

We Salute Our Qualified Contractors

The following companies have met the TVA and VEC requirements necessary to be part of the TVA Quality Contractor Network. We are proud that they are our partners!

To see how you may qualify to receive eScore™ rebates for energy efficiency improvements, call one of these contractors today or contact Paige (ext. 7053) or Kristy (ext. 7055) by calling your local Volunteer Energy Cooperative customer service center.

- A-Team Heating & Cooling - Jamestown
 - Action Heating & Cooling - Crossville
 - Advantage Windows and Doors - Chattanooga
 - Air Comfort - Ringgold, GA
 - Air Experts - Cookeville
 - All About Heating & Air - Cleveland
 - American Best Choice Windows - Knoxville
 - American Home - Knoxville
 - C & E Heating & Air Conditioning - Athens
 - Central City - Kingston
 - Cleveland Aluminum - Cleveland
 - Comfort Zone Insulation - Crossville
 - CRS Exteriors (Chattanooga, Knoxville)
 - Dale's Heating and Air - Ooltewah
 - Davis Heating & Air Conditioning - Cleveland
 - Ductz of Maryville - Riceville
 - Elrod's Insulating - Sparta
 - Energy Miser/Volunteer Rid-A-Pest - Cleveland
 - Fentress Insulation - Jamestown
 - Goodman Electrical Services - Decatur
 - Hatley's Heating and Air - Madisonville
 - Hewitt Heat and Air - Cleveland
 - Hilltop Insulating, Heating & Air - Pikeville
 - Hiwassee Chase/Carter Heating & Air - Cleveland
 - Hullco - Chattanooga
 - Insulation Unlimited - Chattanooga
- J & M Construction/Insulation - Crossville
 - Jackson Heating & Cooling - Cookeville
 - Keith Window Company - Knoxville
 - Kidd Insulation - Georgetown
 - Kingston Scandlyn Lumber - Kingston
 - Madaris Siding and Windows - Ringgold, GA
 - Malone Heating and Air - Chattanooga
 - Manning Windows - Sevierville
 - McCulley Siding & Windows - Crossville
 - Mechanical Systems - Charleston
 - Newman's Heating and Air - Wildwood, GA
 - Petrie Heating & Cooling - Cookeville
 - Reliable Heating & Air Conditioning - Chattanooga
 - Rheaco Service - Dayton
 - Sgt. Paul Heating and Air - Sweetwater
 - Smith Insulation - Cookeville
 - Sparta Heating & Air - Sparta
 - Springdale Heating & Air Conditioning - Cleveland
 - Sterling Window Systems - Knoxville
 - Superior Home Improvements - Spring City
 - Turner Refrigeration - Pikeville
 - Valley Heating & Air - Sweetwater
 - Window Depot - Chattanooga
 - Window Works (Chattanooga, Knoxville)
 - Window World (Chattanooga, Knoxville, Murfreesboro)



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.

One Year Ago - February 2015

Volunteer Energy Cooperative customers dealt with one of the most devastating ice storms in recent memory. At one point, 40,000 VEC customers were without power and four substations were idled. The storm and its aftermath made national headlines. Community support and hard-working VEC employees, contract crews, and neighboring utilities pulled together and the lights were on to all customers within nine days.



POWERLINES

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Newsletter

MAR 2016

Keeping VEC's Grid Safe

By Rody Blevins, VEC President/CEO

Although electrification of America is a relatively recent occurrence, today we have become reliant on electric power to perform even the smallest tasks. And we miss it when it's gone. We are reminded of how important that electricity is to us when power is interrupted, even for a short period of time.

With the recent worldwide and domestic tragedies and a new book published on the subject of vulnerability of the national power grid, I have chosen to take some time to discuss measures we have taken to ensure that VEC does not fall victim to attacks.

