

VEC Annual Meeting Showcases the Cooperative Difference

About 1,000 VEC members enjoyed a free breakfast, free flu shots, informative displays, door prizes and give-aways, and entertainment by James Rogers at VEC's 77th Annual Meeting on October 5th at Meigs County Middle School. Members were also brought up to date on VEC's activities during the year and plans for the future.

President/CEO Rody Blevins, Board of Directors Chairman Laney Colvard, and Board of Directors Secretary/Treasurer Sammy Norton each gave reports.

VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department was responsible for organizing the event.

"Our Annual Meeting is a very big part of our year," VEC Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development Patty Hurley said. "It's a great opportunity for us to connect with our member-owners, communicate with them about their cooperative, and do our best to provide answers to any questions they may have about their cooperative."

Hurley was quick to point out that she couldn't organize an event like this without plenty of help.

"We get so much volunteer support from our employees," Hurley said. "Most of our guests probably didn't realize that our employees at the Annual Meeting are not being paid to help with the event. They volunteer to give up their Saturday in order to be available to our members and to help with the event."

She added that the support of the entire Decatur and Meigs County community is immeasurable.



VEC
VOLUNTEER ENERGY COOPERATIVE
ANNUAL MEETING

A GREAT TIME HAD BY ALL AT VEC'S ANNUAL MEETING!!



Now Playing VEC Unveils New Website

Is it a phone? Is it a notebook? Is it a pad? Is it a desktop?

It doesn't matter. VEC's new website displays smoothly no matter how you access the internet.

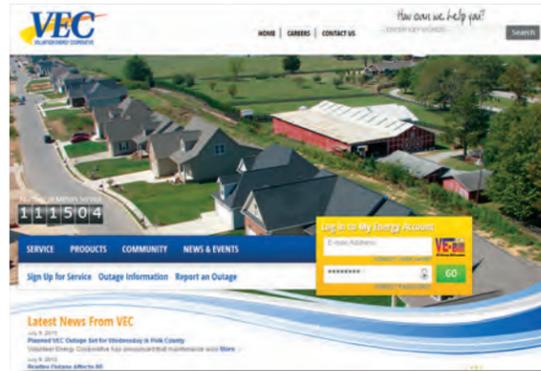
More and more VEC member-owners are finding that www.vec.org is the most convenient way to pay their bill, update account information, ask a question, or access a wealth of information about VEC's products and services.

Not too long ago VEC could count on the vast majority of those folks to access the website with a desktop or laptop computer with similarly configured monitors and keypads. But the mobile internet revolution has changed all that. Now VEC's member-owners are finding it convenient to take care of their business while waiting to pick up their children from school, while they sit in a doctor's waiting room, or anywhere and anytime they find themselves with a few minutes to spare. Mobile internet devices are making that possible.

But if you've ever tried to navigate a traditional website on your phone, you are probably well aware of the drawbacks. Small text links are often hard to use and if the links are close together, it's easy to hit the wrong link.

In order to meet the needs of these member-owners VEC began working with Apogee Interactive to develop a new website capable of detecting what type of device is being used to access the site and respond with an appropriately configured website.

But ease of use isn't the only thing member-owners expect from a website. They want to be able to complete a wide variety of transactions and access the information they want 24 hours a day, seven days a week. VEC's new website meets those needs as well.



Try it Out! www.vec.org

We've Got Your Holiday Shopping Covered

Toy Bucket Trucks & Pick-up Trucks
\$5.00 plus tax

Midland WR-300 Weather Radio
\$59.95 plus tax

Stop by your local Volunteer Energy Cooperative Customer Service Center to pick up these great holiday gifts.

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QUICK TIP:

A reversible ceiling fan can be used not only in summer, but in winter as well. The fan should turn clockwise during the summer, directing air downward to create a cooling effect. During the winter, the fan should turn counterclockwise at a low speed. This pushes heated air at the ceiling level down into the room without causing a cool breeze.

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VEC POWERLINES
Volunteer Energy Cooperative Newsletter
DEC 2013

VECcustomers Share Board Welcomes New Members



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Each month in *Powerlines* we provide a list of local community service organizations from all across our 17-county service area that have received grants from our VECcustomers Share program. What you might not notice, however, is the group of 12 selfless individuals who work so hard to make the program work.

Our VECcustomers Share board members are volunteer VEC members who examine scores of applications each month and then travel from all across VEC's service area each month to deliberate and decide how grant funds are to be awarded.

