

## New Year Getting Off To Busy Start at VEC

One of the most important parts of meeting the needs of more than 113,000 member-owners is listening. At VEC we are privileged to serve a very diverse group of individuals who have very unique expectations from their electric cooperative.

And we've been listening carefully.

Today's electricity consumers want choices – choices in how they communicate with their electricity provider, choices in how they manage their account and energy use, and choices in how to report outages and request services.

As the New Year begins VEC is unveiling several different programs in response to our members' ever-changing needs.

### Paperless Billing

Many of our customers have inquired about paperless billing and VEC is now ready to provide this option.

As a member-owned cooperative VEC had an extra hurdle to clear in order to provide a paperless billing option. We are required to provide our members with a great deal of information about your electric cooperative. The method we have used to distribute this important information is the *Powerlines* newsletter that comes with each month's paper bill.

In order to meet the competing needs of accommodating members who prefer paperless billing and providing this required information to our owners, we will be making the *Powerlines* newsletter available in an electronic version.

Paperless billing is efficient and environmentally friendly, but I would encourage those members who choose this option to take advantage of the important information, money saving advice, and news about VEC programs that are available to you in our electronic newsletter.

### SmartHub

Web-based account access and control is another service VEC member-owners demand. But just creating a website isn't enough to meet the demands of our increasingly tech-savvy consumers. VEC is incorporating SmartHub, a suite of web-based applications that will make managing your account, paying your bill, or communicating with VEC fast and easy.

A separate article in this edition of *Powerlines* goes into more detail about what is available.

### eScore

VEC is committed to helping you spend as little as possible on your electric service. In keeping with that commitment, VEC is unveiling a new program to help member-owners make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. This edition of *Powerlines* contains an article that provides more information on the program which replaces our previous In-Home Energy Evaluation program. The new eScore program features numerous improvements including an opportunity to earn multiple rebates for multiple qualifying improvements.

We're working hard at VEC to listen and to respond to the needs of our member-owners. It's a commitment that will last beyond this New Year season and into the years ahead.




*Rody Blevins  
President/CEO  
Volunteer Energy  
Cooperative*

## Every Degree Counts in Cutting Energy Costs

Winter is here and lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees can mean substantial savings on your heating bill. On average, each degree your raise or lower the thermostat from 70 degrees means you pay 3.1% more or less on your heating bill. For example, lowering your thermostat from 70 degrees to 68 degrees will save 6.2% on your heating bill. However, if you like to keep your home warmer in the winter, raising the thermostat to 76 degrees will increase your heating bill by 18.6%.





### ENERGY SAVING TIP — Find and Seal Leaks

- Seal the air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes (plumbing penetrations), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

## 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 2015.

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 2015 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](http://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 6, 2015.**

## VEC's Annual Meeting Showcases the Cooperative Difference



*David Browning as "The Mayberry Deputy" kept the laughs coming.*



*Dr. Shane Roberts and staff provided free flu shots to attendees.*



*VEC's Greg Hutsell, right, presents one of the door prizes - a propane grill, provided by Volunteer Energy's propane supplier Blossman - to Patricia Barron of Ten Mile.*



*The Presentation of Colors and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Cub Scout Pack 615 of Decatur.*



*David Browning as "The Mayberry Deputy" and Meigs County's Angel Thurman teamed up to entertain the crowd.*

*A crowd of more than 900 enjoyed VEC's Annual Meeting at Meigs County Middle School.*



VEC  
Customers Share  
Your Change Changes Things



The VECustomers Share program funded \$30,500 in community service grants in October. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5 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](http://www.vec.org).



VECustomers Share Board Member Erbin Baumgardner, right, presents a grant check to Tracy Carter of the McMinn Amateur Radio Club.

Organizations receiving grants in October

Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,750	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$500
Eagle Dugout Club, Evensville	\$1,300	Creating Christmas Memories, Cleveland	\$500
Happy Hearts Seniors, Benton	\$1,250	Boys and Girls Clubs of Cleveland	\$500
Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$1,250	Rogers Creek Elementary School PTO	\$500
Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison	\$1,250	Rogers Creek Boys and Girls Basketball Boosters	\$500
Cumberland Children's Center House of Hope, Crossville	\$1,200	Fentress County Rescue Squad	\$500
Kids on the Rise, Crossville	\$1,000	Benton Fall Festival Booster Club	\$500
Plateau Longbeards NWTF, Crossville	\$1,000	Monterey Civitan Club	\$500
Pickett County High School Boys Basketball Boosters	\$1,000	Wilson Elementary School 8th Grade Class Trip Club, Crawford	\$500
Operation REACH, Kingston	\$1,000	Bradley Initiative for Church and Community	\$500
McMinn Amateur Radio Club	\$1,000	Homestead Elementary School FCCLA, Crossville	\$500
Meigs County FFA Alumni	\$900	American Legion Post 203 Ladies Auxiliary, Spring City	\$500
Meigs County Retired Teachers	\$900	Luminary Health Fair Committee, Ten Mile	\$500
Ms. Kara Smith's Reading Club, Byrdstown	\$800	Meigs County Senior Center	\$400
Frazier Elementary School Tremont Booster Club, Dayton	\$700	Pleasant Hill Basketball Booster Club, Sparta	\$300
Pickett County K-8 Junior High Book Club	\$700	Michigan Avenue School PTO, Cleveland	\$250
Meigs County High School Tennis Boosters	\$550	People Helping People, Benton	\$250
Pine Haven Elementary School Yearbook Club, Jamestown	\$500	Polk County High School Basketball Cheerleader Boosters	\$250
BonDeCroft Elementary School PTO, Sparta	\$500	Museum Center at Sive Points, Cleveland	\$250
Tennessee Shooting Stars, Crossville	\$500	Vietnam Veterans of White County	\$250
Benton Elementary School Junior Beta Club	\$500	Life Bridges, Cleveland	\$250
Burks Stars, Monterey	\$500	Monterey Community Chorus	\$250
St. Therese Parish Health Ministry, Cleveland	\$500	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$250
Cumberland County High School Men's Soccer Boosters	\$500	Midway Quarterback Club	\$250

