SVEC Offers Scholarships for 2018

Since 1992, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has awarded scholarships to deserving high school seniors in the region that it serves. These students have earned the scholarships with excellence in the classroom, extracurricular activities and contributions to the community. In the years since the scholarship has been awarded, the Cooperative has given back more than $100,000 to the community. During the spring of 2018, SVEC will award ten $1,000 scholarships to students whose parents or guardians are members-owners of SVEC.

Furthering one’s education is the best investment for success in the future. The obstacles facing most students today are the rising costs associated with a college education. The goal of SVEC’s scholarship program is to make a student’s dream of higher education become a reality. The only requirements for a student to apply for the scholarship are that their parents or guardians must be member-owners of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and the student must attend a high school located in the areas served by the Cooperative.

Students will be judged for the scholarship based on a number of criteria. The three most important criteria will be the quality of the essay provided by the student, participation in school/community activities, and the quality of their high school course load. Other information used to judge the applicants will be letters of reference and grade-point average. It is important to note that the first step in the judging process is a blind review of the essays. The judges have no information regarding who wrote the essays at this point. Based on the essays, the judges will narrow the applicant pool before reviewing all other information submitted with the application.

The eligibility requirements and judging criteria are outlined in the application forms that are available at any SVEC office or the students’ school guidance department. All applications and essays must be delivered personally to SVEC by 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 21, 2018, or postmarked no later than Feb. 21, 2018.

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

PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

2017
Peyton Ayers - Stuarts Draft High School
Kennedy Eagle - John Handley High School
Maria Becerra Flores - Stonewall Jackson High School
Sadie Garber - Fort Defiance High School
Zachary Hiter - Broadway High School
Tara Ingersoll - Wilson Memorial High School
Blair Landram - Fort Defiance High School
Tyler Patton - Stonewall Jackson High School
Duncan Schroeder - Stonewall Jackson High School
Allison Stump - Highland High School

2016
Grace Blanchard - Highland High School
Margaret Chu - Luray High School
Lauren Croissant - Rappahannock County High School
Sarah Daley - Wilson Memorial High School
Colin Jones - Riverheads High School
Isabelle Leonard - Riverheads High School
Nathan Miller - Stonewall Jackson High School
Haley Sanders - Wilson Memorial High School
Benjamin Witman - Spotswood High School
Jacob Wright - Fort Defiance High School

2015
Kelsey Basham - Riverheads High School
Cody Bodien - James Wood High School
Rosie Clifton - Stonewall Jackson High School
Daniel Cox - Riverheads High School
Isabella Dickens-Bowman - John Handley High School

2014
Megan Goodsey - Wilson Memorial High School
Klaire Gubler - Rappahannock County High School
Olivia Heeb - Fort Defiance High School
Sierra Hepner - Spotswood High School
Julia Watson - Wilson Memorial High School

2013
Abigail Blase - James Wood High School
Nora Burgess - John Handley High School
Mary Callender - Turner Ashby High School
Michelle Fultz - Buffalo Gap High School
Julia Haberman - Sherando High School
Savannah Hepner - Spotswood High School
Charles Jones - Riverheads Christian School
Tyler Morris - Sherando High School
Mason Seaman - Stuarts Draft High School
Jessica Watson - Wilson Memorial High School

SHENANDOAH VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
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Gerald A. Heatwole
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.
Meter Tampering Is Dangerous — and Illegal
by Cammie Tutwiler, SVEC Writer

At Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC), we work to bring you reliable and safe electric service at the lowest possible cost. To achieve some of the Cooperative’s goals, it is with the help of you, our member-owners, that we are able to meet and exceed these expectations. One of the most important parts of the Cooperative’s electric service is probably not frequently thought of or seen, but it holds significant value in bringing you quality service: your meter.

Meters are useful and necessary tools to accurately measure the amount of electricity used. The meters are property of the Cooperative, and member-owners should never risk tampering with a meter for any reason.

“The most important thing to always consider with electricity is the safety aspect, and this kind of activity has a high level of danger associated with it,” said Greg Rogers, SVEC’s vice president of engineering and operations.

Tampering with a meter is very dangerous, and also against the law, he said, according to Section 18.2-163 of the Code of Virginia. “Of course, the next consideration with meter tampering is the illegal nature of the action. A lot of people feel the worst thing would be that we disconnect them, but that’s not the case anymore. Depending on the severity, cases could end up in court,” Rogers said.

