

VEC Contract Crews Inspecting Poles

Power Pole Maintenance Company will be the contractor again this year for our pole inspection program. They will have 2 or 3 crews consisting of 5 to 6 Hispanic gentlemen working in each crew. They will have pickup trucks with VEC Contractor signs and possibly ATV four wheelers.

These inspections allow VEC to identify poles that may need replacement and to identify problems before they result in power outages.

Since 2003 VEC has employed an aggressive pole inspection program in an effort to spot deteriorating poles and older equipment. Since beginning this project VEC has inspected about 133,759 utility poles and replaced approximately 5,200. The cooperative is working toward a goal of inspecting 100% of the poles every 15 years.

Current inspections began in December 2016 and are being conducted in the following order:

Fairfield 354 (1,100 poles) – Catoosa Blvd, Kingsboro Dr, Stonehenge Dr
Crossville 294 (3,200 poles) – Genesis Rd, Hwy 70E, Peavine Rd, Colinx, Stone Memorial High School, Roane State
Lantana 314 (3,300 poles) – Vandever Rd, Brewer Rd, Lantana Rd
Wolftever 214 (800 poles) – S Snow Hill
North Ooltewah 214 (150 poles) – S Ooltewah-Georgetown Rd
North Ooltewah 244 (400 poles) – N Ooltewah-Georgetown Rd
Spring City 284 (3,200 poles) – N Bottom Circuit, Town, Elem School
Goodfield 214 (1,750 poles) – Hwy 58N to Hwy 30, Hwy 30E
Sanford 334 (350 poles) – Hwy 11S to Bowater, CR 28, CR29

It is not necessary for customers to be home during the inspections and power will not be affected.



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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 2017.

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 2017 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 3, 2017.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Don't forget to spring forward on **March 12!**
Set your clocks ahead by one hour.

Where Worlds Collide

The Solution to Tennessee's Lack of Broadband Access Could Be Found in Our History Books

Electric co-ops have an interesting history. In the 1930s, much of Tennessee was left in the dark because for-profit utilities refused to extend power lines beyond the city limits. There was no money to be made serving rural areas, and these utilities claimed that rural Tennesseans had no use for electricity.

This lack of electricity placed rural and suburban Tennessee at a significant disadvantage. Frustrated by the unwillingness of existing utilities to serve their communities, neighbors banded together to create Volunteer Energy Cooperative and other electric co-ops. These not-for-profit, consumer-owned utilities brought power and unprecedented opportunity to rural and suburban Tennessee.

Today, rural and suburban Tennessee face another disadvantage. A study conducted in 2016 by the state of Tennessee found that 34 percent of rural residents lack access to broadband, while only 2 percent of urban residents lack access. Just like electricity in the 1930s, existing providers refuse to expand broadband because of the cost, and some even question rural America's need for it.

Limited broadband access hurts our communities. Modern education, healthcare and commerce all depend on access to the internet. When broadband is unavailable, too slow or too expensive, the impacts can be profound with jobs and capital investment locating elsewhere, students falling behind their urban peers and existing businesses missing out on opportunities to sell their goods and services.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "The more you know about the past, the better prepared you are for the future."

Electric co-ops have a legacy of expanding critical infrastructure beyond the city limits. A generation ago, the issue was electricity. Today, it is broadband.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) and other electric co-ops are uniquely positioned to provide real solutions to Tennessee's broadband problem. We serve the rural and economically disadvantaged regions of the state where broadband expansion is needed most. The cooperative business model means we can be successful in areas where for-profit businesses cannot, and we can deploy broadband quickly and more economically because of our existing infrastructure. To support the growing technology and communications needs of our power grid, VEC already operates an internal fiber optic network that reaches deep into our rural service territory.

Unfortunately, state law in Tennessee prevents us from providing retail broadband service. Changing the law will provide co-ops like VEC with the option of developing a broadband service for our consumer-owners or forming effective partnerships with existing providers.

Tennessee's electric cooperatives are working hard this year to change the law and create new opportunities for our rural and suburban communities. Visit takeactiontn.com to join our campaign and make your voice heard.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative



The VECustomers Share program funded \$29,000 in community service grants in January. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.8 million in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant applications is the last working 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.



VECustomers Share board member Pauline Sherrer (right) presented a grant to Christy Dolinich, Executive Director for Home Away from Home Head Start and Childcare Center.

Organizations receiving grants in January

Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$2,000	Stone Memorial High School Competition Cheer Squad	\$500
Friends of the Spring City Library	\$1,500	National Center for Youth Issues	\$500
Bradley High Wrestling Booster Club	\$1,250	Clarkrange High School Interact	\$500
Fellowship of Christian Athletes-Upper Cumberland Area	\$1,125	Meigs County High School Cheer Boosters	\$500
Polk County High School National Beta Club	\$1,115	Benton Food Fund Boosters Club	\$500
Hiwassee Lodge #188	\$1,000	Don't Fret Guitar Class	\$500
Meigs Middle School 8th Grade College Access Program	\$1,000	Monterey High School Lady Wildcat Parent Organization	\$500
Polk County Alumni Association	\$885	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$500
Mrs. Pauletta Dowdy's Reading/ Language Arts Club	\$858	Kids On The Rise	\$500
Midway High School Cheerleading Booster Club	\$850	Glenn L. Martin Elementary Junior Cross Country Team	\$500
Midway Elementary Music Club	\$850	Boots N Rose Dance Club	\$500
Youch Achievement Foundation	\$825	Spring City Toys for Children	\$500
Clarkrange High School Baseball	\$800	Pickett County Veterans Service Office	\$498
Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland County	\$775	Hiwassee Long Beards	\$375
Big Spring United Methodist Church Outreach Team	\$750	Midway High School SWPBS	\$300
Monterey High School Class of 2017	\$750	Monterey High School Cheerleading Booster Club	\$250
Miracle Lake	\$725	Waterville Baptist Learning Center	\$250
5th Grade Explores the Arts Club	\$644	Monterey Civitan Club	\$250
Bread of Life Rescue Mission	\$625	Monterey Mission Center	\$250
Cherokee Tribe Baseball	\$600	Monterey High School Project Graduation 2017	\$250
Meigs County High School Baseball Booster Club	\$500	Taylor Elementary Parent Teacher Organization	\$250
Meigs High School Archery Boosters	\$500	Mineral Springs Hunger Relief	\$250
		The Muscular Dystrophy Association	\$100
		The Art guild at Fairfield Glade	\$50

BROADBAND CREATES
EDUCATION | HEALTH | COMMERCE | OPPORTUNITY

HELP US
EXPAND RURAL BROADBAND

Rural and suburban Tennesseans face missed opportunities because of limited broadband access. Electric cooperatives are uniquely positioned to help solve this problem, but complex legal restrictions prevent co-ops from providing broadband access to their rural and suburban communities. It is time to change the law and create new opportunities for rural and suburban Tennessee.

CO-OPS HAVE A LEGACY OF EXPANDING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS. A GENERATION AGO, THE ISSUE WAS ELECTRICITY.

GET INVOLVED
TAKEACTIONTN.COM

Make your voice heard, and help us create new opportunities for rural and suburban Tennessee. Visit takeactiontn.com and join our campaign.

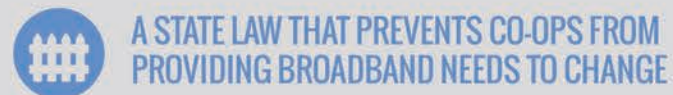
TODAY, IT IS BROADBAND.



Modern education, healthcare, and commerce all depend on access to the internet, yet a study conducted by the State of Tennessee found that one in three rural Tennesseans lack access. When broadband is unavailable, too slow or too expensive, the impacts can be profound with jobs and capital investment locating elsewhere, students falling behind their urban peers and existing businesses missing out on opportunities to sell their goods and services.



Co-ops serve the rural and economically disadvantaged regions of the state where broadband expansion is needed most. The cooperative business model allows us to be successful in areas where for-profit businesses cannot, and co-ops can deploy broadband quickly and economically because of existing infrastructure. To support the growing technology and communications needs of modern power grids, many co-ops already operate internal fiber optic networks that reach deep into rural Tennessee.



Changing the law will provide co-ops with the option of developing broadband service for their members or forming effective partnerships with existing providers, creating new opportunities for rural and suburban Tennessee.

The Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association represents Tennessee's 23 not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives that provide energy for more than 2.5 million rural and suburban Tennesseans.

TNELECTRIC.ORG



**QUICK TIPS:
Save Energy in the Laundry Room**

The average family washes about 300 loads of laundry a year, spending about 68 cents per load, for a yearly expense of about \$204. Most laundry room expenses come from heating water for washing and heating air for drying. But these costs are not set in stone: Avoid getting taken to the cleaners - try these tips to save money and save energy.

- 1) Wash as many of your clothes in cold water as you can.
- 2) Wash and dry clothes only when you have a full load.
- 3) Dry your second load of clothes as quickly as possible after the first load to take advantage of the heat that is already in your dryer.
- 4) Front-loading machines typically use two-thirds less water than top-loaders, reducing water and water-heating costs.
- 5) If you have the option, choose the faster spin cycle on your washer. The faster your clothes spin in the washer, the less time they'll need in the dryer.
- 6) Remove lint from the filters after every load. Clothes will dry faster - using less energy.
- 7) Consider hanging clothes on a clothesline or stand-alone drying rack and let nature help save you money.
- 8) If possible, locate your dryer in a warm laundry room rather than in a cold basement. The warmer the air is coming into the dryer, the less energy your machine will use to heat it up.
- 9) If you are in the market for a new washer and/or dryer, make sure your new machines are Energy-Star certified.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective March 1, 2017

2.213¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.