SVEC offices will be closed all day on Monday, May 29, in observance of Memorial Day. Offices will reopen Tuesday, May 30.

SVEC Annual Meeting Reminder

Come to your Annual Meeting and take an active role in your Cooperative. This year, the meeting is on Thursday, June 8, at the James Madison University Convocation Center.

At Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative’s 2017 Annual Meeting, several exciting things are happening. The member-owners are electing their board of directors, and learning about the Cooperative’s business for the year.

Families can enjoy a delicious barbecue dinner. Kids can learn about safety and electricity, and have a good time at the “Kids Zone” for children ages 5-10. There will also be door prizes and gift certificates given. This year features two grand prizes: two $500 credits on the winner’s electric bill.

At SVEC, you are more than a customer — you are a member-owner. Unlike other electric utilities, your Co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated, your Co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community. That’s why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.

SVEC January and February Major Outages

1/13 Deerfield area
600 members out for 0.5 hour — equipment failure (vandalism)

1/25 Cub Run area
650 members out for 0.75 hour — device on sensitive setting to protect workers

1/26 Fairview area
1,900 members for 0.25 hour — equipment failure

2/12 Shawneeland area
2,000 members out for 3 hours — tree off right-of-way fell on power line

Franks Mill, Gardner Springs and Jennings Gap area
1,600 members out for 2 hours — tree off right-of-way fell on power line

Winchester’s North Kent Street area
2,100 members out for 2.25 hours — tree off right-of-way fell on power line

White House area
1,100 members out for 2 hours — tree off right-of-way fell on power line
More than 1,600 Meals Donated from Food Drive

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) wants to thank all of our member-owners who contributed to our recent food drive benefitting the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. Your generosity led to 1,927 pounds of donated food, which equals 1,606 meals. Thank you!!!

The Cooperative believes strongly in supporting the communities that we serve, and is happy to serve as facilitator for these efforts, but you, our member-owners, deserve much of the credit for making this year’s food drive such a success. Blue Ridge Area Food Bank serves 25 counties and eight cities, providing food to 114,400 people each month.

The food from SVEC’s drive will serve those in need from the food bank’s Verona headquarters and Winchester branch.

“For your continued efforts are doing more than just helping our neighbors in need. You’re showing them that people do care, and that gives them hope. Sometimes hope is just what people need to try to change their lives,” said Jennifer Clark Robertson, the food bank’s volunteer and food drive coordinator.

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated!

Home Energy Advisor Finds Ways to Save

If you’re looking for ways to save energy and money in your home, check out the new Home Energy Advisor tools available on www.svec.coop and under your account in www.svec-online.coop.

These fun, interactive tools help you zero in on where you can save the most — and fast!

Here’s what you’ll find in the Home Energy Advisor:

- **The Home Energy Advisor** — This quick calculator provides an estimated breakdown of your energy use and costs by heating, cooling, water heating, refrigeration, lighting and appliances. Learn how much you can save in each area.

- **Billing Analysis** — Here the Home Energy Advisor goes one step further and incorporates your actual electric bills in its calculations. Either enter your account number when visiting the advisor through www.svec.coop, or log-in to your account in www.svec-online.coop. From there, you will have a customized experience to analyzing your energy usage.

- **Energy Forecast** — See the current weather’s direct impact on your home’s energy use and costs. Based on your area’s seven-day weather, you can adjust a “virtual thermostat” for heating and cooling and see the daily dollar impact. Complete the home profile to pinpoint more savings opportunities.

- **Lighting Calculator** — This tool quickly calculates and compares the operating costs of standard incandescent, halogen, compact fluorescent and LED lamps.

In addition, you’ll find a complete home energy library packed with more information and helpful tips.

Please visit the Home Energy Advisor, another way Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative seeks to better serve our member-owners!
The Cooperative’s member-owners for 2016 will soon be rewarded with one of the advantages of being a part of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative: Capital Credits. Capital Credits are not received by consumers of all utility companies. Capital Credits are one of the benefits of being a member-owner of a cooperative.

SVEC will mail “Notices of Equity Allocation” to its member-owners. Equity allocation is the member-owner’s share of the Cooperative’s margins, or revenues after all proper expenses, for a given year.

The notices were mailed to member-owners who received electric service in 2016 and had Capital Credits assigned. This represents the amount of equity assigned to their accounts. The allocation amount for each member-owner is based on their total electric service billing patronage with the Cooperative for the year. The total dollar amount of owner equity assigned for the fiscal year of 2016 was more than $16 million.

