

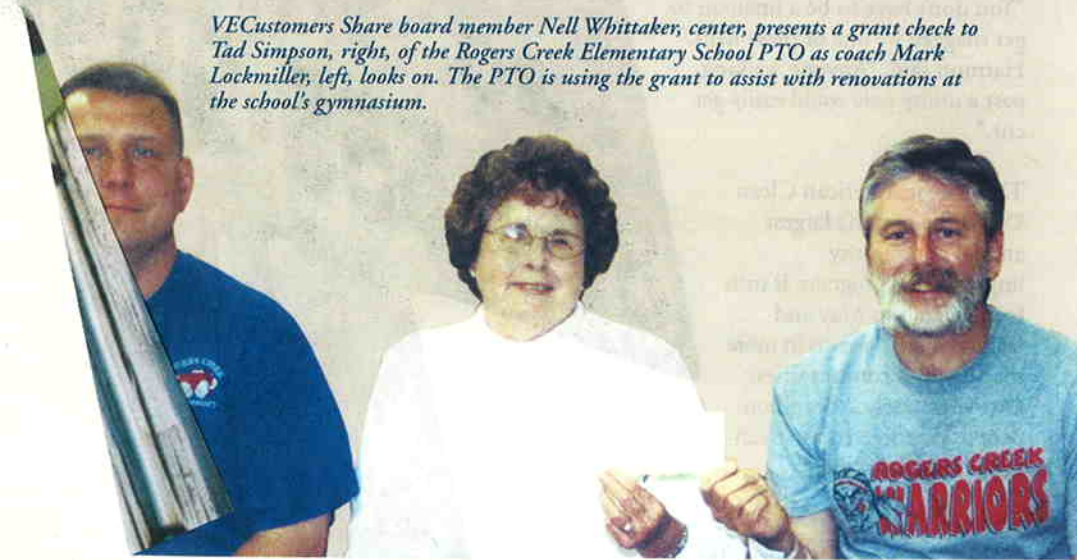


Grants totaling \$34,400 were awarded by the VECustomers Share board of directors in March 2003. VECustomers Share is a non-profit, tax exempt charitable organization covering VEC's 17-county service area. The foundation's funds are derived from Volunteer Energy Cooperative members who allow their electric bills to be rounded up to the nearest \$1. The additional amount goes into the VECustomers Share fund, which is administered by the foundation's board of directors whose 12 members serve as volunteers.

VECustomers Share contributions average 50 cents per month or \$6 per year for each participating residential customer. Approximately 80 percent of VEC's customers are donating to the program. The deadline for grant applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contact Patty Hurley, manager of member services, at 423-334-7050.

Shiloh Youth Center, Inc.	\$ 1,800.00
Athens Civitan Club	1,000.00
McMinn Area Cancer Relief Fund	640.00
Advent Home Youth Services, Inc.	500.00
Claxton Community Volunteer Emergency Services	540.00
Full Circle Pregnancy Resources	500.00
McMinn Centennial Celebration Committee	500.00
Rogers Creek Elementary School PTO	680.00
Rhea County Rescue Squad	640.00
Spring City Dixie Youth	1,800.00
Spring City Quarterback Club	640.00
Charleston Elementary School PTO	770.00
East Cleveland Early Childhood Center	770.00
Ocoee Outreach of the Bradley County Baptist Association	770.00
Walker Valley High School Football Booster Club	770.00
McDonald Cemetery Association	2,090.00
Ooltewah High School Soccer Booster Club	640.00
Tri-State Resource and Advocacy Corp., Inc.	350.00
Camp Agape	770.00
Linsdale Community Services	770.00
Polk County Girls Softball	770.00
Polk Northwest Fire Station Number Five	770.00
Luminary United Methodist Church Boy Scout Troop 304	850.00
Midway Athletic Club	850.00
Midway Quarterback Club	530.00
South Roane County Volunteer Fire Department	850.00
Bread of Life Rescue Mission	1,800.00
Cumberland County Family Shelter	640.00
Neighbors Together	1,800.00
Stone Elementary School PTO Enrichment	640.00
Clarkrange Volunteer Fire Department	640.00
Cumberland G.A.P. Mission	1,800.00
Delta Kappa Gamma	640.00
Burks Panthers Softball Club	640.00
Mineral Springs Hunger Relief Ministry	640.00
Monterey Family, Community, Education	1,800.00
Byrdstown AAU Basketball "Fame Seekers"	1,800.00

VECustomers Share board member Nell Whittaker, center, presents a grant check to Tad Simpson, right, of the Rogers Creek Elementary School PTO as coach Mark Lockmiller, left, looks on. The PTO is using the grant to assist with renovations at the school's gymnasium.



