The Nominating Committee for the 2017 Annual Membership Meeting of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative has selected its Nominating Committee for the 2017 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 2017 meeting member-owners of SVEC will elect one director from Augusta/Highland counties.

The incumbent from Augusta/Highland counties running for re-election is Larry Howdyshell of M t. Solon.

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 at left 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 2017 Annual Membership Meeting, June 8 at the James Madison University Convocation Center.
SVEC Energy Bills Decrease

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henandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has announced that a reduction in the billing factor will decrease residential member-owners’ energy bills $8.35 per 1,000 kWh from what was charged in January 2016.

As of January 2017, the cost to a residential member-owner who uses 1,000 kWh of electricity is $112.16. In January 2016, the cost for that same 1,000 kWh to a residential member-owner was $120.51. The decrease reflects a reduction in the Cooperative's wholesale power cost from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), SVEC's wholesale power provider. The fluctuation in the billing factor is largely caused by changes in the cost of fuel for generation.

"SVEC is always happy to pass along any reduction in costs to our member-owners, and this one is fairly significant," President and CEO Michael Hastings said. "On their bills, where residential members would usually see a charge on the ‘Billing Factor’ line, they will currently see a credit."

Hastings noted that the billing factor can be recalculated at any time, to accommodate changes in the cost to purchase power.

Electric Cooperative Representatives Meet with Legislators in Richmond

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taff and board members of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative met with legislators on Monday, Jan. 23, as part of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) quarterly board meeting and Legislative Day.

Attending were Board Chair Robbie F. Marchant, Secretary/Treasurer Charles Huffman, Steve Burkholder, David Ferguson, Fred Garber, Larry Howdyshell, Suzanne Obenshain and Bill Orndoff, along with President and CEO Michael Hastings, Vice President of Member Services Mike Aulgur, and Public Relations Representative Preston Knight. They joined more than 300 people attending VMDAECs annual event at the Omni Hotel, which included representatives of Virginia’s 13 member-owned electric cooperatives as well as government officials, legislative staff and guests.

Following a breakfast reception at which Del. Jackson Miller, R-Manassas, received the Distinguished Friend of Electric Cooperatives Award, attendees spent the morning visiting with legislators and their aides in their Capitol Square offices, outlining the position of Virginia’s electric cooperatives on legislation being considered by the 2017 General Assembly.

From top: Del. Ben Cline, R-Rockbridge, meets with SVEC Board members Larry Howdyshell (middle) and David Ferguson (right).

• Del. Chris Collins, R-Winchester, talks with SVEC President and CEO Michael Hastings (left) and Board Chair Robbie Marchant.

• Del. Randy Minchew, R-Leesburg, stands between (L-R) SVEC Board Chair Robbie Marchant, SVEC President and CEO Michael Hastings, and Board members Fred Garber and Bill Orndoff.
How Your Personal and Account Information Is Secure with SVEC

Even before the first time that potential members share their personal information with Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC), safeguards are in place to protect their data. Using a multi-layered plan, in conjunction with the coordination of nearly every department at the Cooperative, measures are taken around the clock to keep member-owners' information safe.

INITIAL INFORMATION INPUT

When applicants apply for electric service from SVEC, the Cooperative is required to verify the identity of the applicant, and also to evaluate the application for deposit requirement. Cooperative personnel request information from the applicant to perform the identity verification and assess for deposit requirement. This information is then entered in the Cooperative’s database, and the information is secured through various processes.

“SVEC considers a member-owner’s personal and account information extremely important,” said Vice President of Member Services Mike Aulgur. “We strive to protect our members’ privacy in all manners through the implementation of regulations, Red-Flags-Rule compliance, security and passwords on individual accounts, and verification of giving or supplying information to the individual in question.”

While applying for electric service, the application process is subject to the Red Flags Rule, which are requirements to confirm proper identity set forth by the government that certain agencies must follow. With this Rule, the identity of whomever is signing up for service must be checked and verified.

The Red Flags Rule requires the Cooperative to implement policies and procedures that will:

- **Identify** relevant red flags for accounts. Red flags are a pattern, practice or specific activity that indicates the possible existence of identity theft.
- **Detect** red flags that have been incorporated into the Cooperative’s program.
- **Respond** appropriately to any red flags that are detected to prevent and mitigate identity theft.

“The protection of individuals’ information is extremely critical and has high priority with all agencies and companies involved,” Aulgur said.

