Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative Names New President & CEO

The Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Michael W. Hastings has been selected as the next president & CEO. Hastings will move into the position on Aug. 1, 2016. He will be the sixth leader in the Cooperative’s 80-year history.

Hastings was selected following a lengthy, nationwide search over the past several months. SVEC utilized an executive search group in the hiring process. Hastings has worked for electric cooperatives and their member-owners for more than 25 years. Raised on a Kansas farm, he is member-focused with excellent leadership experience and a keen awareness of safety practices.

“Michael’s demonstrated devotion to the cooperative principles and member-owners, along with his prudent and strategic thinking, made the board feel confident that he will effectively lead SVEC into the future,” SVEC Board Chair Robbie F. Marchant said. “We are certain he will be able to continue to build on the relationships we have with the community leaders, suppliers, staff, and most importantly our member-owners.”

“I am delighted to be joining the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative family,” Hastings said. “I look forward to working with staff and the member-owners of our Cooperative in an effort to provide safe and reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost.”

Rummel said, “I am happy to welcome Michael and his family to SVEC and the Valley. Our team here at the Cooperative will do everything we can to make his transition as smooth as possible over the coming months. I am confident that Michael will serve our member-owners well as he takes the reins and leads our Cooperative as its next president & CEO.”

Hastings has served as president & CEO of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (an electric-distribution cooperative in Illinois), for 11 years, and prior to that worked for the statewide association of Illinois for 10 years. He holds a master’s degree in business, a law degree and an undergraduate degree in accounting.

Hastings, his wife, Shauna, and their children look forward to moving to the Shenandoah Valley this summer and making it their home.

2016 Nominating Committee Report

On the following page is the report of the 2016 Nominating Committee. Shown are the photos of the nominees for the Board of Directors of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. With each photo is a brief biography of the nominee. Elections for the board will be held at the Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 9, 2016.
Rockingham County Nominees (in alphabetical order):

*Stephen W. Burkholder of Broadway

Stephen W. Burkholder was raised in the New Market area and moved to the Broadway-Timberville area after graduating from college. He is married to the former Connie Dove and they have three children.

First elected to SVEC’s board in 1992, Burkholder has served as the Cooperative’s secretary/treasurer, vice chairman and chairman, and currently serves as chairman of the strategic planning committee. He has served as chairman of the compensation and benefits committee and also has served on the finance and executive committee. He has taken numerous courses and has completed the Credentialed Cooperative Director program, and received the Board Leadership Certificate, sponsored by SVEC’s national organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He is a member of the communications and public relations committee of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Burkholder is the sole proprietor of the Broadway Supermarket across from J. Frank Hillyard Middle School. He has worked in the store since graduating from Virginia Tech. While at Tech, he received a degree in forestry resource management.

Burkholder’s wife works with him in the store, helping keep the books. The store has been a family-owned business for over 40 years. Burkholder is a past member of the board of directors of the Broadway-Timberville Chamber of Commerce. The Burkholders are members of St. John’s Lutheran Church.

*Larry E. Garber of Pleasant Valley

Larry E. Garber is a native of the Pleasant Valley area of Rockingham County. He and his wife, Jane, have three children — two sons and a daughter, and four grandchildren. Garber resides at Pleasant Run Farm in Pleasant Valley.

Garber is a retired auctioneer, farmer and livestock broker. He was an auctioneer for more than 40 years.

Garber served six years as a member of the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors. He is an original director of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority and a past member of the Rockingham County Planning Commission. Garber assisted in developing the original plan for the Rockingham County landfill.

He served seven years on active and reserve duty in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Garber is a member of the Mt. Crawford Ruritan Club, where he has 56 years’ perfect attendance. He has served in many offices with the Ruritans and is a past district governor of the Rockingham District. He is also a member of the Harrisonburg Elks Lodge.

Garber served 12 years as a director of the Rockingham County Fair Association and one term as its president. He is a member of the Rockingham County Fair strategic development committee, and has received an award for his efforts as a volunteer with the Rockingham County Fair.