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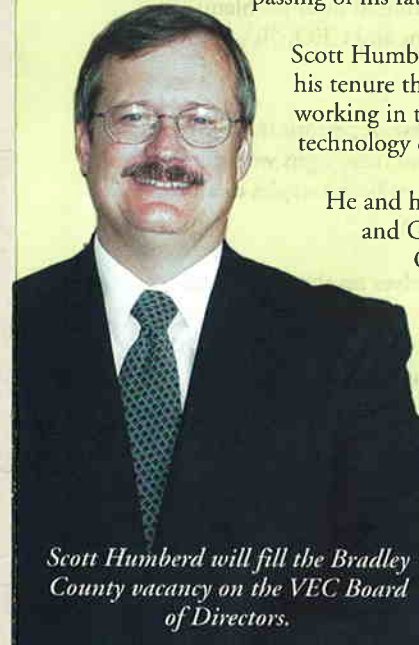
vec@vec.org

Powerlines is produced by the Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Member Services Department as a service to customers. Comments and suggestions can be e-mailed to vec@vec.org or mailed to VEC Member Services Department, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322.

VEC Board Names Scott Humberd to Fill Vacancy

Scott Humberd, a lifelong Bradley County resident and technology director of the Bradley County School System has been appointed to the Volunteer Energy Cooperative Board of Directors.

Humberd fills the Bradley County director position on the board that was vacated with the passing of his father, Bill Humberd, in January.



Scott Humberd will fill the Bradley County vacancy on the VEC Board of Directors.

Scott Humberd has been with Bradley County Schools for 26 years and his tenure there includes service as a junior high school biology teacher, working in the attendance division and he currently serves as the system's technology director.

He and his wife of 25 years, Debbie, have three children, Jason, Sarah and Geoffrey and are members of Broad Street United Methodist Church. Humberd also serves as an ensign with the United States Navy Sea Cadet Corps and is vice president of the board of directors for the Cleveland-Bradley County Teachers Federal Credit Union.

Bill Buchanan, VEC president and CEO, said Humberd will be a valuable asset to the cooperative.

"Bill's family remains in our thoughts and prayers," Buchanan said. "We miss the leadership and fellowship he offered. We are also eager to begin working with Scott Humberd and look forward to his insights, directions and guidance."

ROW Spraying Schedule

VEC's right-of-way spraying program will begin early in July according to Jim Runyan, VEC's vegetation control specialist. Runyan, a certified arborist, said the spraying is necessary to help prevent extended power outages caused by falling trees and to assist with quick power restorations by improving access for service crews.

"We spray in July and August because those months are when growth is most active," Runyan said. "We use the herbicides that are rated the safest and we use them in low concentrations."

Runyan said the herbicides work on woody growth without affecting flowers and grass. The herbicides VEC will be using have been tested and deemed harmless to humans and animals and copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets for each herbicide are available at VEC service centers.

2003 Summer ROW Spraying Schedule

July • Crossville Service Area

White County/Crossville area. Ozone/Hwy. 70 east

July • Cleveland Service Area

Hwy. 11, Moore Road, Hwy. 60. West Charleston-Lower River Road. Snow Hill – Harrison Bay – Birchwood Pike. Polk County – Linsdale Community

August • Crossville Service Area

Crab Orchard-Meridian-Mayland-Grimmsley. Ridge Road – Muddy Pond Community

August • Decatur Service Area

Rhea County – Yellow Creek and Wolf Creek areas.

Warm Weather Scams

By Bill Buchanan, President/CEO



Warmer weather is finally here. We are preparing for summer vacations, planting and tending gardens, attending sporting events, and enjoying the outdoors. As we move into a new season, I am dedicating my column this month to highlighting a few reminders from your cooperative.

Unfortunately, each year the warm temperatures bring out scam artists. We have already had reports of criminals posing as VEC employees to take advantage of unsuspecting victims and cheat them out of money.

We take extra precautions to ensure that our VEC personnel are easily identified. Knowing our practices will keep you and your family safe from scams.

- VEC line crews can be identified by our logos on uniforms, vehicles, and hardhats.
- Each VEC employee is issued an identification badge with his or her photograph that is worn on the shirt or blouse.
- Other than normal collections for overdue bills, VEC employees NEVER request money be paid on site for work being preformed on lines or service equipment.

If you have any doubts about whether or not a person is a VEC employee, feel free to call your local customer service center. It is definitely better to be safe than sorry!