For example, the applicant for electric service must provide a tax-identification number during the application process. The Cooperative then uses a third-party vendor, who must meet federal standards for privacy — the transfer of information is electronic, and all data is secured — to verify identification of the applicant. If the report comes back saying that the tax-identification number belongs to someone other than the applicant, the Cooperative personnel will not connect the account in the applicant’s name until he comes into the office and provides photo identification and other supporting documents.

Once the information is in SVEC’s system, security measures continue to protect the personal data that has been entrusted to the Cooperative.

“We take security very seriously,” SVEC Vice President of Information Technology Wayne Hannah said. “We meet and, in most cases, exceed industry standards when it comes to network security. In addition to firewalls, intrusion-detection appliances, enterprise antivirus, web and email filters, and routine security patch maintenance, quarterly tests are conducted by an outside firm to assess the levels of security in place. Additionally, SVEC has taken the proactive measure to prevent security breaches by regularly educating and testing employees.”

Measures are also taken to protect all data through multiple backups and other safeguards.

“All user data is securely backed up and stored off-site,” Hannah said. “Additionally, our data is duplicated on an array of storage devices at another site.”
MEMBER SERVICE

Once members are signed up and their service is connected, there are many places where their information continues to be protected — in the offices and in the field.

For example, Aulgur said, in the event that a wife would call for information on a single account with just the husband’s name on it, the wife would not be able to get information regarding the account, in order to protect the identity and security of the account.

And when crews are communicating in the field, measures are just as high to keep information secure.

“Measures are just as stringent in the field as they are in the offices,” SVEC President and CEO Michael Hastings said.

“Through all the services SVEC brings to its members, protection of their personal information remains one of our most important tasks. The Cooperative diligently monitors all aspects of our system to protect members’ information.”

Communication between crews and smart metering are two of the main areas.

“Crews use discretion in communication when they are out in the field to help keep members’ information confidential,” Vice President of Engineering and Operations Greg Rogers said. “Crews are cognizant of what information is shared over communications so that member-owners cannot be identified.”

With new metering technology (SEVC employs automated meter-reading or AMR technology), one question SVEC has received is about the privacy of their members’ information and the potential for personal information to be learned and/or used by the Cooperative.

“I can assure you, SVEC is not looking to invade anyone’s privacy, and we have no way to know what you are using in your home,” Hastings said.

He said SVEC can look at total electric usage, but the Cooperative does not know specifically what’s being used.

“The biggest thing we learn is the period of peak usage in homes and that information allows us to maximize efficiency and minimize system loss, which ultimately saves money for our member-owners,” Hastings said.

With the information that is gathered, it gives utilities the ability to plan more accurately how to build a distribution system more economically, enabling a higher level of functionality and reliability.

“It comes down to our mission statement of delivering safe, reliable, affordable electrical energy to our member-owners,” Hastings said. “That’s why we use the technology.”

MEMBER-OWNERS’ OPTIONAL SERVICES

SEVC member-owners have the opportunity to utilize a couple of choices offered by the Cooperative for convenience and information — access to view and/or pay their bill online at www.svec-online.coop, correspondence with the Cooperative via email, and receipt of an e-newsletter sent out by the Cooperative.

To access their account information, where members can view and pay their bills, members must first create an account username and password.

“A web address that begins with ‘https’ indicates that the connection between your browser and the web server is encrypted,” Hannah said. “That means if the data passing between the locations were to be intercepted, it would be incredibly difficult, if not virtually impossible, for someone to be able to interpret the data.”

Another online service offered is to email questions and/or comments to the Cooperative.

“Email is not secure. You should never send important personal information through email,” Hannah said. “Typically, your name, address and phone number are public record, so the necessity for more stringent protection is not as crucial as the need to protect more personal data.”

An “opt-in” service offered by the Cooperative is a monthly e-newsletter. By “opt-in,” the member must first share their email address with the Cooperative to receive the newsletter.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative members can rest assured that information shared with the Cooperative will remain confidential and secure. If you have any questions, please call 1-800-234-7832 or visit your local office.

STAY SAFE ONLINE

- Never send important personal information through email.
- SVEC will never call to ask for payment. If you are in doubt of a call regarding your electric service account, call SVEC at 1-800-234-7832 to confirm if it is legitimate.
- Keep firewalls turned on.
- Use a malware scanner.
- Use different passwords for each online account and make them complex.