A conviction of tampering could lead to 12 months in jail and/or up to a $2,500 fine plus restitution. Additionally, those attempting to tamper with a meter could end up costing the other Cooperative members money.

“In the process of trying to divert electric, there are at least two possible circumstances that could end up costing member-owners money. One, repairing SVEC equipment if it is damaged, and two, paying for the electricity that is gained improperly,” Rogers said.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative asks that if you see any suspicious activity regarding meter tampering, electric theft, or if you just have a question regarding the readings of your meter, please call the Cooperative at 1-800-234-7832 and a representative will be happy to assist you.

FROM THE COOPERATIVE’S TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR PROVIDING ELECTRIC SERVICE

Meter Tampering, Current Diversion or Unauthorized Reconnection

The Cooperative may pursue any criminal complaint procedure available under the law. Before reconnection of any service disconnected for meter tampering, current diversion, or unauthorized reconnection of service, the Consumer normally must comply with the following conditions:

1. Pay for all damages to Cooperative equipment resulting from the tampering and/or damages and provide sufficient deposit to cover future tampering or damage;
2. Pay an amount estimated to be sufficient to cover service used or service received;
3. Pay the Reconnection Fee, if applicable;
4. Pay any other required deposits as identified in Section IV.B. (Requirements for Securing Electric Distribution Service);
5. Pay a fee to cover the cost of testing the meter in accordance with Schedule F; and
6. Make any changes in wiring or equipment which, in the opinion of the Cooperative, may be necessary for the protection of the Cooperative.

SVEC to Hold Food Drive

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) is pleased to announce that we are holding a food drive for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, beginning Feb. 1. 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. All locations are open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The food drive will last until March 9.

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank serves an average of 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 food drive, you can contact Cammie Tutwiler at SVEC by calling 1-800-234-7832.

**PLEASE DO NOT DONATE GLASS ITEMS**
- Cereal
- Peanut or Almond Butter
- Canned Tuna and Chicken
- Canned Soups, Stews and Chili
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Veggies
- Beans, Canned or Dried
- Boxed Mac & Cheese
- Pasta and Rice
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Paper Products
- Baby Food, Formula and Diapers
- Soap, Toothbrushes and Feminine Products

www.svec.coop
Cool Off Your Winter Electric Bill

You budgeted for holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation — and with money tight, that doesn’t leave much room for home energy-efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you’re powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your electric bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks:

- **Drape delivery**: Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.
- **Thermostat**: Set your thermostat to 68° F (or lower if comfortable).
- **Got tape?** Though not as durable as foam, rubber or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first-aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash; door frames; attic hatches; and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.
- **Fan it up**: Run ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.
- **Free vents**: Your HVAC system will have to work twice as hard if your air registers and vents are blocked by rugs, furniture or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.
- **Garage drain**: Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.
- **Rug relief**: Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.
- **Cool food**: Don’t make your fridge door work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34°-37° F; leave the freezer between 0°-5° F. Keep the freezer full — frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.
- **Hot savings**: Heating water accounts for 12 percent of your home’s energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120° F. For households with only one or two members, 115°F works.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don’t pay for what you don’t use. When you’re not watching TV or using lights, computers and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com, Alliance to Save Energy, EnergySavers.gov

### Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative

**Aerial Cutting Begins for 2018**

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative uses the services of Aerial Solutions Inc. to cut right-of-way in areas that are difficult to reach with ground crews. This North Carolina-based helicopter company uses a patented aerial power saw to trim the right-of-way along power lines. The 800-pound saw consists of multiple 24-inch-diameter rotary blades and is suspended from a 90-foot vertical boom beneath the helicopter.

The versatility and speed of the saw provides an efficient and cost-effective alternative to conventional side-trimming methods in all types of terrain with little to no environmental impact. The aerial saw provides maximum lateral clearances from vegetation encroaching into the right-of-way. The right-of-way is trimmed from ground to sky to further avoid conflicts with the power line.

Long-term outages in severe weather are avoided after rights-of-way are trimmed with the aerial saw.