Construction and Maintenance Activities

This is the time of year when VEC construction crews and contractors are most active. The work that they do in changing out poles and replacing the conductor and transformers will improve service reliability when bad weather hits. These crews are performing work that will alleviate potential problems and prevent future outages. Please be mindful that these crews are working and watch for them along the roadways as you travel.



Students Win Washington, D.C. Trip in VEC Short Story Contest

What would Benjamin Franklin think if he could see what his early experiments with electricity have helped produce?

From a random lightning strike to an extensive grid of reliable power that we've all come to depend on, electric power has come a long way since Franklin's day.

That's what Walker Valley High School junior Jackie Taylor thought and her short story based on that premise earned a first place finish in this year's Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) short story contest.

Taylor garnered an all-expense paid week in Washington, D.C. for herself and for her English teacher, Mrs. Sarah Frost. Her short story will also be judged against other top entrants around the state with the top three statewide winners earning a \$2,000, a \$1,000 or a \$500 scholarship.

VEC, in conjunction with the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) annually sponsors the contest. Junior English students at four high schools in VEC's 17-county service area were invited to write short stories of no more than 900 words titled, "Electric Cooperatives: Your Hometown Power."

In order to guarantee that students from each school have a chance to vie for one of the four all-expense paid Washington, D.C. trips, VEC rotates schools each year.

This year's participants were from McMinn County High School, Clarkrange High School, Rhea County High School and Walker Valley High School.

Teachers selected five short stories each from their school and forwarded those to a separate panel of judges who selected an overall winner as well as winners from each school.

About 150 students from across the state and 1,400 from around the country, all sponsored by electric cooperatives, will converge on our nation's capital June 13 through 19. Unfortunately a scheduling conflict will prevent Jackie from making the trip, so junior Whitney Lee will represent Walker Valley High School in Washington.

Clarkrange High School's Kari Jones was her school's winner and will be making the trip.

Kelly Monteen won McMinn County High School's slot on trip but she'll be participating in her Junior Miss Pageant that week so Ashley Thomas, MCHS's runner-up, will make the trip.

Rhea County High School's Tyler Lane won his school's contest but a scheduling conflict will prevent him from making the trip so Cathy Shaver will represent RCHS on the trip.



"Pole Patrol" Targets Treacherous Signs

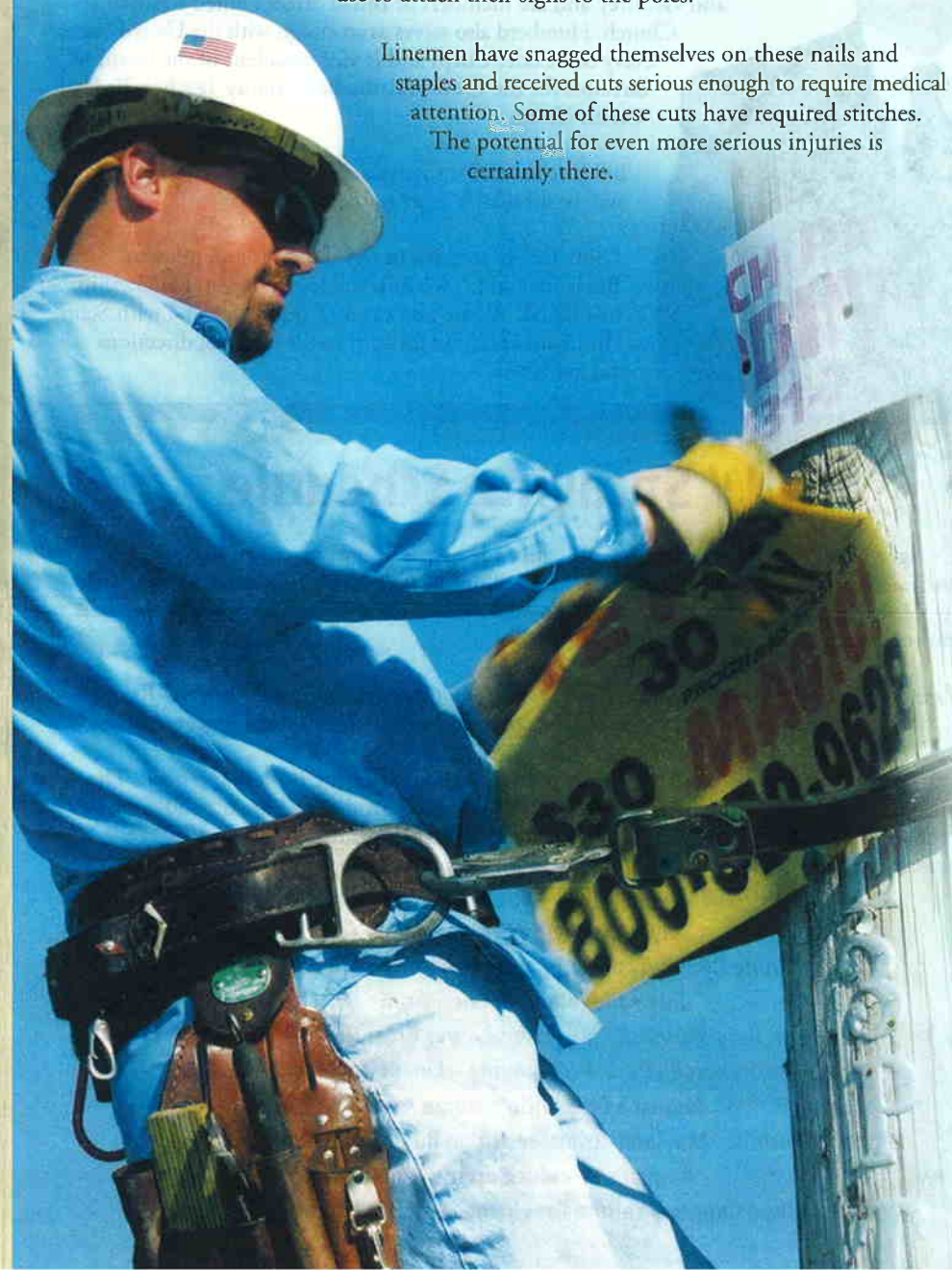
With thousands of volts of electricity above and unforgiving ground below, linemen have plenty of safety concerns to consider when they start climbing a utility pole. Advertising signs and flyers attached to utility poles just make their lives that much more difficult.

That is why Volunteer Energy Cooperative, in conjunction with "Great American Clean Up, Fix Up" week April 21 - 26, had more than 100 employees working to remove these signs throughout VEC's 17-county service area.

The problem goes beyond distracting drivers and contributing to litter problems. "It's not just an eyesore," said Bill Buchanan, VEC president and CEO, "It's a real safety concern."

These signs are a real problem for linemen, who in the course of performing their jobs, must climb these cluttered poles. Trying to maneuver around these signs with climbing gear is tough. Linemen also have to worry about protruding nails and staples that people use to attach their signs to the poles.

Linemen have snagged themselves on these nails and staples and received cuts serious enough to require medical attention. Some of these cuts have required stitches. The potential for even more serious injuries is certainly there.



Linemen are trained to spot hazards, so they have a tremendous interest in getting these poles cleaned up.

Great American Clean Up, Fix Week ran from April 21 - 26. But all of Volunteer Energy Cooperative's outdoor employees worked to remove illegal signs from utility poles from April 21 through May 2. Throughout the two-week period, VEC's "Pole Patrol" removed signs during the course of performing their regular duties. Supervisors also dedicated one-half of one work day for their crews to work exclusively on removing signs.

Not only are the signs a distraction and a safety concern, they are also illegal. State law (TCA 2-19-144) prohibits anyone from placing signs on utility poles unless they have been legally authorized to do so.

Supervisors say they focused VEC's effort on urban areas and high-traffic intersections because these are the places where the signs seem to be most prevalent.

But signs weren't the the only target. "We've seen people mounting birdfeeders, birdhouses and even basketball goals on utility poles," said Steve Harmon, VEC's Decatur area manager. "I've even seen folks use them as fence posts."

Harmon agrees that these obstructions are more than just a nuisance - they are a safety concern.

"It's time consuming for the linemen to have to climb around them," Harmon said. "But more than that, they can be a safety hazard."

Harmon said linemen run the risk of hitting nails and staples with the spikes they wear on their boots to climb the poles. That prevents the spike from digging in the way it is supposed to.

Harmon said he's also worried about the threat these nails and staples pose to the general public.

"You don't have to be a lineman to get snagged by one of these nails," Harmon said. "Anyone walking past a utility pole could easily get cut."

The "Great American Clean Up" is the nation's largest annual community improvement program. It runs from March to May and features 30,000 events in more than 14,000 communities. Last year nearly 2.3 million people volunteered for clean-up projects nationwide.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Jackie Buckner, Cleveland Service Area Manager, left, was on hand to congratulate the overall winner in the 2003 VEC Short Story Contest, Jackie Taylor of Walker Valley High School along with Taylor's English teacher, Sarah Frost, right.