They don't earn a cent for doing this work. Their only reward is helping communities become better places to work, play, go to school, and raise children.

In October the terms of three members of our VECcustomers Share Board expired and one board member stepped down due to personal reasons. We welcomed four new members to take their place.

Leaving the board at the end of their terms were Doug Ford, who represented McMinn County and who served as chairman of the board; Jim Purcell who represented East Cumberland County and served as vice chairman of the board; and Alton Lingerfelt who represented Roane County; Ruthann Woolbright, who represented Putnam County, ended her service on the board due to personal reasons.

As you can see, we lost a great deal of leadership and experience on our board. These representatives will be missed.

But this gives us an opportunity to welcome four new members who I look forward to working with in the coming years.

Erbin Baumgardner is now representing McMinn County, Barry Narramore is representing Roane County, Sharon Parrott is now representing Putnam County, and Pauline Sherrer, who has served two previous terms on the board, is back to represent East Cumberland County. I'm very proud to work alongside these people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work necessary to make this program work.

As much as I admire these people and the work they do, I think it's important to note that the real heroes of the VECcustomers Share program are you – our members. By opting to round your electric bill up to the next nearest whole dollar amount each month, you've provided more than \$4.6 million to support local communities over the last 12 years.

From hunger relief, literacy, and the arts to emergency services, education support, and all types of aid for the needy, you've helped local communities and your neighbors. Thank you for your support of this program.



Barry Narramore



Erbin Baumgardner



Pauline Sherrer



Sharon Parrott



Doug Ford



Alton Lingerfelt



Jim Purcell



Ruthann Woolbright

VEC Customers Share Your Change Changes Things



The VEC Customers Share program funded \$30,000 in community service grants in September. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$4.6 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.



VEC Customers Share Board Chairman Harold Reno, center, presents a grant check to Stan Evans (left) and Van Swearingen (right) of Bradley County Scottish Rite.

Organizations receiving grants in September

Sierra Hull Bluegrass Festival, Byrdstown	\$2,500	Pleasant Hill Football Boosters	\$1,000
Allardt PTO Playhouse Trip	\$1,500	Ooltewah High School Girls' Soccer Boosters	\$750
Idlewild Fire Department, Athens	\$1,500	Meigs County Future Farmers of America	\$750
SpiritHorse Therapeutic Riding at Black Fox, Cleveland	\$1,500	Meigs Middle School PTO	\$750
Luminary Volunteer Fire Department, Spring City	\$1,450	Meigs County High School Band Boosters	\$500
Kiwanis Club of Spring City	\$1,050	Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$500
Monterey Senior Center	\$1,000	Midway Elementary School AR Club	\$500
Monterey High School Girls' Basketball Boosters Club	\$1,000	Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$500
Sonshine Soup Kitchen, Crossville	\$1,000	Midway Youth League	\$500
Operation REACH, Kingston	\$1,000	Bradley County High School Wrestling Boosters	\$500
Kitchen of Hope, Allardt	\$1,000	Benton Fall Festival Booster Club	\$500
Cumberland County TAD Center	\$1,000	Meigs County High School Tennis Booster Club	\$500
Homestead UMC Food Pantry, Crossville	\$1,000	Midway High School PTO	\$500
FUNDAY, Inc., Benton	\$1,000	Wilson Elementary School 8th Grade Field Trip Club, Crawford	\$500
Roane State Cumberland County Business Incubator	\$1,000	Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison	\$500
Bradley County Scottish Rite Shoe Fund	\$1,000	Chilhowee Middle School Girls' Soccer Booster Club, Benton	\$500
Riceville Youth Football Organization	\$1,000	Cherokee Removal Memorial Park, Birchwood	\$250

Making the Most of Your Electric Water Heater Easy Tips to Help You Save Energy and Money

Next to a heating-and-cooling system, a water heater is the biggest energy-user in your home. While electric water heaters are one of the most effective ways to provide an ample supply of hot water for your family, you should try to boost the efficiency of your unit as much as possible.

Since a water heater provides hot water 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, maximizing efficiency offers tremendous potential as a source of savings. By applying a few no-cost and low-cost tips, or by replacing your current water heater with a more efficient one, you'll be able to better manage your water heating energy use.