**SVEC Major Outages**

**Sept. 5**
- Bethel Church Road, Route 55 areas
- 1,070 members out for 2.5 hours
- Live tree off of right-of-way

**Oct. 17**
- Honeyville area
- 2,124 members out for 0.5 hour
- Unknown cause

**Oct. 25**
- Town of Stanley
- 2,127 members out for 0.5 hour
- Protective device on protective setting to protect workers

**Oct. 26**
- Columbia Furnace area
- 1,318 members out for 0.5 hour
- Power supplier

**Oct. 29**
- Shawneeland area
- 462 members out for 7.5 hours
- Live tree off of right-of-way

**Oct. 30**
- Mountain Falls Park area
- 447 members out for 13.5 hours
- Live tree off of right-of-way
Center Puts Student Veterans at Ease

by Preston Knight, SVEC Writer

De’Angelo Wynn’s recruiting pitch for fellow veterans to attend Shenandoah University (SU) comes at you like a major-league fastball. “The military is focused on developing structure through small unit leaders,” said Wynn, a member of the class of 2019 who served as a Navy religious program specialist in Afghanistan. “Veterans want that small student-to-teacher ratio. Environment is such a huge deal. You look for somewhere you feel comfortable, where you fit in. You look for something similar to what you departed from.

“That’s the attraction of SU to veterans. You’re not another number here. There’s opportunity. SU is focused on global outreach, altruism, experimental learning trips. There’s a huge focus on making yourself uncomfortable in order to expand your perception.”

President of the student veteran organization, Shenandoah Veterans and Supporters, he has more reasons to appreciate his school these days. In November, the university held the grand opening of its Veterans, Military and Family Resource Center for military-affiliated students. The one-room center within Halpin-Harrison Hall is basically a living room for veterans and active-duty students, who can study or lounge there, gather in small groups, or meet individually with university staff for counseling.

A wall full of literature is on display to educate these students on various programs available exclusively to them.

“The battlefield to the classroom is something that is a difficult transition,” said Sherry Rawls-Bryce, an assistant professor of nursing and Air Force veteran who coordinates the resource center. “We want to ease that transition. We want them to be successful and get meaningful jobs.”

She calls Niccole Gatliff, SU’s assistant registrar, the “heart and soul” of veterans resources. Seemingly non-stop meetings with military-affiliated students in Gatliff’s office sparked the idea to create something more permanent for veterans and active-duty students.

Gatliff and student veteran Kevin Scadden were leaders in gathering support for the resource center, leading up to its soft opening last spring.

“She’s selfless and has a genuine interest to make sure veterans are taken care of every step of the way,” Wynn said of Gatliff.

“Without her, we would leave.”

Gatliff said almost every interaction with a veteran or active-duty student turns into a question-and-answer session, one in which she gladly participates.

“They may not know we have the services that we have,” she said. “We have administrative support here. At a lot of institutions, you may have to push and fight for that.”

The resource center is the latest example of success.

“It provides a space to just relax,” Wynn said. “We tend to cling to other veterans. We find each other. We feel comfortable in the company of other veterans. ... We use this space for everything you can think of. It just brings us back to that camaraderie.”

SPACE CRUNCH

As excited as SU officials and students are for the center’s presence, they stress that it is just the beginning.

“We’ve got to get more space,” Wynn said. How much additional space and where exactly that would be have financial and logistical considerations that are all still a work in progress. A permanent staff position to oversee the center is one goal for Gatliff and Rawls-Bryce.

Another objective for SU is to continue building relationships with community organizations, such as hosting meetings of the Community Veterans Engagement Board. The Board’s goal is to consolidate all of the veteran-related services in the area into one organization, Rawls-Bryce said.

While the resource center is primarily intended for SU students, it will have use for outside veterans through a partnership between the Library of Congress and 10th District Rep. Barbara Comstock, R-Loudoun. The center will serve as the interview site for veterans who participate in the Library’s Veterans History Project, which collects the personal accounts of war veterans. Comstock’s office finds veterans to interview.

Wynn, meanwhile, is hopeful of attending military-base education fairs to explain what SU has to offer. He would like to see Shenandoah’s military-affiliated student count grow from the current 60 to 150 by the spring of 2020.

The resource center will only help the cause. “This is the beginning of a bigger vision,” Rawls-Bryce said. “There is a lot of energy, enthusiasm and passion for our veterans.”

For more information or to contribute to the center, contact Rawls-Bryce at srawlsbr@su.edu.
They’re negotiators, investigators, advisors, ambassadors and just about anything else in between.