The electric utility industry is no stranger to being prepared in the event of a crisis. Threats to the power grid can come from a variety of sources. By far, the largest and most menacing threat to any power grid comes from weather. The good news is that the power industry as a whole is very familiar with protecting itself from the unseen and unpredictable dangers of Mother Nature, and mounting a Herculean effort of recovery when the inevitable happens.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative, along with other distributors of TVA power, has an Emergency Response Plan in place that details steps to be taken in various types of emergencies. This provides a step by step, systematic approach to both isolated and more widespread events. The plan is updated periodically as part of our normal business operations.

Our Dispatch Control Center was designed and built to withstand tornadic winds, in case that a natural weather event occurs that disrupts the VEC power grid. Back up communications systems are in place to provide a means to connect with crews in the field if the fiber network or telephone system is damaged.



Rody Blevins President/CEO Volunteer Energy Cooperative

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The VECustomers Share program funded \$31,700 in community service grants in January. 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.



VECustomers Share Board members present a grant check to Gus Gocella, Cumberland County - Honor Air Knoxville Coordinator.

Organizations receiving grants in January

Pickett County Student Health Council	\$2,000	American Red Cross of SE Tennessee	
Grace & Mercy Ministries	\$1,500	- Hamilton County	\$500
Midway High School Band Boosters	\$1,500	American Red Cross of SE Tennessee	
York Institute Bowling Teams	\$1,500	- Bledsoe County	\$500
Fair Park Senior Center	\$1,500	Ocoee Theatre Guild	\$500
Mountain First Responders	\$1,450	Meigs County High School Band Booster Club	\$500
Foster Adoptive Parent Association	\$1,350	Frazier Elementary Tremont Booster Club	\$500
Friends of Cumberland Mountain State Park	\$1,250	Spring City Middle - 8th Grade Washington	
Jamestown Bulldog 10U Baseball	\$1,250	DC Boosters	\$500
American Red Cross of SE Tennessee		Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)	\$500
- Polk County	\$1,200	Byrdstown Senior Center	\$500
Polk County Baptist Food Bank	\$1,150	Bon Air Mountain Historical Society and Museum	\$500
American Red Cross of SE Tennessee		Meigs County Health Council	\$500
- McMinn County	\$1,000	Rhea County Girls Basketball Booster Club	\$500
American Red Cross of SE Tennessee		Birchwood Senior Neighbors	\$500
- Bradley County	\$1,000	Meigs County High School Baseball Booster Club	\$450
Disabled American Vets Chapter 25	\$1,000	South Polk Elementary Math Club	\$300
Happy Hearts Seniors	\$850	Hiwassee Long Beards Chapter - National	
Midway Middle School Waves Serve	\$800	Wild Turkey Federation	\$250
Ooltewah Lady Owls Softball Boosters	\$750	Pine Grove Volunteer Fire District	\$250
Kids for Christ Meadowview Baptist Church	\$750	CSW Foundation	\$200
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6277	\$750	American Red Cross of SE Tennessee	
Meigs County Ministries	\$600	- Meigs County	\$200
American Red Cross of SE Tennessee		Stone Elementary FFA	\$200
- Rhea County	\$500	Roane County Knights Lacrosse	\$200

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Cyber security is another area of concern for the electric industry. This topic has been discussed at industry conferences for several years. VEC has two main software platforms: one for our billing and accounting system and another for our substation system control and monitoring. While no system can guarantee absolute security, we have gone to great lengths to minimize the chance of our systems being compromised. We recently installed new firewall devices for our systems and are constantly upgrading our system software protection. Regular upgrades are performed that meet the newest requirements for security. Our substations are designed with manual override capabilities that can be utilized if needed.

No system is guaranteed to be failsafe, but VEC has a number of strong safeguards in place to ensure a constant supply of power is available to our member-owners.

With all our efforts it is impossible for us to say our systems cannot be compromised. We will continue to take this issue seriously and look for opportunities to improve our systems to minimize our risk and ensure that a constant and consistent supply of power is available to our member-owners.



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 pay to heat water you never use.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative and TVA offer a \$30 electric bill credit to customers who install qualifying electric water heaters. Details are available by searching "water heater rebate" on our website: www.vec.org.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment

Effective February 1, 2016

1.815¢

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



Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer