SVEC Offers LED Web Deal

When it comes to lighting, the best ways to save money are to turn off the lights when not in use and replace old bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes). LEDs last longer and use less energy than the spiral-shaped compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) or traditional incandescent bulbs.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has partnered with Cree Inc., a leading LED manufacturer, and online retailer, 1000Bulbs.com, to offer member-owners exclusive deals on energy-efficient bulbs. Cree LEDs have 25,000 hours (22 years) of lifetime. They are “instant on,” dimmable and are environmentally friendly.

To take advantage of the special offer, and to complete the online-ordering process, you must be an SVEC member-owner and use SVEC’s e-Business page. It’s free and easy to sign up!

To sign up, or log in if you’ve already registered, please visit www.svec.coop. The link to the online offer is on the left side of the e-Business home page, under “Account.” Please take advantage quickly to enjoy savings today.

Howdyshell recognized for service to electric cooperatives

The Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) board of directors took action at its July 24 annual meeting to recognize Larry C. Howdyshell of Mount Solon for his committed service to electric cooperatives in three states.

Howdyshell, a long-time member of the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative board of directors, has served in various leadership roles on the VMDAEC board of directors from 2003 through the present, chairing both its Legislative and Awards committees.

“Howdyshell served as chairman of the VMDAEC board from 2015 to 2017, leading the Association through its greatest structural changes in a generation and into a dynamic period of expanded services in training, communications and governmental affairs,” said Richard G. Johnstone Jr. (above, left), CEO of VMDAEC. Johnstone added, “Larry’s homespun sense of humor and humility has endeared him to all with whom he has come in contact!”

Howdyshell was first elected to the SVEC Board of Directors in 1992 and was re-elected to serve a seventh four-year term at the Co-op’s Annual Meeting in June.
Kiosks Provide New Way to Pay

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has introduced an added convenience for member-owners: payment kiosks.

The machines are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The easy-to-use system provides a faster way for you to complete your transaction by not having to wait in line.

You can pay your statement by cash, check or credit or debit card. Visa, MasterCard and Discover are all accepted. Plus, there is no transaction fee for the use of your credit or debit card!

Payments are immediately posted to your account and you leave the station with a receipt confirming the transaction.

The kiosks are in operation in the Mount Crawford headquarters and district offices in Staunton, Mount Jackson, Luray and Winchester.

Thank you for trying our new kiosks.

Work is progressing well at the site of Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative’s Rockingham Complex, which will serve as the new Headquarters and Rockingham District Office. Scheduled for completion in the spring of 2018, the facility 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.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

Average Annual Price Increase 2011-2016

<table>
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<th>Percent</th>
<th>4.0</th>
<th>3.5</th>
<th>3.0</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.0</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
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<td>3.3%</td>
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<td>2.7%</td>
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www.svec.coop
The Winchester-area ChildSafe Center – CAC (Child Advocacy Center) plays an important role in helping children after incidents of abuse, and on Saturday, Sept. 30, at 7 p.m., the organization will hold its 4th Annual Celebration of the Decades at the Youth Development Center.

Kelly Bober, executive director of the ChildSafe Center – CAC, said that guests will be able to dance the night away in a gymnasium with a live band, participate in a costume contest and dance off, and enjoy food and drink being served in the adjoining “Diner” space during the “Nifty ’50s” event.

“The Annual Celebration of the Decades is a fun event where guests can feel as if they have truly stepped back in time,” Bober said. “Shine up those saddle shoes and fluff out those pom poms, and while costumes are not required, guests are encouraged to come fully decked out in ’50s fashions.”

Tickets are $65 per person, which includes dinner, beverages and live entertainment. Last year, she said, they were able to raise over $11,000, with 100 percent of the funds being used to support services to child abuse victims in the local community.

“To date, the Annual Celebration of the Decades has raised more than $30,000, with each year growing and raising more to help the children of our community,” Bober said. “As this is our fourth annual celebration, we are hoping to make this the best year yet.”

Tickets do not usually sell out, but they are not sold at the door. Ticket sales will end Sept. 22 and guests are encouraged to purchase tickets early. For information about the event, visit their Facebook page (ChildSafe Center-CAC) or website (www.childsafecenter.com) or call the “Teacher’s Lounge” at 540-665-2733.

The ChildSafe Center – CAC

The thought for a Child Advocacy Center originated in the 1980s from a district attorney in Alabama. Robert E. “Bud” Cramer Jr. felt that the systems in place to support child abuse victims were actually re-victimizing them. After an incident of abuse, children were forced to talk about it repeatedly — to police, social services or at school. Cramer’s idea was to create a child-friendly place where children could safely tell their stories and receive the support they needed following abuse.

“The (Winchester) ChildSafe Center – CAC opened in March 2003, after a steering committee of professionals discovered the approach and learned that it was the gold standard in terms of a community’s response to the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse outcomes,” Bober said.

The services were initially housed in the Frederick County Department of Social Services, and the center moved to a freestanding location in March 2010 on the Our Health Community Campus in Winchester.

“Recognizing that children’s needs extended beyond the initial investigative response, we began to provide ongoing therapy services in 2012,” she added. “Today, we have grown to include a staff of professionals who provides forensic, case management, therapy and interpreting services for child abuse victims and their non-offending caregivers.”

Services have now expanded to help children in need from Shenandoah, Warren and Clarke counties. The organization provides forensic and therapy services to children and non-offending caretakers to the entire region. However, families from outlying areas have to drive to the location in Winchester, sometimes up to an hour in each direction.

“Even though the CAC provides free services, the distance creates a barrier to families who do not have the time, funds...continued on pg. 21
The Center opened in March 2003. This year, another location will open in Woodstock.

Many of our children have endured significant abuse and have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),” Bober said. “Our caring and supportive staff gently guides children through the healing process, giving them the tools they need to manage these symptoms. Without such services, many abuse victims find maladaptive ways to manage these symptoms, often causing long-term social, emotional and medical issues.”

The CAC does not work alone, but is part of community teams that respond to child abuse allegations, Bober said. Each jurisdiction has its own team, called the multidisciplinary team, and is comprised of experts who work collaboratively to ensure the well-being of the child and improve investigative outcomes. The team is made up of CAC staff, including forensic interviewers and mental health professionals as well as medical, law enforcement, victim advocate, prosecution and child protection professionals.

“Teams work together to share information, resources and expertise to look at each child abuse case in a holistic way to improve the outcomes for child abuse investigations and the outcomes for the children and families involved,” Bober noted.

By using a cohesive, multidisciplinary team response, she said they are able to reduce added trauma to children that may be caused by the investigative response.

“By having the entire team present and observing a child’s statements through a one-way mirror, we are able to reduce the number of times children have to tell their story, reduce the number of people the child has to meet and preserve the statement by recording it,” Bober said.

She said that in addition to reducing more trauma for the child, team response allows for a division of tasks by professionals, which further reduces duplication of effort.

“This collaborative response is more efficient, saving critical time needed to protect children and secure evidence, which ultimately saves the community in taxpayer dollars because of the reduced hours spent on duplicate tasks. But most importantly, we are hopefully reducing the negative long-term impact of the abuse on the child through specialized treatment services.”

For more information about the Child Safe Center – CAC or volunteer opportunities, call Kelly Bober, executive director, at 540-665-4426.
Keep the Motors Runnin’

Story and photos by Preston Knight, SVEC Writer

Through a rotation, one of the four mechanics is stationed in Winchester each week, working four 10-hour days to assist with what is the Co-op’s largest district fleet.

“The more vehicles you have,” Biller said, “the more problems you’re going to have.”

‘Behind-the-Scenes’ Appreciation

A large portion of the mechanics’ workload is preventive maintenance, ensuring all of the Co-op’s vehicles are safe and dependable to operate when called upon for duty.

“SVEC takes a tremendous amount of pride in providing a well-equipped fleet for the employees here,” Manager of Distribution Systems Ben Cash said. “We have well-trained employees in all areas and it is the responsibility of these mechanics to make sure we have safe and reliable transportation for them to complete the task.”

