that there is a long list of things that can cause outages with overhead lines. “Vehicle accidents, trees falling on lines, equipment failure, animals and overloading can all lead to outages. Animals get into trouble with overhead lines when they touch energized equipment and contact something grounded,” he said. “As long as the bird is just sitting on a line and isn’t grounded, he’s okay.”

**If you ever see a downed power line, DO NOT APPROACH IT! Make note of the location and call SVEC immediately!**

Feltner said that underground outages can sometimes be caused by some kind of equipment failure.

“Cables go bad, rocks shift and it only takes a little pinhole for it to interrupt service,” he said.

It can be a tedious process of elimination to identify what needs repair in an underground outage situation, increasing the length of service interruptions. That’s because you can’t fix what you can’t see.

For underground troubles, it’s 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 we could start your repairs,” he said.

Even as fault-indicator technology and sectionalizing equipment improves to 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.

Good has worked many different outage scenarios.

“One of the first things for me, I talk to dispatch and try to get an idea of what’s going on. Whether there was an accident, or whether there were any people involved, and then I start thinking about the terrain of the area,” he said. “I will start thinking about what it might be, if there are any problem areas, and try to rule out causes before I get there, to try and narrow
it down. If it’s a device that’s energized, you start thinking about safety precautions, and not only what you need to do to fix it, but how to do it safely.”

Feltner said his mind goes through a similar process.

“I get the location, and then try to recall if I have been there before, what the logistics are, and if there are any extra safety measures that need to be taken besides the usual,” he said. “The other part to consider is if it’s an overheard or underground line, and I start thinking about what the cause is. I try to get as much information as possible and prepare before I get to the scene.”

As for storms, Good said that if there is forewarning, SVEC crews will pre-pack their trucks.

“We get extra materials such as wire, sleeves and transformers. If we get out, especially to distant locations, we need to make sure we have these items with us. We’ll take extra time to make sure what we need is intact before we leave the night before,” he said. “I will even pack extra food and clothes. If you’re in isolated locations and need to eat, or if I would happen to fall in a creek, I’d have what I needed. You never know, until you know what the circumstances are, what you’re going to be doing. For example, one time the snow was up to our waist in February 2010 and we had to make a path to get to where we needed to be to work on the place where a tree had fallen across the line. You do extra preparation for everything that you can think of.”

One thing to consider: Member-owners should always call Miss Utility at 811 to have their property marked in order to prevent digging up any underground lines.

“Sometimes people will be doing yard work, and won’t call 811 before they dig. Maybe someone has decided to cut a tree down, or is doing work with a tractor,” Good said. “Human error can definitely cause outages. On stormy days, you have an idea of why an outage might be happening.”

One way SVEC works to prevent outages: vegetation management. When trees contact power lines and other electric facilities, it can lead to power outages, especially during severe weather events. The Cooperative works to make sure these lines have a clear pathway by maintaining a vegetation-management program, which is designed to reduce tree-related outages and shorten the duration of outages when they do occur.

“SVEC uses a couple of different means of vegetation management, including spraying the rights-of-way, cutting trees with the helicopter or manually,” Feltner said.

He added that you just never know what the weather conditions are going to bring.

“For example, sometimes wind causes nothing, and sometimes it causes outages,” Feltner said. “But our member-owners can rest assured that no matter the weather, we will always work diligently to restore their power to them, as quickly and safely as possible.”
On the Right Track

Augusta County Railroad Club Educates, Entertains

Story and photos by Preston Knight

Jerry Hendricks has determined the life cycle of a model train enthusiast. “We had a 14-year-old who joined us, and I told him trains will be the last thing on your mind in two years,” said Hendricks, president of the Augusta County Railroad Club. “Then, when his first kids come along, he’ll put the trains around the Christmas tree and he’ll be hooked all over again. That’s the way it works.”

There’s something to be said about that formula, as the club that Hendricks presides over is now nearly 25 years old and grown to about 50 members. The club, which serves to encourage interest in the history of railroading and to promote the hobby of model railroading, operates the Augusta County Railroad Museum in the Staunton Mall.

“We’ve really opened up to the public,” Hendricks said, noting that the museum holds work sessions every Tuesday at 6 p.m. for people to bring in and run their own trains. “We do a lot of things for the public and enthusiasts who like trains.”

The museum, which is near Belk in the former Hallmark space at the mall, is otherwise open 1-5 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is free and gets you a look at several large train layouts — with models running, of course — as well as a wide selection of railroad art and shelves lined with models and artifacts.

Between 1850 and 1950, the primary means of transporting people and goods in the United States was through its railroads, and the museum conveys the role that railroads played in the past, in addition to their function in today’s society, according to the club’s website.

“We have a lot of history in the museum,” Hendricks said.

The Augusta Model Railroad Club began in 1993 with a meeting in Fishersville for those interested in model railroading, the website states. A vacant building in Staunton later became the group’s “clubhouse,” where models were set up, run and tested.

In January 2001, the club members obtained not-for-profit status, officially becoming known as the Augusta County Railroad Museum. It is also still called the Augusta County Railroad Club.

The museum has bounced around since having its first permanent location in Waynesboro in 2003. The Staunton mall location opened in early 2015.

Hendricks said the club would like its own building, but it doesn’t have the funding to support one. Membership dues are $40 a year, which includes a $10 application fee in the first year.

Increasing membership numbers would help with finances, Hendricks said, but some train enthusiasts just aren’t interested.

“There must be hundreds of trains in people’s basements,” he said. “They just don’t let people know they have them.”

The museum comes to people, too, to heighten interest. In 2007, club members began setting up a display during the Augusta County Fair, making it one of the more popular attractions inside the exhibit hall.

Even bigger is the Shenandoah Valley Model Train & Railroading Show, which the Augusta County club took over from the now-defunct Shenandoah Valley Railroad Club in Rockingham County. Held the first Sunday in May, the show takes place at the Augusta Expo and features model train sales, railroad historical societies, model railroad club layouts, railroad memorabilia and books for sale.

This year will be the 31st annual event. Scheduled for May 7, the cost to attend is $5 for adults, while children 12 years old and younger are free. Hendricks said about 60 vendors and 700 people are expected for the event.

The museum, meanwhile, averages about 100 visitors a weekend, featuring the trains of club members hailing from as far away as Lynchburg. Most club members live in Augusta County and Waynesboro, Hendricks said.

“When they do get involved,” he said, “they just go nuts.”

For more information, visit the club’s website at www.acmrrc.org.