

Automatic Drafts Can Draw from Checking Accounts, Credit Cards and Debit Cards

How much easier would your life be if you opened your next electric bill and seeing that it has already been marked "PAID"?

It happens every month to customers who have signed up for VEC's Automatic Draft payment plan using their checking account, or their Visa or MasterCard credit or debit card. These customers don't have to worry about checks, stamps, or extra trips to the VEC Customer Service Center. If they are on vacation or traveling for any reason, they don't have to worry about whether or not their electric bill has been paid on time.

Sounds easy, doesn't it?

If you're interested in taking the stress and hassle out of paying your electric bill, signing up for VEC's Automatic Draft is quick and easy.

Customers with accounts in good standing are eligible. Each month you will continue to receive your bill, but it will be marked "Paid By Bank Draft" or "Paid by Credit Card Draft." When you see one of these messages you can rest assured that your bill will be taken care of automatically.

The amount due will be drafted approximately two days before the actual due date.

Checking Account Draft

To have your electric bill automatically drafted from your checking account you'll need to fill out and sign a Draft Authorization Card and supply VEC with a voided check. You can do this at your local VEC office, or you can call to have the form sent to you so you can return the form and voided check by mail. You can also download the form from the VEC website at www.vec.org, fill it out and sign it and mail it back to VEC along with your voided check.

Credit or Debit Card Draft

VEC accepts Visa or MasterCard credit and debit cards for the Automatic Draft program. To have your bill automatically drafted from your credit or debit card, you'll also need to fill out a Draft Authorization Card and VEC will need to get a copy of the front of your card. You can accomplish this by going into your local VEC Customer Service Center or you can phone to have the authorization card mailed to you. You can also download the authorization card at www.vec.org. If you have the form mailed or download it from the website, you'll need to fill it out, sign it, and mail a photo copy of the front of your card back to VEC.

The mailing address to use is:

Volunteer Energy Cooperative
Attention: Accounting Department
P.O. Box 277
Decatur, TN 37322

The Fine Print

Electronic deductions will continue automatically from the time you sign up until you request that the deductions discontinue, you discontinue your electricity account, your credit/debit card expires, or your checking account changes.

Due to federal "Red Flag" rules to prevent identity theft VEC can no longer sign up new automatic draft customers over the telephone. However, customers who can answer security questions can change the details of their draft payment plan or add new accounts to the automatic draft payment plan over the telephone.

Upon the expiration of the credit/debit card, customers will need to re-submit a Draft Authorization Card and photocopy of the front of their new credit/debit card. VEC will make every effort to notify customers whose credit/debit cards are about to expire.

Customers who discontinue their Automatic Draft Payments for any length of time must re-submit the Draft Authorization Card and voided check or credit/debit card photocopy to re-enroll in the program.

VEC Offers College Scholarships

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) wants to reward students who have used their time and talents to benefit their local communities. VEC's Lillard-Shadow scholarship program rewards academic and community service achievements by awarding four \$2,000 scholarships to students who will graduate from high schools in VEC's service area in the spring of 2014.

The scholarships honor J.W. Lillard and Willis A. Shadow, two community leaders who spearheaded efforts to bring electric power to Decatur and Meigs County in the 1930s, forming the organization that would become Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Mr. Shadow and Mr. Lillard were instrumental in improving the lives and livelihoods of thousands of residents through electric power.

Four awards of \$500 per semester each (renewable for up to four semesters) will be presented to spring 2014 high school graduates whose parents or guardians are VEC electric customers. Applications will be judged by an independent panel based on each student's community service activities and citizenship - 40%; written communication skills - 20%; financial need - 25%; and academic achievement - 15%.

Scholarship applications are available at any VEC Customer Service Center or from high school counselors in the VEC service area. Applications are also available online at www.vec.org.

All application materials must be completed and delivered to VEC's Corporate Office in Decatur no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 7, 2014.

Major Upgrades at VEC Substations Increase Capacity and Enhance Reliability

VEC has rebuilt or made major improvements to 23 of the 33 substations that VEC operates since 2003. Following is a list of the major enhancements that have been performed at substations to increase system capacity and reliability over the past 10 years:

