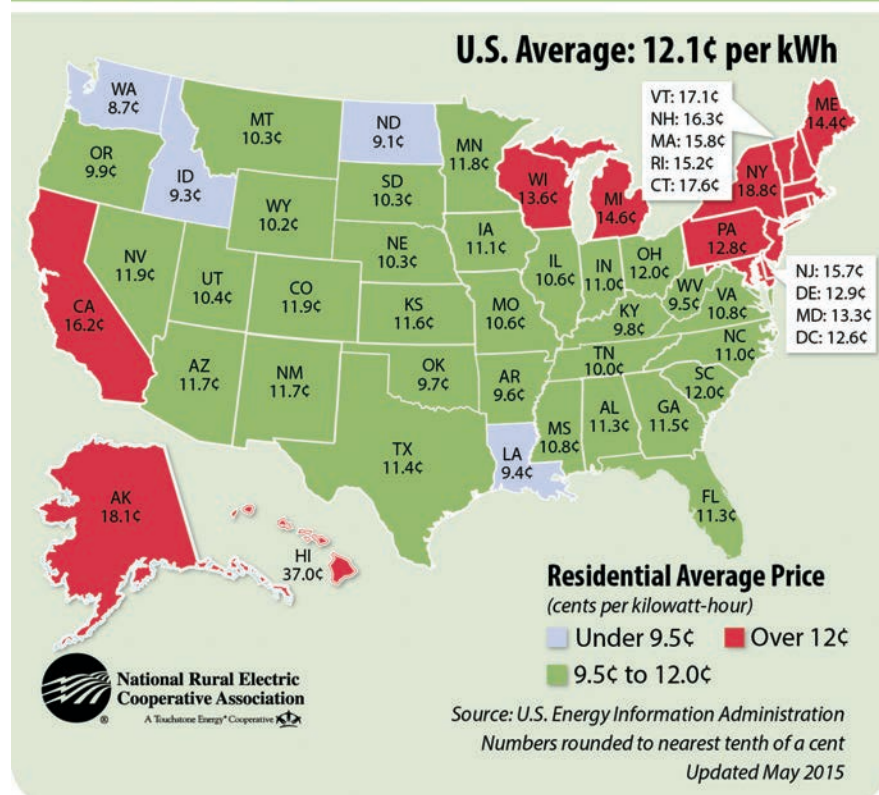


Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2015 figures, in cents per kWh



Legislative Visits

On March 7 and 8, electric cooperative leaders from across Tennessee converged on Nashville to visit with state legislators. Sponsored by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA), the event is an organized effort to provide legislators information about the issues that affect electric cooperative members.



In the foreground of this photo, Rody Blevins (right) talks with Representative Cameron Sexton along with VEC board members (background, left to right), Laney Colvard, Larry Storie, Aubie Smith, Keith Phillips, and Jerry Henley.

Who Do You Call?

It is 8:00 pm, you are settled into your favorite chair to watch your favorite television show and your lights blink. Then they blink again. They blink a third time and the power goes off. Five minutes pass and you're not too concerned, 15 minutes pass and you decide you need to call someone. Who do you call?

Volunteer Energy's Central Dispatch Control Center is staffed 24 hours a day. Whether it is 8:00 pm or 3:00 am, a dispatcher is monitoring real-time service on our power grid. Each of our Central Dispatch staff work hand in hand with service area managers to monitor and diagnose problems. The dispatchers utilize state of the art monitoring systems which include the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and Outage Management System (OMS). In addition to the Dispatch Control Center, our Integrated Voice Response System (IVR) can confirm outages and give updated information 24 hours each day.

Along with the IVR and Central Dispatch, our Contact Center is open for extended business hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 am - 7:00 pm and Saturday 8:00 am - 12:00 pm. "Volunteer Energy, how may I help you?" is a phrase repeated often in the Contact Center as representatives answer calls from the 17 counties served by Volunteer Energy. In 2015 Contact Center Representatives answered 173,518 calls which included more than 21,000 taken during the historic February 2015 ice storm. Each representative can take payments, review billing questions, create service repair orders, answer outage questions and discuss bill payment options. Contact Center Representatives work closely with our nine area offices to resolve customer concerns in just one call. In 2015 the Contact Center provided one-call resolution for 80% of all calls received.

Whatever time you have a question or concern you can reach someone at Volunteer Energy. Central Dispatch Control Center, Contact Center Representatives, and our Interactive Voice Response System all work together to support the mission of Volunteer Energy.

Notice of Election

In compliance with the bylaws of Volunteer Energy Cooperative, Article IV, Directors; Section 4.05, Notice of Directors to be Elected, I hereby give written notice that the following Directors' terms will expire this year:

District No. 2 – Bradley County
District No. 6 – Bledsoe and Rhea counties
District No. 8 – Cumberland County, west of Hwy. 127

As set forth in Article IV, Section 4.06, in order for a member to become a qualified candidate for Director, he/she shall file with the Secretary of the Cooperative or with his/her duly appointed candidate, signed by him/her and not less than fifty other members in good standing whose premises served by the Cooperative are located in the directorate district of the candidate.

Qualifying petitions and other information pertaining to the elections can be obtained on or after May 27, 2016 by contacting Patty Hurley, Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322, or by calling 423-334-7050.

Qualifying petitions must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative or his designee at the VEC Corporate Office in Decatur, Tennessee by 5 p.m. EDT, June 3, 2016.

Sammy Norton
Secretary-Treasurer

Cooperatives Are Pleased with Supreme Court Decision

By Rody Blevins, VEC President/CEO



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Over the last few months in this column, I have addressed our concerns with the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan. In February the U.S. Supreme Court decided to halt implementation of this plan. Volunteer Energy Cooperative, other electric cooperatives in the Tennessee Valley, and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) were pleased with this decision.

Last fall, Tennessee's electric cooperatives joined the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in launching legal efforts to stop implementation of the Clean Power Plan.

David Callis, executive vice president and general manager of TECA said, "We continue to believe that low rates and reliable power must be a part of our clean energy future. This decision opens the door to find real solutions that effectively balance environmental and economic concerns. If this stay had not been granted, cooperatives across the nation would have been forced to take costly and irreversible steps to comply with these new regulations. The Supreme Court's ruling validates our belief that the Clean Power Plan is an overreach of EPA's legal authority."

In 2014, electric consumers from across Tennessee submitted more than 14,000 comments to the Environmental Protection Agency in opposition to the agency's proposals to limit carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

The fight is not over, but it is evident that the voices of cooperative members were heard loud and clear. We continue to be committed to work toward a cleaner environment while keeping electric rates low for our cooperative members.

Pole Inspection Program Continues in 2016

For the past several years, Volunteer Energy has conducted pole inspections throughout the system to pinpoint potential problem spots and fix issues before they cause problems. Poles are inspected for damage and replaced if needed. Our experience during recent storms have shown the value of this program, as outages due to broken poles have been kept to a minimum.

This program will continue in 2016, with inspections scheduled in the following areas:

Jamestown - Hwy. 52W
Cumberland County - North Plateau Road; Westchester, Dorchester areas; Hwy. 70 North, Bakers Crossroad area; Hwy. 127 near downtown Spring City - Wolfcreek, Evensville areas
Benton - Oakgrove area
Bradley County - White Oak Road, Misty Ridge
McMinn County - Bowater Road

The VECustomers Share program funded \$30,300 in community service grants in March. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.5 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.

Barbara Rector, VECustomers Share board member (right) presents a grant check to Melissa Tompkins from the Pickett County Soil Conservation Club.

