

VECcustomers Share Board Welcomes New Members

After bidding farewell to three long-serving members whose terms expired, the VECcustomers Share board of directors recently welcomed new members.



Dana Burgner

Dana Burgner serves as the Bradley County representative to the VECcustomers Share board and replaces Harold Reno. He is retired from Magic Chef where he served as the parts warehouse manager. He has served as a Bradley County Election Commissioner since 2006 and is on the Board of Directors for Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Company. He is president of the McDonald Ruritan and Chairman of the McDonald Community Center. He is also a former chairperson of the Bradley Fire and Rescue board.



Gary Gilmore

Gary Gilmore, who replaced Pete Williams, represents Bledsoe and Rhea Counties on the VECcustomers Share board. He is the husband of Tijuana Gilmore and the father of Angela Moffett and Phillip Gilmore. He was a forester for Bowater Southern Paper Corporation for 35 years. He is a member of the Spring City United Methodist Church.



Jerry Mayo

Jerry Mayo is the newest Cumberland County East VECcustomers Share board member and replaces Holly Neal. He is the husband of Patricia Mayo; they have four children, ten grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He is a retired United Methodist minister and served as district superintendent of the Pulaski district. He has served on several conference boards and committees and was a recipient of the Denman Evangelism Award.

VECcustomers Share board members serve as volunteers and receive no monetary compensation for their service. In a typical month, fifty to sixty applications are submitted and reviewed. Funds for this program come from VEC members who agree to have their electric bills rounded to the next highest dollar. Since the program began in 2001, over \$5.7 million has been awarded to local community organizations in VEC's 17-county service area.

VEC College Scholarship Deadline is March 4th

Volunteer Energy Cooperative 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 2016.

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 2016 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.

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 4, 2016.

2016 The Volunteer Energy Cooperative Lillard-Shadow Scholarship Program

The Scholarship
Willis A. Shadow was the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Agent for Meigs County in 1933. He saw the great potential in bringing electricity to the Decatur/Meigs County area. His leadership helped to create Meigs County Power Association, the organization that would become the Meigs County Electric Membership Corporation and ultimately, Volunteer Energy Cooperative. J.W. Lillard's roots ran deep in the county; he lived and practiced law in Decatur for many years. As a gift to the community he loved, Mr. Lillard volunteered his time and expertise to assist Mr. Shadow in his efforts. Mr. Lillard was the cooperative's first president, providing the necessary consistency of leadership for the first seven years. Because of their vision and commitment to the community, Mr. Shadow and Mr. Lillard were instrumental in improving the lives and livelihood of thousands of residents through electric power. This scholarship honors the community spirit of Willis A. Shadow and J. W. Lillard.

Because of this history, Volunteer Energy Cooperative is committed to the strength of individuals and organizations in its service area and recognizes the importance of volunteerism and community activities to a young person's growth. This scholarship program will reward students who have "given back" to their communities by assisting the students with college costs.

A total of four awards of \$500 per semester will be distributed for Fall Semester 2016. These awards are renewable for up to four semesters, with a \$2,000 maximum award per student. To receive each semester's award, the student must be a declared major in one of the qualified areas (see Criteria below) and maintain a GPA of at least 2.5. (The student is responsible for submitting copies of grades to VEC each semester to verify continuation of the awards.) Checks will be made payable jointly to the student and the college and will be mailed directly to each recipient's college. The award may be applied to tuition, fees, books, and/or living expenses.

One \$500-per-semester scholarship will be awarded from each of the Volunteer Energy Cooperative service areas. Qualifying areas are:
Jamestown Area: Pickett County High School, York Institute, Clarkrange High School
Crossville Area: Cumberland County High School, Monterey High School, Stone Memorial High School
Decatur Area: Rhea County High School, Midway High School, Meigs County High School, McMinn County High School, McMinn Central High School
Cleveland Area: Bradley Central High School, Cleveland High School, Walker Valley High School, Chattanooga Central High School, Polk County High School, Ooltewah High School
 (Students from schools other than those listed may also be eligible for scholarship awards.)

The Criteria

- Graduating high school seniors at qualifying schools whose parents or guardians are electric customers of Volunteer Energy Cooperative are eligible to apply. (Dependents of Volunteer Energy Cooperative employees, directors, or dependents of TVA employees are not eligible for this award.)
- Qualified applicants must have a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale through the Fall Semester of his/her senior year and have valid ACT/SAT scores.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Rody Blevins, President/CEO. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. 20250. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Speaking for Our Members

By Rody Blevins, President/CEO



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

As you read this issue of *Powerlines*, state and federal lawmakers are preparing to begin their new sessions. As we do each year, we will visit our legislators and discuss the issues that affect the member-owners of Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Our goal is to ensure that rates stay low and that our operations are not burdened with unnecessary and expensive legislation that may prove costly and arduous.

We are blessed with a group of legislators who have always been very supportive of electric cooperatives and our mission. This is a result not only of the close working relationship that we enjoy with them, but also because members like you who communicate with them so that they can keep their fingers on the pulse of the way their constituents want them to vote. Nothing is more effective at influencing legislation than an email or phone call from a concerned citizen. Your voice really is important to these lawmakers.

Each legislative session brings surprises, but as we expect discussion on several topics that are important to our members. A few of these are:

- **EPA Regulations** – If the regulations remain as currently written, our members are likely to be burdened with the high cost of the Clean Energy Act for years to come. We support a clean environment, but propose a common sense, methodical approach that allows for improvements to be made in a systematic way that allows us to manage the increased costs.
- **Pole Attachment Fees** – VEC and the other electric utilities install and maintain hundreds of thousands of poles on their systems. Other utilities such as telephone and cable pay a fee to attach to these poles. We feel that the current fees charged adequately reimburse us for the cost of installing and maintaining these poles. Any reduction in these fees would be a cost burden for our membership.
- **Rural Broadband Access** – While this is not a topic that directly affects cooperatives, state law prohibits electric cooperatives from offering broadband internet services and also does not allow municipal electric utilities to provide these services outside of the footprint of their electric service area. This leaves thousands of Tennessee residents without access to broadband internet service. There promises to be a vigorous debate this year to change this restriction and allow service to be provided by electric providers who have fiber and poles that could expand internet access to rural areas.

As the year progresses, other issues are sure to emerge. Rest assured that we are watching and waiting – committed to be the voice for the member-owners of Volunteer Energy.



The VECustomers Share program funded \$31,400 in community service grants in November. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.4 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 Bill Womac (center) presents a grant check to Janet Drope (left) and Gail Wilcoxon (right) from People Helping People.

Organizations receiving grants in November

Operation REACH (Roane Enriches Another Child's Holiday)	\$2,500	Youth Achievement Foundation, Inc.	\$700
Pickett County Lady Bobcats Support Group	\$2,000	American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 90	\$700
Kiwanis Club of Spring City	\$1,600	MARA Medical Ministry	\$650
McMinn County Foster Care Association	\$1,540	Pleasant Hill Elementary FCCLA	\$600
Brown Middle School PTO	\$1,300	Crossville Quilt of Valor Quilters	\$550
Muddy Pond Eastern Star	\$1,000	American Cancer Society - McMinn County	\$500
Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,000	Eagle Dugout Club	\$500
Ooltawah High School Bank Boosters	\$1,000	Benton Elementary Jr. Beta Club	\$500
Cleveland/Bradley Chamber Foundation	\$1,000	Polk County High School Soccer Booster Club	\$500
Alvin C. York Institute JROTC	\$1,000	Rhea County High School Soccer Boosters	\$500
SpiritHorse Therapeutic Riding at Black Fox	\$1,000	Plateau Worship and Ministry Center	\$500
Monterey Toys for Children	\$1,000	Meigs Middle/High School Concert Choir Booster Club	\$500
West Polk Empty Stocking	\$875	Mayland Senior Center	\$500
Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$875	Meigs County Lions Club	\$500
Cumberland County High School Bowling Booster Club	\$800	Adult and Family Education of McMinn County	\$460
Cumberland Adult Reading Council	\$800	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$400
Monterey Historical Depo Society	\$750	Lake Tansi Hospice Auxiliary	\$400
Byrdstown Angel Tree Program	\$750	Midway High School Bass Club	\$350
Meigs County Ministries	\$750	Meigs Lodge 213 F&AM	\$300
		Etowah Arts Commission	\$250

The 12 Days of Holiday Safety

By Paige Finnell



The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is upon us – we want to help you make this winter a safe one. It's as easy as 1,2,3 to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips.

Tackle one of these a day and you're well on your way to keeping you and your family safe in the New Year.

DAY



What's that noise?

Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and make sure everyone is aware of the sound emitted by these devices. Multiple alarms should be placed throughout the home and on every level.

DAY



Escape Route:

Go over the escape route with your family and any guest that might be staying at your home during the holiday season.

DAY



What a shocker?

Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage. Cracked, loose or bare wires may cause a serious shock or can start a fire. Before you put these away after the holidays, give them another quick look.

DAY



Two's company, three's a crowd.

Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices. Overloading electrical outlets is a common cause of holiday fires.

DAY



Is it working?

Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to make sure they are protecting you.

DAY



Look out below.

Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas. When using extension cords outside make sure they are marked for outdoor use.

DAY



Ouch!

Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children. Children are always curious and are prone to investigating items by putting them in their mouth.

DAY



Thirsty?

Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh green tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. Place your tree at least three feet away from all heat sources.

DAY



Make a wish!

Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed. Use battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles whenever possible. Almost half of home decoration fires are caused by traditional candles, according to the National Fire Protection Association

DAY



Nice and Warm.

Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn – decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.

DAY



Can't touch this!

Consider installing tamper-resistant outlet receptacles. Cover any unused extension cords with plastic caps to prevent children from inserting objects into the slots and coming in contact with the live circuit.

DAY



Hot Stuff!

Keep children away from cooking areas – at least 3 feet: use back burners on your stove and turn pot handles in a direction so little hands can't reach them. Once your holiday meal is complete, double check to make sure the stove and oven are off.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday season!



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective December 1, 2015

2.088¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer