

Frequently Asked Questions About SVEC's Rockingham Complex Project

Why does SVEC need a new facility?

- Since the current headquarters was built in 1991, the Cooperative has nearly tripled its membership, primarily due to SVEC's acquisition of Potomac Edison's service in Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page and Warren counties, and the City of Winchester.
- The current headquarters was built decades before this period of tremendous growth. No one at that time could have foreseen current membership levels or the staffing levels and operational space needed to serve the membership.
- Expanding the current headquarters was not an option due to limited availability of adjacent real estate.
- The existing building is also aging and has significant maintenance needs as a direct result of that aging. Given the inability to expand at the current location, it makes no sense to invest in resolving the maintenance issues when a new facility is needed.
- This is not an impulsive decision. The Board of Directors worked closely with staff over the past 18 months to review all of the options available to SVEC. At the conclusion of this review process, the Board unanimously voted to proceed with construction of a new headquarters as the best and most cost-effective option for the Cooperative's needs.

What is the impact on the consumer?

- Member-owners will see no change in rates as a result of this project. The Cooperative's cash flow and financial position allows it to undertake this project with current revenues. This is not an expense for the Cooperative but a long-term capital investment.
- Right now, financing rates are at historic lows and construction work remains sluggish allowing the Cooperative to take advantage of lower costs by moving ahead now. This creates additional cost advantages.
- The additional space provided by the new headquarters will allow the Cooperative to add needed service, engineering and IT staff to provide enhanced service to members for everything from paying bills, to upgrading infrastructure throughout the system, to improved reliability.
- Specific improvements that member-owners who visit the new headquarters will experience include: bank-style drive-through lanes for making payments, customer service kiosks in the new lobby, and greater privacy for face-to-face meetings with member services staff when discussing account information.

- The cost of the facility will be partially offset by the sale of the existing facility as well as the sale of SVEC's facility in Dayton. Almost 10 percent of the cost of the new facility will be covered from the proceeds of these sales.
- The current headquarters will remain a vital part of the community as the site of the consolidated campus of Blue Ridge Christian School. The school will move into the facility once SVEC moves into the new headquarters.

What is the impact on the community?

- The new headquarters will contribute additional tax revenue to Rockingham County.
- The Cooperative is paying for local road improvements to limit the impact on traffic. These improvements include a right-turn lane from southbound Route 11 and a new traffic signal at the intersection of Route 11 and Cecil Wampler Road.

Will SVEC incorporate solar power?

- The Co-op is carefully considering all of its options across our service territory, including at the new headquarters, to determine where – and if – investments in solar panels are financially feasible.
- In terms of the new facility, three specific options are under discussion.
 - The first possibility is the installation of solar panels atop a roof in the employee parking area.
 - A second consideration would be placing panels – or a battery storage system – on the headquarters itself, most likely on the side of the building.
 - And, finally, the third idea being studied involves setting panels somewhere on the property that would turn during the day to collect sunlight.
- These ideas have not been finalized and are not guaranteed to be carried out. However, we believe they are all worth pursuing, and they demonstrate that the Co-op is indeed looking to take advantage of alternative ways of generating electricity.