What's Your eScore?  
VEC is Ready to Join You in Your Journey  
to a More Energy Efficient Home

by Paige Finnell, Energy Services Specialist

If your car gets poor gas mileage, it's not hard to figure out what you need to do to spend less money on gasoline. But when your home is an energy hog, what can you do to lower your energy costs and get more "mileage" out of your home?

If you have been asking yourself that question, VEC is launching a free new program to help provide you with answers.

The eScore program – a joint venture of Volunteer Energy Cooperative and TVA – kicked off December 1st. It replaces the In-Home Energy Evaluation (IHEE) program and offers expanded opportunities to make multiple energy-efficiency improvements and receive multiple rebates.

There are two paths the customer can choose from to take advantage of the program.

- 1) Visit VEC's website at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org), log in to eScore, register, and select a contractor who is a member of TVA's and VEC's Quality Contractor Network (QCN). Arrange for the contractor to make any qualifying energy efficiency improvements and after the work is complete, VEC will schedule an inspection. A trained energy efficiency professional will inspect the work that has been done and calculate the home's eScore (energy efficiency rating). The evaluator will also make customized recommendations for other improvements the homeowner may want to consider to improve their homes energy efficiency – and eScore – even more. The homeowner can make additional improvements - and earn more rebates and incentives – as they choose.
- 2) The second path to take advantage of the eScore program is to visit the VEC website at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org), log in to eScore, register, and request an eScore evaluation; or phone me at 423-334-7053 to schedule an evaluation.

No matter which path you choose, an expert will perform a free walk-through evaluation and provide you with a customized report of suggested energy-efficiency measures, a list of rebates and incentives that are available, and your home's eScore. Your eScore is stored on your eScore online account and you can access that information anytime to chart your progress.

VEC will assist you throughout the process to help you reach an eScore of 10 which represents your home's highest level of energy efficiency.

Instead of a "one-and-done" program, VEC is using eScore to help you make your home as energy efficient as possible.

The typical initial evaluation produces an average score of about 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 10. The rating is based on heating and cooling systems, insulation, ductwork, and other items

TVA and VEC are partnering to deliver this program, in part, because each kilowatt hour saved represents less energy that has to be generated. This helps stabilize rates for VEC member-owners and for distributors of TVA power. But we're also committed to helping our member-owners keep their electric bills as low as possible because it's the right thing to do.

Other companies are working hard to get their customers to spend as much as possible on their products and services. But that's the big difference between being a customer of a for-profit business and being a member-owner of a not-for-profit cooperative like VEC.



Paige Finnell  
Energy Services Specialist

There are several ways to get started in the process. You can visit our website at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org) or phone me at 423-334-7053. One of VEC's qualified contractors can also request an eScore for you.

You have the power to take charge of your energy use and your electricity bill. And VEC is here to help you.

SmartHub is Your New Home for  
Web-Based Account Management

Today's customers want convenient account access, multiple ways to communicate with their electricity provider, and detailed information about their electricity use. VEC is delivering with SmartHub.

With the start of the new year, VEC is introducing a new, upgraded version of VE-Bill – VEC's electronic payment service. Powered by SmartHub®, VE-Bill allows you to manage all aspects of your VEC account securely from your computer, tablet, or smart phone.

With the new service you can:

- Pay your bill
- Set recurring payments
- Report outages
- View billing history
- Receive text and/or email alerts
- View usage history by the year, month, week, day, and even hourly
- Contact VEC
- Connect with VEC on social media



Manage your VEC account anywhere, anytime using your mobile device. The SmartHub app is available FREE for your smart phone and tablet (iPhone, iPad, or Android device). Simply look for SmartHub in the Apple Store® or in the Android® Market, or scan the QR code for your device, provided above.

If you've used VE-Bill before, SmartHub will automatically recognize your existing username and password. If you've never used VE-Bill before, SmartHub is the place to start. Visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org) and click the link to sign up as a new user.

You can choose to continue receiving a paper bill and your *Powerlines* newsletter as usual or you can opt for VEC's new paperless billing option. You can also continue to make payments by other available payment options. With so many options available, VEC members can customize their SmartHub settings to create a unique user experience that meets individual needs and preferences.

Creating a SmartHub account takes less than three minutes. Enter your profile information, choose Volunteer Energy Cooperative as your provider, and you're ready to begin.

SmartHub provides a safe and secure environment for bill payments, two-way communications with VEC, and account management.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment  
Effective December 1, 2014

2.136¢



For the most current FCA information, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org)  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.