Field engineering representatives wear many hats at Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC), bringing a high level of expertise in regularly serving as the public’s first contact with the organization. If you have an electric service request, big or small, then you’ll most likely be hearing from one of the 13 representatives across Co-op territory.

“SVEC has around 93,000 meters. That’s 93,000 times a representative has met that individual or business and designed a power-line connection. We handle this request from start to finish,” said Ben McInturff, a representative in the Luray District. “A member request may be as simple as a single-phase meter set or can be more involved like a three-phase facility. Our members know that they need electricity. Behind the scenes, a field engineering representative has to take that request and perform tasks to make that connection happen.”

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Field engineers become member-owners’ go-to guides for questions, scheduling and unforeseen problems that arise during a project. That level of involvement makes their jobs vital to the Cooperative’s overall success, and is also why the people responsible for the job enjoy what they do.

“There’s a lot of interaction with the public, other consumers, utilities in the area, a lot of builders,” said Jim Messick, a representative in the Rockingham District who has held the position for more than 25 years. “There’s no two jobs alike.”

**RURAL LIVING**

After a member contacts the Cooperative with a service request, a work order makes its way to a field representative in the appropriate district. Then, within each SVEC district, representatives have their own coverage areas.

Messick spent one recent morning at a northern Rockingham County farm where a member sought to extend electricity to a barn, a common request for rural parts of SVECs territory. He first consults internal maps to determine what Co-op facilities are already on or near the member’s property, giving him an early indication of what challenges await. A decision of constructing underground or overhead lines will have to be made.

Aerial photos offer additional information, in this case showing a creek and the placement of trees throughout the farmer’s land. Messick also relies on older maps — when he began his career, all maps were hand-drawn — to gain knowledge on how SVEC may have served a location previously.

Each of these steps is part of a representative’s preparation for a site visit and meeting with the member. Only then do the field engineers get a true sense of what’s possible, and that’s where a relationship gets formed.

“I’m his contact through the process until he gets hooked up,” Messick said of the Rockingham farmer. “Any time there’s a question or problem, the field representative is the person they contact. You get phone calls six months or a year later because they had your number.”

After the site visit, Messick heads back to the office to calculate a pair of cost estimates for the farmer to consider. Running underground cable to the barn is possible, but comes with a higher cost than the overhead alternative. The above-ground line, however, brings aesthetic concerns, making the placement of a potential new pole that much more significant.

Field engineers estimate that they have anywhere from 50-75 open work orders at
a time, with a large number in a holding pattern for any number of reasons. When it's all said and done the list of project variables to consider for both SVEC and the member could include meeting National Electrical Safety Code guidelines, determining wire size, obtaining rights-of-way, and securing Virginia Department of Transportation permits.

The most important piece, McInturff said, is designing the electrical grid in a safe and cost-effective way.

“People always say, ‘Linemen keep the lights on.’ I reply, ‘Indeed they do, however, the engineering representative leads you to the light,’” he said. “Joking aside, linemen and field engineering representatives are the backbone of the electric utilities. First impressions to members are important. Engineering representatives are generally the first to meet our members and interact with their needs.”

SLICE OF CITY LIFE

Among cooperatives, SVEC is unlike many in that it also serves a city, in this case Winchester. The population density that a city provides creates space limitations for Co-op facilities and various other factors that are not commonly found in rural settings.

Winchester, for example, requires that new construction or upgrades feature underground cable, said Cindy Allen, one of four field representatives in SVEC’s Winchester District.

“I try to make people aware of that upfront before they get an inspection and don’t pass,” she said.

The member-education aspect of the job — both with city or county ordinances and the Co-op’s own policies — never seems to cease for field engineers. Allen said it's important for members to know, and communicate, load information for a project as early as possible.

“A lot of times people want us to tell them,” she said. “It doesn’t work that way, especially for small commercial consumers. Coordination is a big part of the job.”

When Allen first makes a call on a work order, she checks to see if the member will need to acquire third-party right-of-way. One of the biggest challenges for representatives comes when obtaining an easement is required so a project can cross into another property.

It's the nature of the field engineer's job to overcome any and all challenges. SVEC's representatives say they maintain positive attitudes regardless of what roadblocks they encounter. They are pulled in many directions and expected to get the job done.

“I enjoy the challenges that go along with helping our members and business owners to flip the switch,” McInturff said.

Lineman 1st Class Jeff Mongold, of SVEC’s Winchester District, works from a bucket to help install a pole at a residence.