

VMDAEC and SVCC Partnership Powers Continuing Education Opportunities

A partnership between the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) and Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) is making it possible for those training as apprentice linemen to climb to the top of their careers through advanced education. The VMDAEC represents 15 co-ops in the Mid-Atlantic region and trains over 100 apprentices per year.

VMDAEC apprentice linemen will receive up to 35 hours of college credit for on-the-job training. These credits, when combined with SVCC online coursework, will lead directly to an Associate Degree.

VMDAEC is one of the founding partners of the Power Line Training School located at SVCC's Occupational/Technical Center in Pickett Park, just outside of Blackstone, VA. Thus far, 130 students have completed the 11-week program that prepares them for entry-level jobs with both utility companies and contractors. The program uses curricula from NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) and graduates earn six credentials including a Commercial Driver's License. Additionally, the program covers the fundamental aspects of power line work, including the most crucial element of all: safety. The Power Line Worker Program at SVCC, opened in March of 2016, has been recognized by two Virginia governors for its innovative nature.

About this new opportunity, Richard Johnstone, President and CEO of VMDAEC, said, "VMDAEC is excited to expand our innovative partnership with Southside Virginia Community College. Helping students meet their educational goals is core to our mission and we hope this partnership will encourage all of the graduates of our program to enroll, and also those of other programs as well. Creating this career pathway will allow students to progress from industry-recognized credentials to an Associate Degree and hopefully on to a Bachelor's Degree."

Dr. Al Roberts, SVCC President, noted, "Creating educational pathways and guiding students along those pathways is key to the success of our programs. The expansion of our partnership with VMDAEC is an exciting progression of this extremely successful workforce-training program. Providing VMDAEC apprentice linemen the opportunity to earn the Associate Degree at SVCC via our online portal clearly takes this partnership to the next level."

Anyone interested in more information about the Power Line Worker program should contact Susan Early at 434-292-3101 or susan.early@southside.edu or for the Associate Degree program should contact Matt Dunn at 434 736 2020 or matt.dunn@southside.edu