He is an honorary member of the Rockingham FFA Federation, the Virginia Auctioneers Association and a 53-year member of the United Commercial Travelers. He was awarded the Virginia FFA state farmer degree. He has been associated with Rockingham Livestock Sales for 56 years. He also volunteers with the Salvation Army.

Garber has served on SVEC’s Board of Directors since 1994. He is a credentialed certified director, and has served twice as the chairman of the board. Garber is currently the compensation and benefits chairman. He has also served on the finance, annual meeting, and strategic planning committees for the SVEC board.

Garber is a member of St. James United Methodist Church, where he is a trustee, chairman of the administrative board, and a past lay leader.

Dale Gardner of Bridgewater

Dale Gardner is a real estate agent and agricultural consultant, relying heavily on his experiences from having worked nearly 25 years helping manage a family dairy operation. A Virginia Tech alum, he is a lifelong resident of Rockingham County and lives one mile outside of Bridgewater.

After graduating from Virginia Tech with a degree in dairy science, Gardner returned home to be a managing partner with Rockby Holsteins, his family’s farm. He later worked for Water Stewardship Inc. and is now a consultant for the agricultural industry, along with being employed as an agent for Lee & Associates of Harrisonburg.

Gardner is the former executive secretary of the Virginia State Dairymen’s Association and has also served on the Virginia Agribusiness Council. He is currently a member of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee for the Chesapeake Bay and the Virginia Food System Council. Gardner also serves as an EMT for the Bridgewater Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Gardner is married to the former Joan Grady and attends Christ Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg. The couple has six grown children: John Dale, Patrick, Cameron, Julia, Preston and Paige.

Suzanne S. Obenshain of Lacey Spring

Suzanne S. Obenshain is a small business owner who has been heavily involved in the Shenandoah Valley since moving here nearly 30 years ago. Now living just north of Harrisonburg near Lacey Spring, she is a graduate of Virginia Tech, where she received degrees in history and business. While there, she met her future husband, current state Sen. Mark Obenshain.

A Richmond native, Suzanne Obenshain has lived in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County for almost 30 years. In that span, she has served on several state and local organizations, including as a member of the Commonwealth Council on Aging; the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors; United Way of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Board of Directors; Sunnyside Retirement Community Board of Directors; the Harrisonburg Republican Committee, as chairwoman and treasurer; Harrisonburg Electoral Board; and Generations Crossing, as a founding member of the adult and child day-care facility in Harrisonburg. Among her current civic duties, she now serves as president of the Republican Women’s Club of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County and as a member and treasurer of the Spotswood Garden Club.

A licensed nursing home administrator, Obenshain is an elder at her church, First Presbyterian Church in downtown Harrisonburg. She and her husband have two grown children, Tucker and Sam.
Members and former members will soon be rewarded with one of the advantages of being a Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) member-owner: Capital Credits.

Capital Credits are returned to member-owners in the form of a credit on their bill for active consumers, and mailed to former members and large power accounts in the form of a check.

The total amount of Capital Credits to be returned to members is $3,229,747. SVEC is retiring 38.06 percent of the allocated amount for 2001 for the Legacy System and 7.95 percent of the 2015 allocated amount for the Total System.

On your most recent bill (for May) your Capital Credit amount is indicated on a line reading, “Cap Credit Return.”

One of the advantages of being a member-owner of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative is receiving Capital Credits. It is one of the things that differentiates a cooperative from an investor-owned utility, or a municipal electric system, and just one of the reasons it pays to be a member-owner with Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. SVEC follows seven Cooperative principles; one of which is members’ economic participation. What this means is that as member-owners, you make an equity contribution to the Cooperative based on the billings for your electrical-energy consumption, allowing the Cooperative to meet its financial obligations. Once all financial obligations are met, you may receive an equity allocation based on your patronage.

You also recently received separately in the mail your “Notice of Equity Allocation.” This notice has nothing to do with the Capital Credit that appears on your bill for this year. The equity allocation notice simply shows the amount of equity assigned to your account based on electric-service-billing patronage for the prior year. That amount (or part of it) won’t be retired (returned to you in the form of a credit on your bill or a check) until a later date.

If you have any questions about your Capital Credit return, please contact your local office.

