

VEC Is Deeply Committed To Our Community

By Rody Blevins, VEC President/CEO

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is deeply committed to our community. Some of the ways we do this may not be immediately apparent to others.

We support our community organizations.

One of the more obvious ways we impact our community is through the VECustomer Shares program, made possible by customers who agree to round up their bills. VECustomer Shares has been able to provide community organizations more than \$5.6 million since 2001. Grants have been awarded to food pantries, emergency shelters, disaster relief agencies, senior centers, volunteer fire departments, booster clubs, and so many more. Each edition of *Powerlines* lists the organizations receiving grants.

We are the voice for affordable electric rates. The VEC Board and I travel each year to speak with our elected officials about legislation that affects our members. Recently we expressed our member's interest in the availability of broadband in rural areas to the state legislators. We are also a voice for our members when legislation affects their ability to receive reliable electric service at low rates. A recent example was voicing our concerns about the Clean Power Plan. The schedule of implementation of this plan would have created a cost prohibitive situation for most cooperatives and placed a financial burden on our members. Working with other cooperatives we communicated this to our elected officials. The implementation of the plan has been halted by the Supreme Court.

We strengthen our youth. We send two junior high students to Nashville each year for the TECA Youth Leadership Summit and four juniors on the NRECA Washington Youth Tour. Both opportunities promote leadership to students in rural communities served by VEC. Students are given the opportunity to meet their senators and representatives. During the school year we attend many classrooms and fairs presenting safety demonstrations for students in K-12. We also fund the Lillard-Shadow scholarship which awards \$2,000 each to 4 graduating seniors.

We facilitate the TVA EnergyRight Solutions eScore™ and heat pump loan programs. These programs provide a way for our members to evaluate their home's energy efficiency and



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receive rebates for improvements. So far this year we have assisted 216 members with eScore™ audits and inspections. Through March of this year we facilitated 58 approved EnergyRight heat pump loans for members. The loans are spread out over a 10-year period and paid along with the utility bill. This loan empowers many rural members to create a more energy efficient home.

Whether we are working with members to upgrade their home's energy efficiency, presenting a grant check to a food bank, awarding a scholarship, or traveling to Washington we are working to demonstrate how much we care about the communities we serve.



Volunteer Energy Receives Energy-Right Solutions Award From TVA

Volunteer Energy received special recognition from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for helping the agency exceed energy efficiency and demand response goals for the eighth straight year through the EnergyRight Solutions program.

"Volunteer Energy provides the staffing, promotion and resources to ensure that customers are aware of and can participate in energy efficiency measures to save on electric bills," said Cindy Herron, vice president of EnergyRight Solutions for TVA.



(L to R) Kristy Kelly Sewell - VEC Member Service Specialist, Paige Finnell - VEC Energy Service Specialist, and Cindy Herron - TVA Vice President EnergyRight Solutions

Volunteer Energy and TVA will continue to strive to meet the challenges that lie ahead; working together to better promote energy efficiency and clean energy that will make our Valley a better place to live, work, play and raise happy families.

Volunteer Energy was a top performer in:

eScore™ - Fifth in the Valley with 573 participants

Volume Heat Pump for Manufactured Homes – First in the Valley with 425,730 kWh and 138 participants

Green Power Providers – Second in the Valley with 5.74% of total capacity for the program

Make Summer Safety Number One On Your To-Do List

After a cold, hard 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 Greg Hutsell, 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.

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The VECustomers Share program funded \$26,500 in community service grants in May. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.6 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 Joyce Woods (center) presented a grant check to Girl Scout Troop 40311; (l to r) Tess Robinette, Violet Ellis, Lorelei White, Merry Brown, and Brenda Luisa - Troop Leader.

Organizations receiving grants in May

Pickett County Relay for Life	\$2,000	Unaka District - Great Smoky Mountain Council, Boy Scouts of America	\$500
Monterey Food Bank	\$1,500	McMinn County Educational and Community Foundation	\$500
Rhea Alliance	\$1,500	Senior Lighthouse Center	\$400
YAI Baseball Boosters Club Inc.	\$1,000	Athens Civitan Club	\$400
Fentress County Friends of the Library	\$1,000	Mayland Senior Center	\$300
Fairfield Glade Dept. of Public Safety	\$1,000	Cumberland County Rescue Squad Crewettes	\$300
J.O.Y. Scholarships	\$1,000	Brown Middle School PTO	\$300
Polk County High School Future Business Leaders of America	\$900	Etowah Area Senior Citizens Center	\$300
Kids for Christ - Meadow View Baptist	\$750	Family, Career, & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) - Martin Elementary	\$250
Candlelighters Family Support Group	\$750	Family, Career, & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) - Homestead Elementary	\$250
Midway High School FFA Chapter	\$750	Family, Career, & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) - Brown Elementary	\$250
Polk County Youth Football	\$700	Cumberland County High School FCCLA	\$250
Meigs County Ministries	\$600	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$250
Meigs County First Responders	\$600	Midway Quarterback Club	\$250
Meigs County 4-H	\$600	Midway Middle School Football Booster Club	\$250
Cedine Ministries	\$600	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$250
Benton Elementary Jr. Beta Club	\$500	John Knox Center	\$250
Cumberland GAP Mission	\$500	Tribe Rugby Football Club	\$250
Cumberland County Veterans Assistance Council (CCVAC)	\$500	Calhoun Elementary PTO - Cheerleading Squad	\$250
Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland County	\$500	People Helping People Ministry	\$200
Hamilton County STARS	\$500	Benton United Methodist Women	\$200
Monterey First Baptist Community Youth Group	\$500	TCAT Crossville Student Leadership Council	\$200
Midway Elementary Music Club	\$500	For the Children Quilting Ministry	\$200
Solomon Family Solutions	\$500	Ooltewah Harrison Education Foundation "D9"	\$200
Refuge	\$500		