Year	County	Substation	Improvement
2003	Polk	Benton	New Substation
2003	Cumberland	Campbell Junction	New Substation
2004	Bradley	Hopewell	New Substation
2005	Hamilton	Wolftever	New Substation
2006	Bradley	South Bradley	New Substation
2007	Cumberland	Fairfield Glade	New Substation
2008	Cumberland	Crab Orchard	Re-Built substation increasing capacity
2008	Putnam	Monterey	Added transformer capacity & new breaker bay
2009	Bradley	Hiawassee	New Substation
2009	Hamilton	North Ooltewah	New Substation
2009	Bradley	Tasso	New breaker bays
2010	Polk	Ocoee	New Substation
2011	Rhea	Spring City	New circuit and added breaker capacity
2011	White	Ravenscroft	Increased transformer capacity
2012	McMinn	Spring Creek	Added transformer capacity & new breakers
2012	McMinn	Riceville	New Substation
2012	Pickett	Byrdstown	New Substation
2013	McMinn	Athens	New 69 kV breaker & new 13 kV breaker
2013	Cumberland	Lantana	More than doubled transformer capacity
2013	Cumberland	Mayland	Increased transformer capacity
2013	Bradley	McDonald	New Breakers
2014*	Hamilton	Georgetown	New Substation
2014*	Fentress	Grimsley	New Substation

*Under construction - planned to go into service in 2014

Preparations Helped VEC and Customers Weather New Record for Peak Demand

The new year got off to a frigid start as the Tennessee Valley was hit by the lowest temperatures that have been recorded in 20 years on January 7th and 8th. Those frigid temperatures also prompted a new record for electricity consumption across Volunteer Energy Cooperative's 17-county service area.

The highest previous demand for electricity across our system occurred in January of 2009 when we moved 634.5 megawatts of electricity. This January's event shattered that mark as our peak demand reached 729.4 megawatts. We exceeded our previous record by 15% - or roughly enough electricity to run an entire city the size of Athens, Tennessee.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Emergency Preparations & Vigilance Kept Interruptions to a Minimum

The preparations we made immediately preceding the event and the system upgrades that we have made over the past 10 years made a tremendous difference in keeping interruptions to a minimum.

Over the past 10 years VEC has spent more than \$30 million building new substations and making major renovations to other substations. These improvements include building two new substations in Polk County (Benton Substation and Ocoee Substation); two new substations in Cumberland County (Campbell Junction Substation and Fairfield Glade Substation); three new substations in Bradley County (Hopewell Substation, South Bradley Substation, and Hiawassee Substation); two new substations in Hamilton County (Wolftever Substation, and North Ooltewah Substation); one new substation in McMinn County (Riceville Substation); and one new substation in Pickett County (Byrdstown Substation).

The major renovations we've completed at substations to increase our system capacity and improve reliability include completely rebuilding our Crab Orchard Substation in Cumberland County; increasing transformer capacity and installing



The new Byrdstown Substation that served Pickett County was completed in 2012.

a new breaker bay at Monterey Substation in Putnam County; installing new breaker bays at Tasso Substation in Bradley County; adding a new circuit and additional breaker capacity at Spring City Substation in Rhea County; increasing transformer capacity at Ravenscroft Substation in White County; adding transformer capacity and new breakers at Spring Creek Substation in McMinn County; and adding a new

(continued on page 3)

VECcustomers Share Your Change Changes Things



The VECcustomers Share program funded \$31,300 in community service grants in December. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$4.7 million in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contact the office of Marketing and Economic Development, at 423-334-7051. Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org.



VECcustomers Share Board Member Sharon Parrott, left, presents a grant check to Shawn R. Bouldin, faculty sponsor of the Wilson Elementary School Science Club.

Organizations receiving grants in December

Fentress County Ministerial Association	\$2,500	Monterey Community Chorus	\$750
Midway High School PTO	\$2,500	Martin Elementary School Junior Beta Club, Crossville	\$750
Meigs County Health Council	\$1,750	South Polk Elementary School PTO	\$600
Pickett County High School Basketball Booster Club	\$1,750	Tennessee Valley Theatre, Spring City	\$600
Friends of Harrison Bay State Park	\$1,500	Tennessee Kidney Foundation, Crossville	\$550
Calhoun Elementary School Beta Club	\$1,500	Burks Elementary School Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Monterey	\$500
New Horizon Adult Day Care, Crossville	\$1,500	Monterey High School FCA	\$500
Pickett County Rescue Squad	\$1,000	National Center for Youth Issues, Hamilton County	\$500
Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland County	\$1,000	Tennessee Shooting Stars, Crossville	\$500
Wilson Elementary School Science Club, Crawford	\$1,000	Etowah Arts Commission	\$500
Waterville Elementary School PTO, Cleveland	\$1,000	Fantastic Quilt Guild, Fairfield Glade	\$500
Ooltewah High School Leadership Club, Hamilton County	\$1,000	Dorton Family Community Education Club, Crossville	\$500
People Helping People, Benton	\$1,000	Stone Elementary School Beta Club, Crossville	\$500
AmVets Post 90 Ladies Auxiliary, Decatur	\$1,000	Tennessee Blaze Volleyball Club, Cleveland	\$500
Spring City Dixie Youth Baseball	\$950	Bradley County 4-H	\$500
Central Outreach Center, Spring City	\$950	The International Association of Community Service Chaplains, Cleveland	\$250
Happy Hearts Seniors, Benton	\$900		

(continued from page 1)

69kV breaker and a new 13kV breaker at Athens Substation in McMinn County. We also more than doubled the transformer capacity at Lantana Substation in Cumberland County; increased the transformer capacity at Mayland Substation in Cumberland County, and installed new breakers at the McDonald Substation in Bradley County.