**SVECs Returns Over $3 Million in Capital Credits**

**SVEC Major Outages**

March 1  Spring Hill area
1,500 members out for 1 hour due to live tree off right-of-way

March 28  Shawneeland area
700 members out for ½ hour due to live tree off right-of-way

**The Cooperative’s offices will be closed on Monday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Have a happy, fun-filled holiday!**

**Please remove and retain the SVEC Annual Report inserted between pages 20 and 21 of this magazine.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Thursday, June 9, at 7 p.m.
at James Madison University’s Convocation Center

**REGISTRATION** 5 to 6:30 p.m.
(all members) at Entrance “B”

**PORK BARBECUE DINNER** 5 to 6:45 p.m.
for each member and one guest
(a vegetarian option will be available)

**BUSINESS MEETING** 7 p.m. on stage

**GRAND PRIZES:** Two $500 Gift Certificates for Electric Service

Other Prizes:
Five $200 gift certificates for electric service
Ten $100 gift certificates for electric service

Prize drawings will be held throughout the Business Meeting.
You Must be Present to Win!

Please Make Note!

- An ASL (sign language) interpreter can be provided. Please indicate on your proxy if you are interested in this service.

- A Kids’ Zone, offering crafts, safety tips, conservation information and fun will be available for children ages 5-10 during the business meeting.

- The Walnut Ridge Boys will be providing entertainment for the evening.
SHEVANOAH VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (SVEC) announced on April 27 its intention to construct a new office facility in Rockingham County on a portion of 18 acres of land recently purchased north of Mount Crawford.

The property sits on the northwest corner of Oakwood Drive and U.S. 11 (South Valley Pike). SVEC is currently working with its contractor, Harman Construction Inc. of Harrisonburg, and architect, Mather Architects of Harrisonburg, to finalize the design of the building and layout of the property, which will also serve as the Rockingham District Office and its headquarters. The project remains contingent upon the consideration of all necessary stakeholders, including adjacent property owners, the Rockingham County Planning Commission, and the County Board of Supervisors.

“We are celebrating 80 years of service to the Shenandoah Valley this year, and this project will further advance our commitment to the communities we serve,” SVEC President & CEO Myron Rummel said. “Our organization has grown significantly in recent years. This project addresses operational needs resulting from that growth, while also ensuring that we are properly prepared for the future to provide safe and reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost to all of our member-owners.”

In June 1936, SVEC became the first electric cooperative chartered in Virginia. The following year, the Cooperative purchased land on the eastern edge of the town of Dayton for its headquarters, serving parts of Augusta, Rockingham and Shenandoah counties. Today, that original location remains operational as the Rockingham District Office, while the Cooperative’s headquarters was moved nearly 30 years ago to Dinkel Avenue in Mount Crawford.

SVEC has experienced remarkable growth over its decades of service, highlighted by the acquisition of Allegheny Power’s Virginia territory in June 2010. SVEC added parts of Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page and Warren counties, and the entire city of Winchester in the acquisition, increasing the number of member-owner accounts from 37,000 to 90,000. Today, SVEC serves over 93,000 accounts throughout its service territory.

After careful consideration of a needs assessment, the Board of Directors approved a plan to relocate its Rockingham District Office and its headquarters to a new joint facility. In February, to address current and future operational needs, SVEC exercised an option it had to purchase 18 acres of property at 70 Oakwood Drive. Once complete, the building will improve operational and organizational efficiencies within the Cooperative.

Further information on the future of SVEC’s properties east of Dayton and on Dinkel Avenue in Mount Crawford will also be made available to member-owners as more definitive plans are made and action is taken.

“If SVEC is committed to all of the communities we serve, by sponsoring events, awarding scholarships to high school seniors, organizing activities such as blood and food drives, visiting schools to educate youth about electrical safety, and more,” Rummel said. “Our primary role, however, is to provide safe and reliable electricity to our member-owners at the lowest possible cost. The new facility will better equip SVEC to address all of our members’ needs, both now and for many years to come.”
Wilt Named Distinguished Friend of Electric Cooperatives

The Honorable Tony Wilt, a state delegate representing Virginia’s 26th House District, has been named a Distinguished Friend of the Electric Cooperatives by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC).