To ensure that you're saving as much as possible with your water heater, follow these tips:

- Know how to choose a new water heater – Higher efficiency water heaters may have higher price tags, but they actually save you money in the long run because they use less energy to operate. Select a unit that is the right size for your family's needs—your retailer can help you decide on the appropriate size. Don't buy a unit that's too large or you will wind up paying to heat water you never use. You can also take advantage of VEC's program that offers electric bill credits for the purchase of higher efficiency electric water heaters. Contact your local VEC Customer Service Center for details or visit www.vec.org.

**Replacing your water heater?
Call your local VEC Customer Service
Center to see if you qualify for a credit
on your VEC electric bill.**

- Compare apples to apples – When comparison-shopping for a new water heater, look at both the initial cost and the annual operating costs of the unit. Remember, the operating costs listed on the yellow EnergyGuide label are based on an average of national electricity rates. You can expect your operating costs to be somewhat lower, since VEC's electricity rates are lower than the national average.

- Set your thermostat for savings – By setting the thermostat to the lowest appropriate temperature for your needs, you can greatly increase the efficiency of your water heater.

- Don't leave your pipes out in the cold – You can minimize heat loss and cut operating costs by wrapping exposed hot water pipes with an insulating material such as, foam pipe, or fiberglass wrap. Wrapping the first three feet closest to the water heater is the most critical.

- Offer your water heater a blanket – Installing a water heater blanket (also known as an insulation jacket) is a very low-cost way to save up to 9 percent on your water heating costs. To see if you need a blanket, feel the outside of the tank. If it feels warm, you should consider a blanket. Be sure to check caution labels on the unit since many newer units are already insulated and cannot be used with a blanket.

- Give your water heater a vacation, too – If you're going out of town for more than a few days, turn your water heater off. Make sure you turn it back on as soon as you return so that it has some time to produce more hot water.

- Stop that drip – If you have a faucet dripping hot water, even a very slow drip, that's money down the drain. To ensure that you're not wasting money and water, promptly fix any leaky faucets.

- Restrict the flow – Installing low-flow devices such as water-saving shower heads and faucet regulators can cut up to 11 percent of your water use. This means you'll save on water heating costs and the cost of water itself.

- Start new habits – One of the best and easiest ways to save is to use less hot water. By taking showers as opposed to baths you'll reduce hot water consumption considerably. In fact, the average person will use about half as much hot water in a shower as in a bath. Another way to save is to maximize the size of the loads of laundry you put in your washer and to wash your clothes in cold water when possible and always rinse in cold water. Finally, don't let the hot water run when doing dishes or shaving. Try filling the sink with water instead.

Ailing Hawk Rescued at VEC Substation



Sonya Lum shows off a healthy Girly Girl at VEC's Corporate Office before transporting her to the release site.

VEC employees often encounter wildlife as they go about the business of maintaining the system that distributes electricity to 112,000 customers across all or part of 17 counties. Unfortunately, most of those encounters are "clean up" efforts after an animal has strayed into electrical equipment.

But when Greg Hutsell and Melvin Holmes approached VEC's Spring Creek Substation near the Meigs County – McMinn County border, their wildlife encounter was of a different type. A Red-tail Hawk – obviously in distress – was waiting for them. The hawk did not appear to have any injuries, but Hutsell, VEC's superintendent of safety and construction, and Holmes, superintendent of purchasing, knew something was very wrong.

"She wasn't moving very much at all," Hutsell said. "Even when we got extremely close."

They contacted VEC's Operations Department Assistant Melanie Cannon who knew a wildlife rehabilitation specialist in the area – Sonya Lum.

Lum works with Alix Parks, a volunteer with Tennessee Raptor Rescue in Signal Mountain. Lum came and picked up the hawk and took her to the rescue center. Lum said the hawk – she nicknamed her Girly Girl – didn't have any severe injuries. She said Girly Girl was just very young and not a very accomplished huntress yet. The Hawk was malnourished and very close to death.

"She was just too young and too weak to feed herself," Lum said.

On clear and warm fall day this year Lum, her daughter Wendy Moore – a veterinary technician – Hutsell, and Holmes took a revived and healthy Girly Girl out to release her into the wild very close to where she was found.

"She would have been dead by now if you guys hadn't saved her," Lum told Hutsell and Holmes.

Lum carefully took Girly Girl out of her crate and set her on a metal gate at the entrance to a large field. Instantly the hawk made a few strong, confident flaps of her wings and was immediately soaring across the field. She perched in a nearby tree and began surveying her surroundings.

"She'll do fine now," Lum said.



Girly Girl takes flight for the first time after her rescue.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective November 1, 2013

2.148¢

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