Download the Free Mobile App, MySVEC

Take your participation as a member-owner of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative to a new level by downloading our free mobile app, MySVEC. Pay your bill, report a power outage, and receive outage-related notifications through this fast, user-friendly program.

Features enable you to: • Manage and make timely, secure payments; • Report an outage; • Receive up-to-date outage-restoration information; • View the area’s outage map; and • Contact SVEC by phone or email.

This app is designed to provide an additional convenience for you, our member-owner, and serve as another way in which you can be connected to your electric cooperative. It builds on existing resources such as our website (www.svec.coop) and our social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter.

During extreme weather or emergency situations, this app also offers another way to contact us and monitor the area’s outage map. Remember, you are more than a customer of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative. You are a member-owner. Take advantage of everything the Cooperative has to offer by downloading this app. We will continually evaluate your needs and work to exceed your expectations, pursuing opportunities that will benefit you. To download the app, visit stores for Android and Apple devices, or find the links under the ”MySVEC App” page on www.svec.coop.
An Explanation of Your SVEC Electric Bill

1. **Electricity Consumption Data**

2. **Electricity Service Charges**

   - **Total Previous Balance**: Total amount due from previous month's bill.
   - **Payments received**: Received since previous month's bill issued.
   - **Balance Forward**: Difference in Total Previous and Payments Received.

3. **Current Charges (Schedule XXX — tells which rate schedule your service falls under)**

   - **Basic Consumer Charge**: Part of rate schedule as approved by State Corporation Commission; a fixed amount charge per month, does not vary with amount of power and energy consumed, covers costs that are not associated with the amount of power and energy consumed. For example, materials (poles, transformers, etc.), metering costs, billing costs and a certain amount of the electric plant recovery that provides for the connection to the distribution system.

   - **Variable Distribution Charge**: Charges for the distribution of power and energy through the distribution system that SVEC owns, which varies monthly according to the amount of power and energy you consume. The total of the two (Basic Consumer Charge and Variable Distribution Charge) equal the **SVEC Distribution Charges** line on your bill, and are the Cooperative’s distribution charges for distributing the power and energy and metering and billing.

4. **Power and Energy Charge**: A per kWh charge for the production and transmission of electricity.

5. **Billing Factor**: Also known as the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA); this is a dollar for dollar pass-through that reflects any increase or decrease in the Cooperative’s cost of purchased power from our wholesale provider, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC). As needed, the Cooperative will re-calculate the billing factor to reflect changes in the cost to purchase power. SVEC **Electricity Supply Charges Subtotal** is the total of the power and energy charge and the billing factor.

6. **SVEC is required to bill, collect and remit the city or county tax.**

7. **VA consumption tax** is the tax imposed by the state of Virginia by legislation based upon the amount of energy consumed.

8. **Sales and Use surcharge** is a revenue recovery mechanism allowed by the SCC to recover incremental Virginia sales tax that the Cooperative is required to pay on tangible items or property it purchases.

9. **Total current charges** are for the month’s service and the amount of energy so identified on the bill, therefore the balance forward plus the total current charges is the **Total Amount Due**.

10. **Messages from SVEC**

    - **Payment information and other relevant news is printed here.**

11. **Important Messages from SVEC**

    - **Payment information and other relevant news is printed here.**

12. **Electricity Consumption History**

    - **Gives the last 12 months plus the current month’s usage.**

13. **Account Information**

    - Please keep this information up to date: if you are planning to move, or change your phone number, please let SVEC know as soon as possible.
SVEC Conducts Survey in 2017

Every other year, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) conducts a survey of its residential member-owners on a variety of topics. This survey is designed to provide information that can be used to better serve your needs. Using the responses, SVEC can modify existing programs to meet changing needs, add new programs, enhance communications with you, and more.

The survey will ask you about the construction of your home, the type and age of your heating and cooling systems, the number and age of appliances, how you connect to the internet, and a variety of other topics. Unlike quizzes and tests in school, there is nothing you need to study or prepare for in advance. Just sit back, relax and answer the questions to the best of your ability.

This year the survey will be conducted entirely online. The rationale for this approach is straightforward:

- Online surveying saves resources; no paper is used or postage required.
- It is easy to complete and doesn’t pick up stains from your coffee cup.
- It eliminates data-entry errors.

Of course, the logical follow-up question is, “What if I don’t have internet access or completing things online is difficult for me?” Fortunately, there are a number of simple solutions. If your internet access is limited, try using a PC at your local library or at a family member/friends home.