No allocations were made for less than $15, therefore no allocation notices were mailed with amounts less than $15 for 2016.

The amount of equity allocation for a member-owner is determined by multiplying their total electric service revenue (“total patronage” on their equity allocation notice) for the year by area allocation percentage.

It is SVEC’s intent to return Capital Credits when its financial condition meets the reserve requirements of Rural Utility Service and on the conditions outlined in the Cooperative’s Bylaws (Article VII, Section 2b).

The Cooperative’s Bylaws (Article VII, Section 2b) state that no capital credits may be paid until authorized by the Board of Directors. Before this can be decided, the Board must determine that the overall financial condition of the Cooperative will not be adversely affected and that all mortgage requirements are met.

If you, as a member-owner, receive an allocation notice for 2016 or any prior year, please keep the Cooperative informed of any address changes. This will enable the Co-op to issue you a check, or credit to your bill, when the Board does approve capital credit retirements (payment) associated with your allocation.

Please call your local Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative office if you have any questions regarding your Equity Allocation notice.

Staying Prepared for Outages

Checklist of things to do when an outage occurs:

• Check fuses or breakers in your electrical panel box.
• Even if your neighbors’ lights are on, don’t hesitate to call Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative at 1-800-234-7832.
• If fuses or breakers are OK, call SVEC. Following the prompts from the automated system, give your name, SVEC account number, telephone number and the approximate time the outage occurred. This will help the Cooperative determine the extent of the outage and restore service as quickly as possible.
• Turn off all electric appliances that were on when the outage occurred, especially air conditioners, heat pumps or other large electric appliances. You will want to leave a light on so you will know when your power has been restored.
• Check the SVEC App on your mobile device for updates regarding outage restoration.
• STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES and broken utility poles. Please note the location of the downed line or pole and call SVEC immediately. Even lines that look harmless can be dangerous.
• If your power is still out once your neighbors’ homes have been returned to service, you should not hesitate to call the Cooperative again.
• Don’t keep checking your refrigerator and/or freezer. Food will keep much longer if the doors are kept closed. If it appears the outage could be for an extended time period, cover your refrigerator and/or freezer with a heavy blanket.
• If any member of your family is on a life-support system, please notify Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative today so his or her name, account number and telephone number can be placed on our life-support registry.
Meter Tampering Is Dangerous

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.”

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 is the potential to damage equipment, which ends up costing not only the person doing it, but other members as well,” 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 IVB. (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.

The next generation of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative lineworkers is ready to serve member-owners! Pictured above is Brodey Williams, 7, son of Michael Williams, lineman second class in the Luray District, and below are Alyson Good, 8, and Kelley Good, 6, daughters of Blair Good, a lead lineman in the Rockingham District. Two more kids of an SVEC lineman are pictured in the “Say Cheese” section on page 8.
New Facility Construction Continues

Work is progressing well at the site of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative’s new Headquarters and Rockingham District Office. Scheduled for completion in the spring of 2018, the new building is being constructed on the corner of Oakwood Drive and U.S. 11 near Mount Crawford. For additional information, please visit www.svec.coop/new-facility.
A Real ‘Page’ Turner: Expansion Comes to Stanley’s Kibler Library

by Cammie Tutwiler

It is an exciting time for the William “Bill” Kibler Memorial Library, located in Stanley. In mid-February, the library held a groundbreaking event for the addition of approximately 1,600 square feet to its existing 1,700-square-foot building.

“We have raised more than $260,000 towards construction and have acquired a grant/loan from the Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Authority for the interior furnishings,” Elizabeth Kite, library board member and coordinator of children’s activities, said in an email interview.

She said that the cost of construction is estimated to be $300,000 with $65,000 in interior furnishings, and that the project should take six to eight months to complete, depending on the weather.

“IT is designed to be a very usable open space with the ability to move children’s bookcases and furniture around to open up or close down the space,” Kite said.

She said that the new area will feature a built-in story-time seating area; a computer lab area just for kids, with colorful keyboards and chairs; a craft area, activity boards, a smartboard, and work space.

“Currently, we have to pop up folding tables when we do kids’ activities,” Kite said. “In the summer, we have card tables popped up in the aisles and everywhere! It’s hard to get around.”

The expansion, she said, will allow them to have kids’ furniture available all of the time, for the programs and patrons who need space to work on projects, homework and other things. She added that they are also excited about the new circulation desk, which will be lower on the children’s side so that kids can walk right up and check out books from volunteers. The desk is being donated by Ridge View Millwork, who is designing and creating the area at no cost to the library.