Behind every working light bulb in your home is a good mechanic. The correlation may not be abundantly clear, but consider this: When linemen are called out to restore or connect service, they do not travel by foot. They need fully functioning equipment, not the least of which is the vehicle to take them to the scene.

Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) has a fleet-management program operated by four full-time mechanics, who are assigned to maintain about 150 vehicles and 70 pieces of equipment. Lead mechanics Ron Whetzel and Don Biller, and mechanics Mark Dillashaw and Scottie Armentrout, bring more than 100 years of combined experience to work each day.

Their central garage is located in the Rockingham District office in Dayton, but they are equipped to run mobile to each of SVECs four other districts — Winchester, Luray, Mount Jackson and Staunton — at any time.

“We could be anywhere on any given day,” said Whetzel, the department supervisor who has worked at SVEC since 1999.

Mechanic Mark Dillashaw (above) joined the Co-op three years ago. Department supervisor Ron Whetzel (below) has worked at SVEC for 18 years.

“Our mechanics take pride in providing exceptional service to our employees that provide service to our member-owners. This group of employees is a lot of times ‘behind the scenes,’ but much appreciation should be passed on to keeping us ‘rolling.’”

Different circumstances arise every day, so the mechanics must be “versatile” and able to respond to any of those needs, Dillashaw said.

“We don’t have spares. If [a vehicle] is down, it’s top priority,” he said. “As far as mechanics jobs, it doesn’t get much better. When you’re dealing with utility line equipment, there’s always something to work on.”

This is related to the nature of a lineman’s job, not to mention the terrain of the Shenandoah Valley. Co-op vehicles are constantly twisting and turning, even navigating such obstacles as sinkholes, to reach certain areas, whether it be for a service restoration, general maintenance or new construction project.

In the case of a restoration call, it’s obviously easier to address a problem at a pole using a bucket truck, as opposed to climbing it. But the brunt of the wear and
tear does not simply disappear. It just moves from the human body to that of the vehicle.

“It is a challenge. They go through some pretty rough places,” Whetzel said. “There’s no wonder that there is a lot of work [for us].”

**On-the-Job Training**

Before acquiring parts of Alleghany Power’s Virginia territory in 2010, SVEC employed two mechanics. The acquisition nearly tripled the Cooperative’s membership — while also expanding its footprint as far west as Highland County and north to Winchester and Frederick County — and two mechanics from Alleghany joined SVEC to make it a department of four.

Those two employees have since retired and been replaced by Dillashaw and Armentrout. Biller has worked for SVEC for 13 years, while Whetzel, in addition to 18 years at SVEC, has a résumé that includes working on utility vehicles since 1974.

A lot of the work is on-the-job training and learning from each other, the mechanics say. Whetzel said Dillashaw and Armentrout excel at troubleshooting issues related to the growing computerization of vehicles, an area in which he jokes that he and Biller are “dinosaurs.”

“If you pay attention, you can pick up on it,” Biller said. “In this line of work, you learn something new every day.”

The size of vehicles — they’re only getting bigger — is a noticeable change in recent years, he said. But the goal for the department has not wavered.

“We have a sense of pride, that we don’t just patch them up and send them out the door,” Whetzel said. “We fix them as right as we can.”

Biller said, “When you get a big storm, they kind of lean on us pretty hard.”

He’s seen it firsthand in more than just SVEC’s service area. Biller has accompanied line crews to Kentucky and South Carolina to assist other cooperatives in restoration efforts following major ice storms.

On these occasions, he logs 16-hour work days.

“‘It’s a great learning experience,’” Biller said. “‘Overall, it’s a good feeling that you get to help somebody; but it’s pretty tough work. There’s an inch of ice on everything.’

While winter snowfall or summer storms may put the Co-op as a whole on higher alert for potential outages, the mechanics say no season in particular gives them extra pause. The need to keep vehicles running properly is a year-round focus, they said.

Along with service or repair to trailers, cars, bucket trucks, chainsaws and other tools, SVEC’s mechanics also outfit new vehicles with the necessary technology, such as mapping, and all required safety decals.

They strive to always be available, not always knowing what that may even entail.

“Everything can change with one phone call,” Whetzel said.