This award honors legislators and others in public service who have strongly supported the best interests of electric cooperative member-owners. Wilt accepted his award at the association’s quarterly meeting held April 25 in Charlottesville.

Throughout his legislative career, Delegate Wilt has consistently taken the concerns of electric cooperatives and their members into consideration before casting his vote. Chief among legislation he helped pass was a 2012 bill that requires cable companies to negotiate in good faith for cable-line pole attachments, greatly improving the sharing in the costs of maintaining cooperative-owned poles by all utilities. In 2015, Wilt supported a co-op-requested amendment to House Bill 1950, regarding net-metering programs by electric utilities.

“Tony has consistently advocated for the interests of Virginia’s electric cooperatives, aiding their mission of providing affordable, reliable service to their member-consumers,” VMDAEC Board Chair and Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) Board Member Larry Howdyshell said.

Myron Rummel, president & CEO of SVEC, whose service territory includes much of the 26th House District, added: “Since his election to office in 2010, Tony has always listened willingly and intently to our points of view, while providing meaningful feedback and support. Before he travels to the General Assembly each year, he visits SVEC to better understand the issues facing our industry; and communicates with us regularly, seeking to better understand the electric cooperatives’ position.”

The 2016 Distinguished Friend of

From left, SVEC President & CEO Myron Rummel congratulates Del. Tony Wilt on being named a Distinguished Friend of the Electric Cooperatives.

Electric Cooperatives’ award nomination cites Wilt’s many contributions to his community, including his service on the Virginia Small Business Commission and as past president of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Source: energy.gov
SVEC Marks 80 Years of Service

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) will officially mark 80 years of service to the area this month. When the State Corporation Commission (SCC) granted SVEC its charter on June 26, 1936, SVEC became the first electric cooperative established in Virginia. While times have greatly changed and the Cooperative has grown, our dedication to our members has remained constant.

Here is a list of early milestones from 50 Years of Progress, a book compiled in 1986 celebrating SVEC's first 50 years:

May 11, 1935 – President Franklin D. Roosevelt establishes the Rural Electrification Administration, laying the groundwork for the electrification of rural America.

August 13, 1935 – One of the first meetings of local prospective subscribers to secure an REA electric system occurs, held at Cootes Store in Rockingham County.

March 24, 1936 – A group of citizens, calling itself the Valley Committee, form a temporary organization, to be known as Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative.

March 28, 1936 – The group elects its Board of Directors and officers, and votes to apply to the State Corporation Commission for a charter.

March 30, 1936 – The Virginia General Assembly passes the Electric Cooperative Act, providing for the legal formation of member-owned electric cooperatives in the state.

June 25, 1936 – SVEC's application for charter is presented to the SCC.

June 26, 1936 – SVEC becomes the recipient of the first charter issued by the SCC under the Electric Cooperative Act.

Less than two years later, lines were energized for the first time, bringing power to nearly 100 rural homes in the western section of Rockingham County with power from SVEC's generating plant in Dayton. The rest, as they say, is history.

Surviving Auto Accidents Involving Power Lines

When you are in an auto accident, your first instinct is to get out of the car. But in a wreck with a power line, that could be a fatal mistake. By getting out, you could become the path to ground for electricity and risk electrocution.

Whether it is an auto accident or any other situation, always assume that a power line has power running through it, even if it has been knocked down. Never approach a downed power line or attempt to move it.

If you're in a wreck with a utility pole, there are several things you should know:

- **If you aren't in immediate danger**, remain in the vehicle until help arrives. Unless there is a threat of greater danger — for example, the vehicle is on fire or the vehicle comes to a stop in the middle of the highway — you are safer in than out.

- **If there is pressing danger and you must exit the vehicle**, you should follow very specific steps. With the door open, prepare to jump out of the vehicle. During the jump you must make sure that no part of your body or clothing is touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. You may need to remove long or loose-fitting clothing. Make sure that you land with your feet together. Once you land, you should shuffle your feet away from the car. Get at least 30 feet away before you begin to walk normally. This sounds silly, but it is your best chance at avoiding electrocution.