Our commitment to system improvements don't end there as we also have two new substations that are under construction that we expect to energize in 2014.

In addition to these upgrades, VEC has also maintained vigorous right-of-way clearing and pole inspection/pole replacement programs.

VEC's preparation and response to extreme weather events has also been enhanced by our Central Control and Dispatch Center.

In the summer of 2009 VEC completed construction and began using a new 6,379-square-foot centralized dispatch and call center that brings our system mapping, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), Outage Manage System (OMS), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), and weather monitoring systems into a central control center.

VEC's distribution system includes 33 substations, 9,000 miles of line, and 180,000 utility poles and covers about 2,850 square miles in 17 counties. Maintaining system reliability and keeping up with an increasing demand for electricity requires a commitment to ongoing system improvements and maintenance. We have embraced that commitment at VEC.



New transformers which doubled the capacity of the Lantana Substation in Cumberland County were installed in 2013.



The Memorial Wall was dedicated on October 27, 2013.

VECcustomers Share Board Member Helps Preserve Memory of Sad Chapter in U.S. History

Gloria Schougins serves the community by representing Meigs County on Volunteer Energy Cooperative's VECcustomers Share Board of Directors. But that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to her community service.

In addition to other projects, Schougins was instrumental in helping establish the

Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in Meigs County that commemorates the lives and the deaths of an estimated 4,200 Cherokees on the Trail of Tears.

It is a project that Schougins has persistently championed for about 25 years.

But the whole story begins more than 180 years ago when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 mandating that the Cherokee Indians who lived in this part of the country would be forcibly removed to new homes in Oklahoma. More than 90 percent of the Cherokees in the region signed a petition to Congress rejecting the treaty and refused to emigrate. On May 24, 1838 the U.S. Army and civilian volunteers begin a brutal roundup of the Cherokees.

By mid-July of 1838 the Army was holding 14,870 persons in 12 stockades under

deplorable conditions.

Between August 28 and November 7, 1838 twelve detachments of about one thousand each departed by land and one smaller detachment by water. Nine of these detachments departed their ancestral land at Blythe Ferry in Meigs County.

There are no accurate records of the deaths that occurred due to the Cherokee Removal. The best contemporary estimate was by Elizur Butler an attending physician to the emigrating Cherokees. He estimated that about 1,500 died in the Army's transport by water, 2,000 died in the stockades, and 700 died during overland removal. But some scholars place the number of deaths at about 8,000 by taking into account the aftermath.

In the mid-1980s Shirley Hoskins moved to Meigs County. Hoskins' great grandmother was an 11-year-old Cherokee girl who marched the Trail of Tears with her family and Hoskins was determined to commemorate her ancestors. She enlisted the help of Schougins who was then serving as the chairman of Meigs County's Tourism Board. The two, along with Shirley Lawrence, became a tireless trio who worked persistently to see this memorial built.

In 1998 more than a decade of work paid off when a plaque was placed on a wildlife overlook near the confluence of the Hiwassee and Tennessee rivers at Blythe Ferry – the spot where so many Cherokee Indians began their last journey.

Since that time the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park has grown with the addition of a visitors' center and other improvements. The park marked another milestone on October 27, 2013 with the dedication of an impressive memorial wall. Inscribed on the wall are the names of the head of each of the 2,537 households and the number of family members from the 1835 Census taken in preparation for the removal. The wall's panels are arranged by the State of their residence. Panels representing the seven Cherokee clans are superimposed on central part of the Cherokee Nation seal.

More improvements are planned. With a grant from the United States Park Service supporters hope to build informational kiosks, walking trails, and re-build a section of the roadbed the Cherokee's marched.

The park, located at 6800 Blythe Ferry Road in Birchwood, TN, is open year-round and several special events are scheduled. For more information visit www.cherokeeremoval.org, visit the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park Facebook page, or phone the park at 423-339-2769.



From left, Gloria Schougins, Shirley Lawrence, Chief Bill John Baker – the chief of the Cherokee Western Nation – and Shirley Hoskins celebrate the dedication of the Memorial Wall at Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in Meigs County.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective February 1, 2014

2.363¢

For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org