

Colder Weather is Coming – Tips from a DIY-er

By Kristy Kelly

As an average do-it-yourself (DIY-er), I am always looking for areas in my home that need improvements which will make it more energy efficient. Often times, some of the easiest and most affordable areas to save money are easily overlooked.

You might have caulked around those windows 10 plus years ago when they were first installed, but over time the caulking cracks and leaks develop. Did you know that the air coming in from all these little cracks in a home is like leaving a window open all year long?

Weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors are small projects that can have a big impact on how much energy and money you can save throughout the year. A DIY-er of any skill level can tackle these easy improvements. I suggest wearing gloves when working with caulk or foam.

Attic insulation can be visualized as a hat. Think of a house wearing a comfortable toboggan verses a home without proper insulation that lets cold air seep into the living space in the winter and hot air in the summer. Insulation property is stated as an “R-value”, the measure of resistance to heat flow. The higher R-value, the less air can flow through. Insulation with an R-value of R38 is recommended for attics.

Insulation and air sealing keep your home comfortable year-round while also lowering your utility bills. Heating and cooling costs make up nearly 50% of your monthly energy bill; the lack of insulation and several air leaks will add to your home energy costs. Additional attic insulation might be needed to maintain the proper R-value.

Have your heating system inspected, cleaned and tuned annually. A well maintained system runs more efficiently and requires fewer repairs. Replace air filters monthly. Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy use. Check registers and ducts for blockages and/or leaks. Leaky ductwork is one of the biggest energy wasters in a home; cracks or breaks should be sealed with duct mastic or foil backed tape. (Important note: Duct tape is not for ducts!) While some DIY-ers can tackle duct repair, others should seek a professional to handle this for them.

Adjust your thermostat. It is recommended to keep the indoor temperature set at 68 degrees in the winter while you are at home and setting it back no more than 5 degrees while you are away. Many people are now using programmable thermostats to pre-program these settings. You can personalize the thermostat so that the perfect temperature is set when you are home, and adjusts while you are away, effectively saving you money.

When projects become more than you can handle as a DIY project, you need a qualified contractor to fall back on. VEC & TVA are here to help. We are happy to assist you in making these energy saving improvements to your home. Cash rebates are available to customers who make energy saving improvements through our eScore program.

What is eScore? eScore is a system that calculates the energy efficiency of existing homes and produces a rating for each home between 1 and 10. This rating is based on existing HVAC systems,

(continued from page 5)

insulation, ductwork, and other items. A homeowner can improve his/her eScore by upgrading items with an ultimate goal of achieving an eScore of 10. Customers can register for eScore at www.vec.org.

Heat pump financing is also available to customers. TVA offers a rate of 6% financing to customers who install an energy efficient heat pump; subject to credit approval. Contact your local VEC customer service center for a loan application or apply over the phone by calling Kristy Kelly at extension 7055.

Other energy saving tidbits:

- Set your hot water heater at 120 degrees
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact florescent or LED light bulbs
- Only wash full loads when using your dishwasher and clothes washer and dryer
- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Look for home or office electronic products with the ENERGY STAR® label when you shop. Many electronics use energy even when they're “off” to power continuous features like clock displays or remote controls.
- Seal gaps in floors and walls around pipes and electrical wiring, plumbing penetrations, gaps around chimneys.
- Install aerating, low-flow faucets and showerheads
- Fix any leaky faucets – one drop per second can add up to 165 gallons a month
- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label when replacing large or small appliances
- Use power strips for home electronics and turn off power strips when equipment is not in use
- Replace worn-out seals on your refrigerator and freezer
- Reduce hot water use by taking shorter showers and using cold water for the rinse cycle in your washer
- Turn off lights, televisions and other appliances when not in use
- Clean refrigerator coils regularly to keep compressor running efficiently
- Set the refrigerator temperature at 36° to 39° F and freezer at 0° to 5° F
- Use the microwave when possible – it cooks faster and doesn't create as much heat as a stove burner
- Air-dry dishes instead of using the dishwasher's heat drying option



FUN TIME Had by All at the VEC Annual Meeting!