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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 Hutsell "Staying safe around electricity is just a matter of a few simple rules and good judgment."



Planting The Right Trees In The Right Place Helps Prevent Power Outages

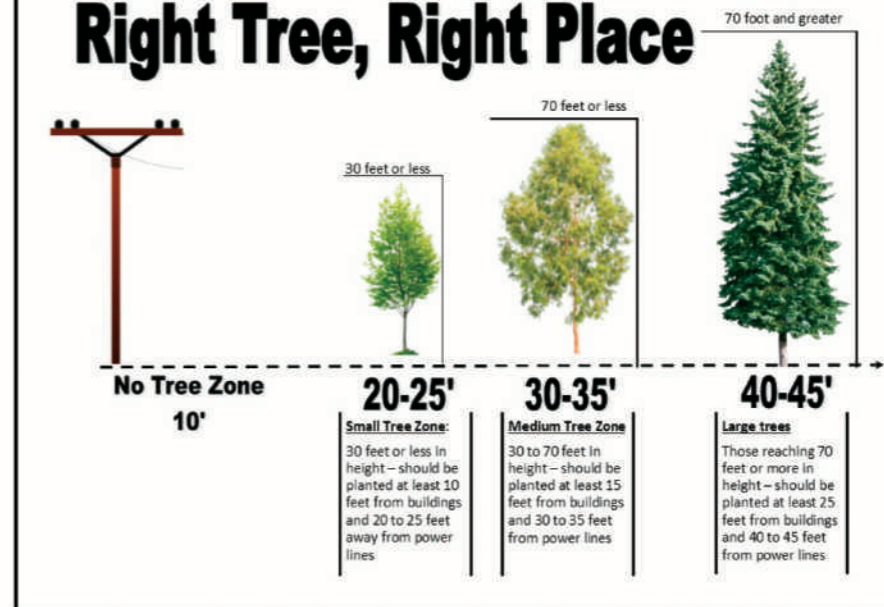
In this part of Tennessee we are blessed with an abundance and variety of trees that many climates can only dream about. It is just one of the many things that make this a wonderful place to live. But it can also be quite a challenge for Volunteer Energy Cooperative in

meeting our responsibility to deliver a reliable flow of power to 114,500 customers in all or part of 17 counties.

As the February 2015 ice storms demonstrated, trees can be a power company's worst enemy. Strong winds, saturated ground, and heavy icing can topple trees or break branches that pull down power lines and cause power outages. Sometimes even heavily damaged power lines can remain energized and can potentially cause a serious safety risk.

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Right Tree, Right Place

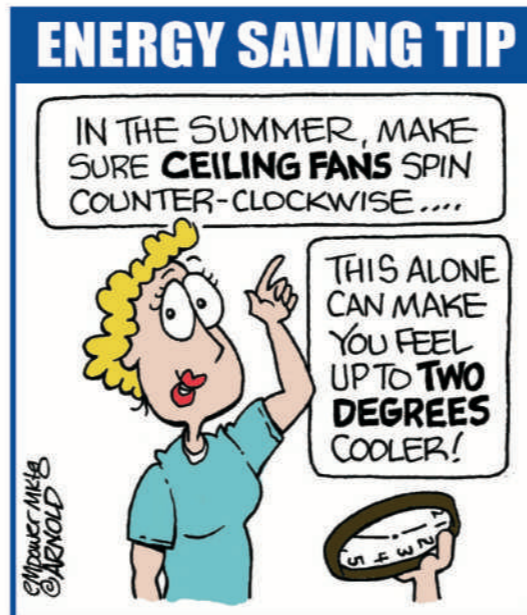


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Arcing and flashovers between power lines and nearby branches – branches that may not even be coming into contact with power lines – can cause serious safety risks as well. For those reasons VEC has undertaken an aggressive right-of-way clearing program to reduce power outages and to minimize safety risks.

To prevent having a tree trimmed extensively or removed, the best solution is to plant the right tree in the right place. The University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension office prepared the following guidelines for power line-friendly tree planting:

- Small trees – 30 feet or less in height – should be planted at least 10 feet from buildings and 20 to 25 feet away from power lines.
- Medium trees – 30 to 70 feet in height – should be planted at least 15 feet from buildings and 30 to 35 feet from power lines.
- Large trees – those reaching 70 feet or more in height – should be planted at least 25 feet from buildings and 40 to 45 feet from power lines.
- No tree trunk, no matter how small the tree, should be within 10 feet of a utility pole.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective June 1, 2016

1.991¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.