Make an event of it and enjoy some good company while you provide input to help your Cooperative deliver greater value. The survey also works very well on a tablet or smartphone.

As with all surveys, more is better; so please be sure to take a few minutes to provide your input. All answers are confidential unless you have a question or issue you would like SVEC to contact you about directly. Just enter that request in the comment box at the end of the survey.

Over the next couple of months, SVEC will be sending one or two reminder emails to let you know the survey is still in the works. In mid-May, you will be sent a survey link via email. Please complete the survey as soon as you can. The goal is to have the data analyzed and a report prepared by August. After that, look for a summary of the findings in a future article.

We all get barraged by survey requests when we are online. Many of those are designed to tailor online ads in your browser to tempt you to buy something. This survey is designed to equip SVEC to add value to your service. So please do complete it. Thank you in advance for helping us help you.

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Does SVEC have your current email address?

To participate in the survey, SVEC will need your current email address. Please register your account, including email address, at www.svec-online.coop so your input can become part of the results. Like all of your account information, it is safe and secure with the Cooperative.

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SVEC Food Drive Nearing Finish

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 headquarters in Mount Crawford 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
The festival steadily grew in popularity, necessitating a venue change. In 1976, it moved to Shrine Mont, a retreat center of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia that’s registered as a national historic landmark. Until the early 1980s, concerts remained purely symphonic, and today have evolved into a series featuring music from across many genres. The venue can comfortably fit about 1,500 people, parking is free, and while a food vendor is on-site, outside food and drinks are allowed into concerts.

“We try to introduce something new every year,” Lynch said. “Music doesn’t know any sort of age. It’s just getting people exposed to it. We do some country, some bluegrass. We still do symphonic music. It’s a variety of good stuff.”

The festival relies on a mixture of revenue streams, led by ticket sales and aided by sponsorships, state and local government contributions, and individual donations. The Shenandoah Valley Music Festival Guild, a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting the music program, raised $16,000 last year. In its 25-year history, the Guild has contributed more than $200,000, Lynch said.

“They are a very active group,” he said. “We love them.”

Through the years the festival has offered scholarships and recognized outstanding music students in the region. With the help of the U.S. Department of Education, the festival also created the Valley’s first public school strings program in Shenandoah County.

The concert series, though, remains the primary initiative of the festival. Lynch said organizers ask the audience what acts it wants to see and then curate a list from those suggestions for a wider-spread survey. The festival cannot always afford bigger “name” acts that people want, Lynch said, or an artist’s schedule may not accommodate a trip to the Valley in a given year.

But the stars sometimes align to get a long-desired performer, such as Hornsby last year.

“We find plenty of good artists to hire,” Lynch said.

Tickets for the coming concert season will be on sale in the early spring. A package deal is available that features tickets to weekend concerts plus lodging and meals at Shrine Mont, which appeals to locals as a single overnight getaway or to tourists seeking a multi-day excursion in the Valley.

Lynch is positive that any music lover’s pursuit of happiness will end at the festival.

“It’s a beautiful site. Shrine Mont is a terrific place,” he said. “There’s kind of an effect there and I haven’t been able to quantify what that is. ... It sounds cliché to say it’s magical, but it is.”

For more information, including how to purchase tickets or contribute to the festival, please visit www.musicfest.org or call (540) 459-3396. The festival office is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 102 N. Main St. in Woodstock.

Once concert tickets are on sale, the music and hotel package is available by calling Shrine Mont at (540) 856-2141.

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### 2017 Shenandoah Valley Music Festival Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Artist/Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, July 21</td>
<td>Arlo Guthrie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, July 22</td>
<td>Piedmont Symphony Orchestra, with rock band celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, July 28</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, July 29</td>
<td>Piedmont Symphony Orchestra, program TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Aug. 11</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Aug. 12</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, Sept. 2</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, Sept. 3</td>
<td>Bluegrass Minifest, featuring Balsam Range and Band of Ruhks</td>
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*By Preston Knight*
Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

**LARGE TREES**

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:
- Maple
- Oak
- Spruce
- Pine
- Birch
- Sweetgum
- Linden

**MEDIUM TREES**

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

**SMALL TREES**

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:
- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac

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40ft. high or less

Tree pruning zone

Maximum tree height 25ft.

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70ft. 60ft. 50ft. 40ft. 30ft. 20ft. 10ft. 0

Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association