“Kids love this and have continued to come even though some are now in middle school,” Kite said. “We read and discuss stories, do fun activities and crafts, and share book recommendations.”

Additionally, the library has a summer reading program, where kids read to reach weekly goals and earn prizes from local businesses, culminating in a Summer Reading Celebration at the end of the summer for those who reach their goals.

“The library has a fourth-grade program with Stanley Elementary,” she said. “We do a Resource Scavenger Hunt, eat popcorn, do fiction and nonfiction relay races, work on character crafts, and sign up fourth-graders for their own library cards.”

Additionally, they do a bookmark contest the week of National Library Week with prizes; Halloween dress-up and candy hand-out; Santa at Christmas with photos; and occasionally an entry into the July 4th parade with a children’s float.

The William “Bill” Kibler Library has been operating since April 2011 and currently has more than 1,965 members, 30-plus volunteers, and over 14,000 items in its collection. They are a non-profit, independently run library that is all volunteer. To make a donation for the addition at the library, visit their GoFundMe page: www.gofundme.com/RoomforMore or donations can be mailed directly to the library: P.O. Box 129, Stanley, VA 22851.
On her best days, Tina Marie Scully comes home in tears.
A perfect world would be set up where she would not volunteer at Froggy’s Closet because all children’s needs would be met at home, making the store unnecessary. In the absence of that is the presence of Froggy’s, an offshoot program of the nonprofit Families Reaching Out Group, or F.R.O.G., that Scully co-founded.

She directs a team of eight volunteers for the store at 32 E. Piccadilly St., sending home donated clothes, toys, baby necessities, and much more for free to Winchester-area foster families and at-risk children referred from partner agencies. In 2016, Froggy’s Closet handed out 18,000 clothing items and had 900 referrals.

Emotions can run high for Scully, who has seen children having to share shoes and encountered homeless boys relegated to wearing men’s pants. These occasions can be painfully sad moments to witness, yet they help reinforce to her the significance of Froggy’s in the community.
“IT really empowers children,” she said. “It gives them self-esteem that they are wearing clothing they can be proud of, and that fits.”

‘Invaluable Resource’

Founded in 2009 as a support group for foster parents, F.R.O.G. obtained nonprofit status in 2011, branching out to serve any child in need. Its mission is to make a difference in the lives of children who have been victims of abuse, neglect or are otherwise at-risk, letting them know people do care about them.

Support meetings for foster families are held the first Monday of each month at Froggy’s, where $150 is given to a child to use toward extracurricular activities. The group also provides vouchers for haircuts and book bags for school.

Froggy’s is the predominant program provided by F.R.O.G. that opened at its current location in December 2015. Its volunteer run, so nobody, including Scully, takes in a salary. Everything in the store is donated.

The building has a frog motif and includes a dressing room and play area. Children are given at least seven matching outfits when referred to the store, Scully said.

One volunteer cuts sleeves off men’s T-shirts and creates a tote bag to carry clothes, handing it out to parents. This is viewed as a much more comforting option than simply stuffing clothes into a trash bag.

Scully will often help with referrals the day they come in, and, through a statewide foster organization, NewFound Families, she assists people around Virginia.

“I have taken clothing to Richmond before,” Scully said. “I’m always on call.”

The focus for Froggy’s remains serving children in the Winchester area. Unfortunately, that keeps volunteers plenty busy.

In the last five or six years, an increase in drug use has left the area in bigger need of placing children in foster care, said Judy Blau, a resource family coordinator for the Virginia Department of Social Services.

“Frequently, we have a need for families that can take sibling groups because our preference is for them to remain together,” she said. “There is also a need for families willing to take teens. The goal is for children to be returned to their families but in the meantime, they need a family that can support and nurture them and in many cases help them deal with the trauma they have experienced.”

Denise Britt, who is also a DSS resource family coordinator in Winchester, adds that there is a growing need for families who have a stay-at-home parent as well.

“Specifically, there is an increasing number of babies coming into care who cannot go into day care immediately because they are newborns, may be substance exposed, may have a disability, or are recovering from abuse,” she said.
Families Reaching Out Group, or F.R.O.G., is a nonprofit that supports Winchester-area foster families and at-risk children referred from partner agencies. Its store, at 32 E. Piccadilly St., handed out 18,000 clothing items and had 900 referrals in 2016.