- **If you come across a vehicle accident involving a power line**, stay clear and call 911. Do not approach the vehicle, even if the person is unable to exit and is in imminent danger. If you do approach the vehicle to help the individual, you stand a chance of being electrocuted and making an already bad situation even worse. Keep other individuals away from the car also.

The electricity Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative provides day-in and day-out is a phenomenal resource, powering our modern lifestyles in a safe, reliable and affordable way. But electricity must be respected. If safety isn't made a priority, what changes our lives for the better could change them for the worse in an instant.

This article originally appeared in the March 2015 Medina Electric Cooperative issue of Texas Co-op Power.
SVEC Finds Maintenance Solution from Above

by Preston Knight

In 2004, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) looked to the skies to maintain rights-of-way in areas largely inaccessible to ground crews.

Aerial Solutions Inc., a company based in Tabor City, North Carolina, proved to be the perfect match. About 95 percent of its work involves aerial side trimming, a practice that it pioneered when the company was founded in 1985.

“We were the innovators,” Marketing Manager Lynn Grayson said.

Aerial Solutions primarily works for utilities east of the Mississippi River, and among that group, it has served seven electric cooperatives, including SVEC.

The equipment deployed on each project includes one of the company’s McDonnell Douglas 500 helicopters, affixed with its patented aerial power saw — an 800-pound machine consisting of multiple 24-inch-diameter rotary blades.

The saw is suspended from a 90-foot vertical boom below the helicopter. It provides maximum lateral clearances from vegetation encroaching into the right-of-way, trimming it from ground to sky to further avoid conflicts with power lines.

The versatility and speed of the saw provides SVEC with an efficient and cost-effective alternative to conventional side-trimming methods, with little to no environmental impact. Long-term outages in severe weather can be reduced after a right-of-way is trimmed with the saw.

SVEC trims right-of-way on a roughly seven-year cycle, with Aerial Solutions normally coming into the service territory from January to March. Each project involves a highly trained professional pilot and groundsman, the latter responsible for fueling the helicopter and engine that runs the saw, coordinating with the pilot on anything that occurs on the ground, and working alongside the utility company, in
case debris might fall on the road or a fence, Grayson said.

“The Cooperative’s vegetation-management program employs a mix of ground crews, bucket crews, mechanized ground crews, selective-herbicide application, and aerial saw. The aerial saw has become an essential tool for SVEC to keep its rights-of-way clear,” said Myron Rummel, SVEC’s president & CEO. “In 2004, we completed 40 miles of clearing using this method. Today, SVEC clears about 200 miles of distribution and subtransmission right-of-way annually using the aerial saw.”

Rummel added that the benefits of the saw are realized when compared to the time and cost of using a ground crew. In many cases, he said, a ground crew could not access the same vegetation that the saw can.

Grayson said: “Given the terrain that SVEC covers, there are a lot of mountains ... a lot of remote locations that are hard to get to. We can fly right on up and do the work.”

Luray’s Greenway Wins Gold

In April, Gov. Terry McAuliffe announced the Luray-Hawksbill Greenway as one of three gold medal winners of the 2016 Governor’s Environmental Excellence Awards. The awards were presented at the Environment Virginia Symposium at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington.

The greenway, a multi-use path that runs from Bulldog Field to the Oscar Sours Bridge on Linden Avenue, was recognized for the “exemplary implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan by connecting the community to the natural environment along the 2-mile walking and biking trail that borders the Hawksbill Creek,” according to a press release from the governor’s office.

The Trail encourages wellness and connectivity by partnering with area health facilities, establishing community exercise classes, and offering free health screening, the greenway’s website states. To motivate youth to participate in outdoor activities, which is another goal of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, Luray hosts an Annual Youth Trout Fishing Derby, 4th of July children’s activities, and school field trips along the greenway, the website states.

Winners represented businesses and industrial facilities, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies located throughout the Commonwealth. They were chosen based on criteria including environmental benefit, stakeholder involvement, public outreach, transferability and innovativeness.

“These winners have made a commitment that all Virginians benefit from,” Governor McAuliffe said in the release. “I congratulate and thank these organizations for their leadership, innovation and commitment to Virginia’s natural environment.”

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation sponsored the awards.

For more information on the greenway, visit www.hawksbillgreenway.org.