The Volunteer Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, October 3rd. Here are some images from the events.



(more on page 3)

Mark your calendars now for VEC's next annual meeting: October 1, 2016!

The VECustomers Share program funded \$34,500 in community service grants in October. 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.



Bradley County VECustomers Share Board member Dana Burgner presents a grant check award to Mary Hixson for Creating Christmas Memories.

Organizations receiving grants in October

Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Department	\$1,998	Central Outreach Center (COC) - Upward Basketball	\$650
Fentress County Children's Center	\$1,750	Cumberland County High School Marching Band	\$600
Midway Youth Development	\$1,700	Ocoee Outreach	\$600
Manna House Ministries	\$1,406	Junior Beta Club - Glenn L. Martin Elementary School	\$600
Fairfield Glade Fire Department	\$1,250	Junior Cross County Team	\$600
Positive Behavior Support Team	\$1,250	Vine Ridge MBC - 5 Loaves Food Pantry	\$550
Christ's Legacy Academy Science Olympiad	\$1,125	Lions Club - Cleveland	\$550
Rogers Creek Youth Football & Cheerleading	\$1,125	Christmas on the Mountain	\$500
People Helping People	\$1,075	American Legion Auxiliary Unit 81	\$500
"FunDay"	\$1,075	Big Spring Baptist Church Crisis Closet	\$450
Maple Grove Community Seniors	\$1,002	Boys and Girls Club of Cleveland	\$450
Meigs County High School Spanish Club	\$1,000	America Legion Post 203	\$350
Mrs. Barber and Mrs. Billbrey's 3-D Printing Club	\$1,000	Monterey Dinner Theater	\$300
Decatur Civitan Club	\$950	Homestead Elementary FCCLA	\$300
Polk County High School Volleyball Club	\$850	Monterey Quarterback Club	\$300
Jr. High Math Club - Pickett County K-8	\$844	Health Occupations Students of America - Meigs High School	\$300
Midway Quarterback Club	\$800	Wolf Creek Fire Association (WCFA)	\$300
Cherokee Beekeepers Association	\$750	Hopewell Elementary PTO	\$250
Meigs County Quest for Success		Spring City Volunteer Fire Department	\$250
Football Boosters	\$750	Creative Story Project dba The Santa Project	\$200
Dorton Family & Community Education Club	\$750	Music Club of Wilson Elementary School	\$200
Hope in Christ Fellowship - Journey Youth Group	\$750	Wilson Athletic Booster Club	\$200
Rhea County Health Council - Give a Kid a Chance/Stuff the Bus	\$725	Kids on the Rise	\$150
Kiwanis Club of Spring City	\$725		
VFW Post 6277	\$700		

Take a home energy self audit *before December 31, 2015* and receive a **FREE Energy Kit** and a **\$10 Home Depot Gift Card !!**

Find the audit by visiting:
<https://selfaudit.2escore.com>

(continued from page 1)



A True Cooperative Effort at Our Cooperative

As I write this column, VEC has just completed one of the largest system conversion projects ever done at one time on the VEC system at our Grimsley substation in Fentress County. Service delivery was switched from 12 kilovolts to 25 kilovolts at this location. Over 850 transformers in the Grimsley and Clarkrange areas and associated power lines were updated to the higher voltage. This results in doubling of our distribution line capacity, lowers line losses we pay to TVA, and improves voltage to our members across the area.

In addition to the system conversion, at the same time we put into service the new Grimsley Substation and made repairs to the 69kV transmission lines feeding the Grimsley Substation. This doubles the capacity of the Grimsley Substation and should help us provide reliable service to this area for years to come.



VEC crews work to complete the Grimsley substation conversion.

This was a true system-wide VEC effort to complete this work. From the engineering design, materials procurement, substation work, distribution line work, coordination from operations to the crews from every office of VEC for the final switch over. The project went well and the crews did a good job of completing the final work.

I appreciate everyone's efforts on this important project, especially the workers' commitment to safety and a minimal disruption of service to our members.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

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

2.247¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer

