SVEC Celebrates National Cooperative Month

The seven cooperative principles are:

Voluntary and open membership: Cooperative membership is open to all who are able to use its products/services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership.

Democratic member control: Cooperatives are controlled by their members who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

Members’ economic participation: Members contribute equally to the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative.

Autonomy and independence: Each cooperative is managed by an independent board elected from its membership, and decisions are made that democratically benefit its members.

Education, training, and information: Cooperatives provide education and training for members, managers and employees, as well as information to the general public about the benefits of cooperatives and the products and services they provide.

Cooperation among cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for community: While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.
SVEC Eazy Pay: Convenient & Free

The SVEC Eazy Pay plan allows the amount of your electric bill to be automatically deducted from your financial institution account. This service is optional, secure, safe and FREE.

HOW EAZY PAY WORKS — IT’S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3 ...

1. Read Material: Learn about Eazy Pay through our website, www.svec.coop; contact your local office for more information; or ask for a brochure to be mailed to you.

2. Sign Up: Enroll online at our new E-biz website, www.svec-online.coop; print out an authorization form online; or pick up a brochure at your district office. Fill out information, and return to SVEC with a voided check (checking account) or deposit slip (savings account). Your account must reflect a zero balance before enrolling in Eazy Pay, modifying your Eazy Pay information, or discontinuing your participation in the program.

3. Enjoy Worry-Free, Timely Payments! Upon receipt of this authorization form, SVEC will implement the direct debit of your financial institution account. You will continue to receive a monthly bill from SVEC as usual. On this bill you will see a new statement to the effect that, “Your bank account will be debited for $ (total amount due) on (date).” You will be charged ABSOLUTELY NOTHING for this service. Again, please remember your account must reflect a zero balance before enrolling in Eazy Pay, modifying your Eazy Pay information, or discontinuing your participation in the program.

SVEC July Major Outages

July 3 Fulks Run and New Market areas
1,500 members out for 1½ hours due to bird in substation

July 4 Staunton area
1,100 members out for 1½ hours due to device on sensitive setting to protect workers

July 5 Staunton and Hickory Hill areas
2,000 members out for 1½ hours due to snake in substation

July 9 Hawksbill area
1,050 members out for 1 hour due to vehicle hitting guy wire

July 20 Staunton and Hickory Hill areas
2,000 members out for ½ hour due to buzzard in substation

July 22 Teaverton area
900 members out for 1½ hours due to vehicle accident

July 25 Staunton and Fort Defiance areas
1,500 members out for 2 hours due to equipment failure

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative proudly sponsors local 4-H chapters and their members. A major component of this partnership is the Cooperative’s participating in livestock sales. We continue to be impressed by the hard work and dedication young men and women display as they show their animals and prepare them for sale. Congratulations to everyone for another great year of events, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2017!
Strasburg Artworks
Work to Inspire

by Preston Knight, SVEC Writer

The trademark purple that adorns just about everything in Strasburg has been accentuated in recent months by the rest of the color spectrum. But this visual explosion isn’t taking over as much as it is complementing.

Through the Staufferstadt Artist Residency, a local non-profit project formed by friends Daniel Lefkowitz and Daniel Stover in the spring of 2015, murals featuring contemporary art elements are popping up on the sides of buildings around Strasburg. The designs, it is hoped, will revitalize the town and inspire youth, organizers say.

“We enjoy art. We appreciate it. We see the power it has, and we just see it as something interesting to do for the community,” Lefkowitz said. “We want to try to give back. We want to try to inspire people.

“There’s a tendency to sit around and complain and say, ‘They oughtta be doing this, they oughtta be doing that.’ This is an opportunity to get up and do something. There are things you can do in your community to really make it better.”

Large-scale contemporary public art is “pretty unique” for a small town, as opposed to scenes depicting barns or other pieces of rural America, he said.

“It can really set the town apart and be a boost for the town,” Lefkowitz said.

Three murals exist so far in Strasburg: at 160 N. Massanutten St. (near the Strasburg Emporium); 181 W. King St. (facing the Strasburg Community Library); and 154 E. King St. (across from the Strasburg Volunteer Fire Department). A fourth mural is planned on the back side of the Northern Virginia Daily building on Holiday Street.

Different artists from out of state have been involved in each mural. Artists are provided a place to stay, and paid a small stipend for their work. Lefkowitz and Stover search for artists specifically for murals, though people can come just to enjoy the experience of being in Strasburg and honing their craft as well.

“It’s attractive to artists because most professional artists live in big cities,” Lefkowitz said. “Getting to experience our relaxed small-town life and the beautiful countryside is a big draw.”

The benefits, however, are not solely for the artists. Their works figure to leave a lasting mark on Strasburg.

“I was lucky enough to get to watch the third mural come to life since it’s next to Town Hall, and I heard from so many delighted community members each time I would go out to check on the progress,” said Michelle Bixler, Strasburg’s economic development and marketing manager. “Even folks from outside of the community are asking me about the project, so I am thrilled that they have brought such energy and excitement.”

From an economic development perspective, the project is advantageous as well, she adds.

“Arts can be a great tourist-attraction tool. Each time someone comes down to look at the murals, our business owners have an opportunity to keep them here a little longer with their goods or services,” Bixler said. “There has already been talk about future works.”
projects throughout town, with folks coming out of the woodwork to share ideas for what to do next. I look forward to helping out in any way I can to cultivate that creative and entrepreneurial energy.”

Lefkowitz said the residency’s goal is to paint three murals a year in Strasburg, while remaining aware that they do not want to go overboard with the paintings. “We’re not trying to take over the town and not trying to saturate it,” he said. “We’re trying to accent what’s already here.”

That list keeps growing. Bixler notes that the town has already been investing in downtown streetscape and façade improvements, as well as the design phase of the Town Green, which will feature green space, benches, a path and more. All of those are important components in “place making,” just as the arts are, she said.

In addition to continuing the mural effort, Lefkowitz said the residency has goals of hosting themed art shows and other special community events throughout the year. “We’re just getting going,” he said. For more information, visit www.staufferstadt.org.

VMDAEC Education Scholarships Available

Any high school or home school senior graduating in 2017 whose parents or guardians are members-owners of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and whose primary residence is served by the Cooperative is eligible to apply now for a $1,000 scholarship. Applications are due Feb. 10, 2017.

Scholarships are awarded by the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives’ (VMDAEC) Education Scholarship Foundation. An applicant must be entering his or her first semester at a college or technical/trade school in the fall of 2017. Scholarships must be used toward tuition, student fees, room and board or textbooks.

The Foundation selects scholarship recipients based on a combination of three weighted criteria: financial need at 40 percent, academic achievement at 40 percent, and personal statement at 20 percent. Successful applicants will be notified no later than May 31, 2017.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO APPLY:


2. Complete the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Application form using a computer. Follow the instructions for uploading or otherwise providing supporting documents and do not leave any sections blank. Failure to provide requested information will result in disqualification.

3. Compile all documents listed below to provide with the application in electronic format, if possible. Do not send any of these documents separately and use the following sequence (from front to back):

- Copy of a recent electric cooperative bill for primary residence.
- Personal statement.
- Copy of preliminary official high school or home school transcript. If it is school policy, the transcript can be mailed to 4201 Dominion Blvd., Suite 101, Glen Allen, VA 23060 in a separate envelope.
- Copy of standardized test scores (SAT and/or ACT), if taken.
- Recommendation letter written by someone not related to applicant.

4. Upload the required documents or email them in PDF format to the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Selection Committee at foundation@vmdaec.com no later than 10 p.m. on Feb. 10, 2017.

In 2016, the VMDAEC Education Scholarship Foundation received more than 200 applications from students in areas served by 15 electric cooperatives in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. From these, the Foundation Board selected 50 recipients. Over the past 15 years, 573 students have received a VMDAEC Education Scholarship.

Founded in 1944, VMDAEC is the trade association for Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative and the 14 other not-for-profit electric distribution cooperatives serving the Mid-Atlantic region.

For more information, visit www.vmdaec.com or contact Nina Jacobs, VMDAEC manager of administrative services, at njacobs@vmdaec.com or 804-968-4084.
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.

Bring an SVEC Safety Demonstration to You!

At Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC), we enjoy getting out into the communities that we serve to discuss the Cooperative, energy efficiency, safety and more. If you are interested in having us visit your civic club or organization, please contact us at svecpr@svec.coop. We will be glad to visit groups of any size, and we can cater our presentation to address specific questions or concerns of your membership.

Also, now that the school year is off and running, we are again excited at the opportunity to bring our safety demonstration to classrooms around the Shenandoah Valley. We believe strongly in educating young people of the dangers of electricity. Our display educates students about the possible hazards of electricity and how to best approach situations when an electrical danger might be present.

We would welcome the opportunity to come to your school, day care or after-school program and present our electrical safety display to any of your students; the display is appropriate for any elementary-aged student. It covers safety topics including the importance of avoiding substations, the need to be aware of overhead power lines, ensuring common household appliances are used correctly, and more.

Please contact us at svecpr@svec.coop for more information!
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 SVEC Manager of District Operations Greg Rogers.

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 electricity, 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.