

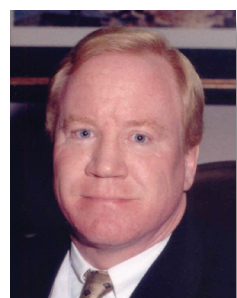
Volunteer Energy Leaders Visit with D.C. Lawmakers

Each year I, along with board members and area managers from Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC), visit with our lawmakers during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference. This year it was held Tuesday and Wednesday, April 25 and 26. Joining more than 65 co-op members from across the state, we discussed energy supply, rural infrastructure, broadband, tax policy and other important issues with Tennessee's congressional delegation.

The decisions made in Washington, D.C., often have a direct impact on our co-op and our members. Infrastructure and energy are critical to our rural and suburban communities, and it is important to ensure that legislators understand our issues.

One of the issues we addressed was the Geothermal Heat Pump Tax Credit. This energy source is highly efficient and saves consumers money on their heating and cooling bills. However the upfront cost is prohibitive and tax credits helped reduce the initial cost for installing residential and commercial geothermal systems. In 2015 this credit was left off when Congress extended and provided a phase down for wind and solar technologies.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry addressed our group and more than 2,100 co-op leaders from across the country that were also attending the conference. Perry hailed electric cooperatives for delivering affordable, reliable electricity to rural America and encouraged us to advocate on our



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

(continued from page 5)

challenges, especially grid security. "We have the greatest electric grid in the world," Perry said, "and we need to keep it that way."

"From energy and economic development to broadband and rural commerce, co-ops have a significant impact on Tennessee's rural communities," says David Callis, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. "The decisions made in D.C. matter, and it is important for co-ops to be engaged. I appreciate the co-op leaders from across the state who joined us on Capitol Hill to tell the co-op story."

You can be sure that I, along with our board members, will continue to advocate for you our members with our lawmakers. We take our responsibility to help lawmakers understand the needs of our members seriously.



VEC CEO and President Rody Blevins and US Representative District 4 Scott DesJarlais.

Make Summer Safety Number One on Your To-Do List

After a cold winter, the warm weather beckons us outside. We drive with the windows down, picnic in the park, spruce up our lawns for summertime living—taking every opportunity to enjoy the outdoors.

"You can have a lot of fun in the sun. But, it's important to remember to take precautions when you're outside," says Tyson Ratcliff, superintendent of safety and construction at Volunteer Energy Cooperative. He offers the following tips to help consumers safely enjoy the outdoors during the summer:



Be up on downed power lines

- Stay away from downed power lines. Never touch, kick, pull, or attempt to pick up a fallen wire. Call us immediately and stand guard to keep others away until help arrives.
- Never plant tall-growing trees under power lines. If you have a tree with power lines running through it, call us so we can correct the situation.
- Before moving a metal ladder or scaffolding, check to be sure it is clear of power lines.
- Don't locate your swimming pool under power lines.

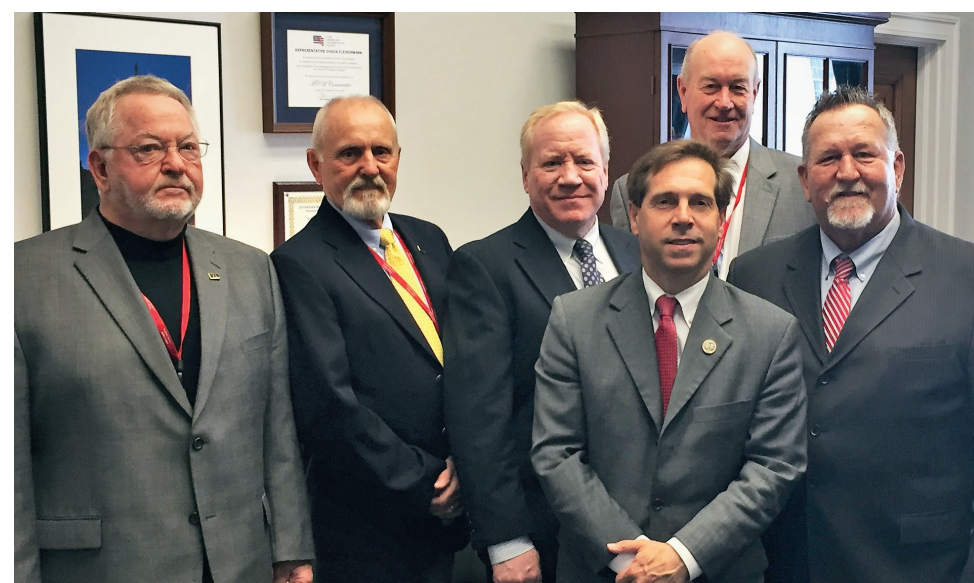
Don't get tangled up with kites and model planes

- Fly kites and model planes in open fields, well away from power lines.
- Never use wire or metal on kites – use only dry string.
- Don't release metallic balloons. They can get caught in power lines and cause outages.
- Call us to untangle kites or balloons that get snagged in overhead lines. Don't try to do it yourself.

Use power tools properly

- Keep all electrical appliances a safe distance away from water.
- Never use a power tool when standing in a wet area.
- Properly ground power tools. Use only heavy-duty extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- Make sure outdoor electrical outlets are grounded and have weather-proof covers.

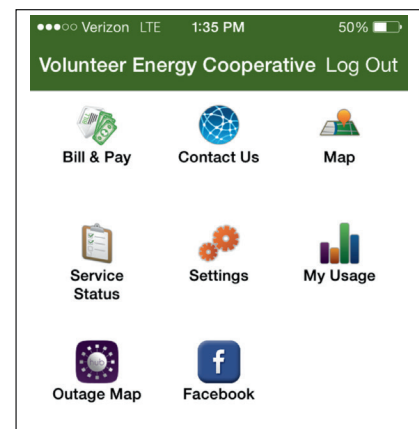
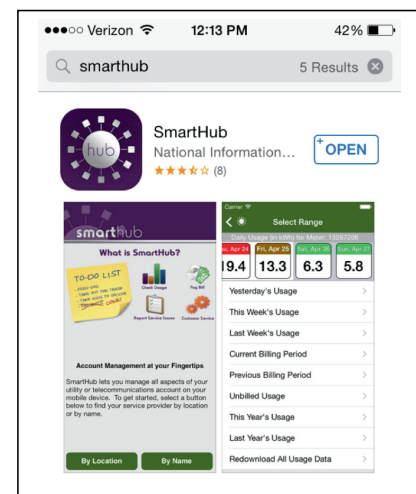
"Electricity is our most valuable and most convenient energy source—use it wisely and it can help you enjoy being outdoors even more," says Ratcliff, "Staying safe around electricity is just a matter of a few simple rules and good judgment."



VEC Area Manager Bobby Randolph, VEC Board Member Jerry Henley, CEO and President Rody Blevins, US Representative District 3 Chuck Fleischmann, VEC Board Member Larry Storie, and VEC Board Member Mike Frazier.

The SmartHub App

Customers are excited about the VEC SmartHub app for smart phones and mobile devices. Monitor your account, pay your bill, view your usage, and report an outage with NO MORE BUSY SIGNALS, and more! Download the free app today and be prepared.



1. Search for **SmartHub** on the app store for your device (exp Google play, Apple Store) or go to www.vec.org and choose the appropriate link on the bottom of the home page.
2. Download the app, choose Volunteer Energy Cooperative as your electric provider, and enter your VEC account number. You can set up your account log-in if you have not already done so or just use the email and password you use to log into the website account portal.
3. Enjoy the features of the SmartHub app.



The VECustomers Share program funded \$29,100 in community service grants in May. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.9 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.



VECcustomers Share board member Sharon Parrot presented a grant check to the Monterey Football Boosters on the field at the new Monterey High School.

Organizations receiving grants in May

Coordinated School Health - Cumberland	\$3,300	Hopewell PTO	\$900
Midway Quarterback Club	\$1,500	Walker Valley High School Softball Team	\$900
Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$1,500	Ooltewah Harrison Education Foundation	\$800
Boy Scouts of America (McMinn & Meigs)	\$1,420	Monterey Community Youth Group	\$750
Benton Little League Baseball	\$1,250	Cedine Ministries	\$750
Rhea Health Council - Give a Kid a Chance	\$1,250	Standing Stone Historical Society	\$750
West Polk Fire and Rescue	\$1,000	Senior Lighthouse Center	\$750
Cumberland G.A.P. Mission	\$1,000	Stone Memorial High School FCCLA	\$700
Meigs County Cheer Boosters	\$1,000	The Stitch Angels	\$580
Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$1,000	Meigs Senior Center	\$500
Cumberland County Piecemakers	\$1,000	Meigs County Historical Society	\$500
Cumberland County High School HOSA	\$1,000	Happy Hearts Seniors	\$500
Athens Civitan Club	\$1,000	South Fentress Baseball Booster Club	\$500
Monterey High Football Quarterback Club	\$1,000	YAI (York Institute) Book Club	\$500
Bradley County Veterans Funeral Honor Guard	\$1,000	Putnam County Adult Literacy Council	\$500

Don't Let Thunderstorms Come as a Shock to You



As temperatures start rising, so do the chances of thunderstorms. And when thunderstorms hit, lightning can be a serious threat to personal safety. It can also cause power outages and create serious problems for your electronic equipment and electric appliances.

The best atmospheric scientists in the world cannot determine exactly when or where lightning will strike, but there is one thing we can be certain of – it will strike. And when it comes to thunderstorms and lightning, the best defense is to be prepared.

VEC offers surge protection that can help protect your homes electronics and appliances from electrical spikes that often occur during thunderstorm season. For more information about Surge Guard, visit www.vec.org.

Lightning has been known to strike more than 10 miles from the storm in an area of clear sky above. So just looking up at the sky may not provide a true indication of whether or not a threat exists.

It's also important to prepare a thunderstorm/power outage kit that includes:

- Canned/packaged food
- A manual can opener
- Fresh water (bottled)
- Blankets
- Battery-operated radio
- Flashlight with fresh batteries
- Extra batteries

It's also important to prepare now by making sure VEC has your correct phone number on file. This insures an outage at your home can be restored in the most efficient way.

During a thunderstorm:

- Do not take a shower or bath. Water and copper tubing are excellent conductors of electricity.
- Stay away from windows. A central location in the house in an area away from doors and windows is the safest.
- If you power goes out, immediately report it to VEC and then avoid using the phone. (Phone lines may also conduct electricity.) You can use our SmartHub app on your smartphone to avoid using the landline completely. To download the app go to www.vec.org home page and click on the appropriate link for your smart phone at the bottom of the page.
- Never touch downed power lines. Dial 911 or VEC immediately to ensure that the line is turned off so repairs can be made.

During a power outage:

- Report the outage immediately to VEC.
- Unplug major appliances to prevent a system overload when power is restored. Gradually plug in and turn on appliances after power is restored.
- Avoid opening your refrigerator and/or freezer. The appliance will keep food fresher longer if the door is kept shut.
- Use battery powered flashlights rather than candles whenever possible to avoid the threat of fire.

A Heat Pump Can Be a Cornerstone of an Energy Efficient Home

In a typical home heating and cooling accounts for about 50% of the total amount of energy used. Today's high-efficiency heat pumps provide economical, year-round comfort and financing one through VEC and TVA's EnergyRight Solutions® program is affordable and simple.

Under the EnergyRight Solutions® program customers enjoy interest rates as low as 6% for qualifying heat pumps, convenient payment arrangements, and a streamlined application process.

VEC works closely with heat pump contractors throughout the region to make the process quick and easy. And a new high-efficiency electric heat pump will pay dividends in lower electric bills. In fact, some customers report that their savings on energy costs more than offset their heat pump payment.

Kristy Kelly-Sewell coordinates the heat pump financing program at VEC.

"Purchasing a new heat pump can be a big expense for many homeowners," Kelly-Sewell said. "We try to make our financing program very accessible so as many people as possible can start saving money on their heating and cooling costs right away."

Kelly-Sewell said VEC doesn't sell or install heat pumps – VEC finances the heat pump much in the same way a bank might finance the purchase of a new car.

"Customers select a contractor they are comfortable with from the QCN (Quality Contractor Network) list and the contractor sells, installs, and services the heat pump. We pay the contractor and then add the payments to our customers' VEC electric bill," she said.

The heat pump loans are set up for a 10-year payoff, but customers who wish to pay the loan off sooner than that can do so without penalty.

Kelly-Sewell added that the application process is fast.

"We can take a heat pump loan application over the phone in about five minutes," Kelly-Sewell said. "And we typically can receive results of the bank credit check within three or four hours."

A good credit score and a good VEC pay history are required.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this program, you can contact Kristy Kelly-Sewell at 423-334-7055 (or you can call your local VEC Customer Service Center and enter extension 7055 when prompted) or by email at kkelly@vec.org.

Additional information, forms, and a list of contractors who participate in the program are available at www.vec.org.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
 Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
 Effective June 1, 2017

2.191¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

JULY 2017