Organizations receiving grants in March

Pickett County Cattlemen's Association	\$1,500	Midway High School Cheerleader Booster Club	\$500
Stone Elementary School Parent Council	\$1,500	Distinguished Young Woman Program of Rhea County	\$500
Youth Achievement Foundation, Inc.	\$1,300	Christ's Legacy Academy Science Olympiad Team	\$500
Spring City Lions Club	\$1,250	HOSA	\$500
Cleveland Emergency Shelter, Inc.	\$1,250	Spring City Chamber of Commerce	\$500
Meigs Senior Center	\$1,200	Cherokee Removal Memorial Park - Blythe Ferry	\$500
Calhoun Alumni Association	\$1,100	Tennessee 4-H Club Foundation Inc. - Cumberland County	\$500
Monterey First Baptist Community Youth	\$1,050	Tennessee Rural Education Association	\$500
YAI Baseball Boosters Club, Inc.	\$1,050	The Samaritan Center	\$500
Monterey High School Football Quarterback Club	\$1,000	North McMinn Fire and Rescue	\$500
Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,000	Meigs Fury (8U Girls Softball Team)	\$500
Helping Hands - Fairview Baptist	\$1,000	McMinn County Living Heritage Museum	\$400
Funday Fun Run 2016	\$875	Agape Preschool	\$300
Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Department	\$750	Meigs County Historical Society	\$300
Lady Wildcat Softball Booster Club	\$625	Chilhowee Middle School Baseball Boosters	\$250
Midway Softball Club	\$500	Polk County Health Council	\$250
Cumberland County High School Track and Field Booster Club	\$500	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$250
Tennessee Valley Theatre	\$500	Roane County Lady Knights Lacrosse	\$250
Cumberland County Community Chorus	\$500	Going Respectfully Against Addictive Behaviors Coalition	\$250
Meigs Cobras Dizzy Dean Baseball Team - Ages 11-12	\$500	Bradley Broadcasting After-School Enrichment	\$250
Midway Elementary STEM Club	\$500	Midway Soccer Club	\$250
Midway Middle School Football Booster Club	\$500	Pleasant Hill Elementary FFA	\$200
Helping Hands of Providence	\$500	Cookeville Housing Services Corporation	\$150
Family Promise of Bradley County	\$500	Polk County Prom Club	\$125
North Cumberland PTO	\$500	Polk County High School Drama Club	\$125

"Blinks" Mean VEC's System is Protecting Your Home and its Contents

It's a situation that has happened to most of us. We come home to find our digital clocks flashing "12:00."

This is caused by a power blink – a brief interruption that is designed to prevent a longer power outage and to prevent damage to VEC's electric distribution system, your home, and the contents of your home.

While blinks can be annoying, they show that VEC's system is working as designed.

Blinks occur when an obstruction, like a tree limb, comes into contact with a power line or a transformer. To minimize the possibility of damage to the utility system or your home, a circuit breaker interrupts the flow of electricity to the problem site for a fraction of a second. VEC's system breakers function much like the breakers in the electrical panel of your home.

If the obstruction remains on the line, the breaker opens and tries to reclose again. If the obstruction is still on the line after the third try, the breaker opens and does not reclose automatically.

At this point a VEC employee will be dispatched to remove the obstruction and manually reset the breaker.

Without these breakers, electrical faults could result in a lengthy outage affecting everyone on that particular substation feeder. The faults could also cause serious and expensive damage to VEC's system or to your home.

Blinks can affect the time display on older electronic devices such as VCRs, microwave ovens, personal computers, and digital clocks. Most new devices include battery backups which give the device the capability of riding out these brief power fluctuations.

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) on your computer can help prevent information loss. The UPS incorporates surge suppression technology with a battery backup and provides you some time to save whatever you are working on and exit your computer properly.

The blinks are most often caused by tree limbs, lightning, wind, heavy snow load, small animals on power lines, or a car striking a utility pole.

VEC operates an aggressive right-of-way management program in an effort to reduce blinks by making sure tree limbs are clear of power lines. Even though blinks will never completely disappear from our power delivery system, we are working hard to minimize the number and the impact of the interruptions.

Money Saving Tip: Don't Pay Processing Fees!

Bill payments made on the Volunteer Energy Cooperative web site NEVER charge a fee to process your payment. Some bill payment vendors (i.e. Doxo, etc.) charge a fee for this service. Be sure that you are directly logged on to the VEC website (www.vec.org) and submit your payment with no processing fee. Better yet - sign up for bank draft and have your payment submitted automatically each month.



VEC Announces Pilot Program to Help Businesses Lower Their Power Costs

Volunteer Energy has announced a new load reduction program for businesses. The program offers bill credits in exchange for electric load reductions that companies institute during times of high demand. Companies nominate the amount of load that they are able to reduce and, in exchange, VEC provides a credit for each kilowatt of demand that is reduced.

Reduction in load during peak times results in VEC paying less to TVA for the power they purchase. These savings are being passed along to companies who participate in this load reduction program.

The actual amount of credit is based on the time of year. Credits range from \$2.80 per kilowatt during the transitional months to \$4.50 per kilowatt for reductions in the summer.

VEC will plan to notify participants in advance of the times they need to reduce load.

Specific program information is available at the local VEC office.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment

Effective April 1, 2016

1.861¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.