

# POWERLINES

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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](mailto:vec@vec.org) or mailed to VEC Member Services Department, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322.

## Our Other Heroes

by Lola Jackson  
VEC Customer

We hear a lot about our firemen  
And our policemen on patrol.  
But, it seems not much is ever said,  
About our men out on the pole.

While our policemen try to keep the peace,  
And our firemen put out the fires,  
There's another man who risks his life  
Maintaining the electrical wires.

I guess we all take them for granted,  
For we sure do harp and moan.  
When we go to flip that little switch,  
And the light just don't come on.

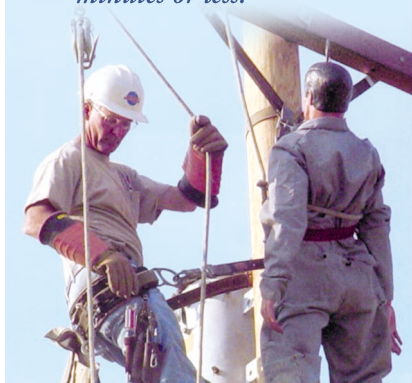
But, I have seen these men out working,  
When the snow was really deep.  
To repair a downed or broken line,  
While most of us are fast asleep.

To never say, "thank you," to these men,  
Would be a sad disgrace.  
Especially when I consider,  
The weather conditions they must face.

They are on the job around the clock,  
So we may stay safe in our homes.  
They work hours without sleeping,  
And the list goes on and on.

So, today while storms are raging,  
I would like to ask the Lord,  
To watch over and keep safe,  
The men on the Power Board.

*VEC linemen recently completed pole-top rescue training and testing. OSHA standards require that all climbers be able to complete a pole-top rescue within four minutes. All VEC linemen completed the test in two minutes or less.*



## Project Deserve

**Project Deserve** allows VEC customers to help elderly, handicapped low income and unemployed customers with their electric bills in emergency situations. You can do this by pledging any amount you choose to be added to your monthly electric bill or by making a onetime contribution.

All funds collected through donations go directly to the emergency fund. No donated funds will be used to administer the program.

Call or drop by your local service center for more details.

## SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY

### to help restore power during outages

Volunteer Energy Cooperative customers may notice some new faces in the neighborhood over the next several months.

Rody Blevins, Department Manager of VEC Engineering and Planning, said employees and contractors will be mapping and recording inventory on the more than 200,000 utility poles across the cooperative's 17-county service area.

*He said all the employees and contractors will be wearing VEC identification badges and they won't need to ask for anything from customers.*

"We are implementing a new mapping software system for the entire VEC service area," Blevins said. "The workers are generating data so we can use Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology to reduce the time it takes to restore power during an outage and to improve engineering and planning efforts."

The workers must stand next to each pole to record its exact location for the GPS system and while they are there, they will also be recording all the equipment such as transformers, cross poles, etc. that are on the pole. Since some of the poles are located on private property, **workers will need to access the property to get to the poles.**

All the information collected will be recorded into a new Geographical Information System. The system will work with outage management software and interactive voice software to determine the exact location and nature of the problem during an outage.

Workers began to gather data in January and 16,000 to 18,000 poles have already been mapped and inventoried. Blevins said that during the summer the process will be accelerated and the entire VEC system should be completed in about 30 months.

During July the workers will be focusing their efforts in Hamilton, Fentress, Cumberland and Bradley counties.



## The Green Power Switch® Invest in the Future

From its very beginnings and continuing today, your electric cooperative revolves around the principle of members helping members, joining together and drawing strength from each other. More than any other type of utility organization, cooperatives are stakeholders in our communities. The citizens they serve are not only customers... they are member-owners, neighbors, and friends.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) has continuously developed programs and services that support this core cooperative principle. From Project Deserve, through which customers contribute to a fund to help those less fortunate with electric bills, to VECustomer Share, which awards grants to assist organizations which improve the lives of the communities they serve, VEC members continue to make giving a priority and continuously make me proud with their support of benevolent programs.

In the next few weeks, VEC will be rolling out another program that gives our members another opportunity to show their concern for the current situation of our communities, and provide resources to ensure a better future for generations to come.

As part of a cooperative effort between TVA and VEC, you will soon have the opportunity to contribute to the *Green Power Switch®* program. Through this program VEC customers can choose to purchase power generated with environmentally-friendly ("green") sources: solar, wind, and methane gases.

Green power is already a reality. Currently, about 5 megawatts of power are being generated in the Tennessee Valley by 3 wind turbines, 11 solar installations, and a landfill methane gas site. Plans are to steadily increase this generation with investment in additional facilities and research over the next few years. By participating in the *Green Power Switch®* program, we can invest in the expansion of these renewable energy sources for the future.

Green power is sold to residential customers in blocks of 150 kilowatt hours; each block adds \$4 to your electric bill. It will appear as an add-on to your bill and does not affect the price you pay for the electricity you use. TVA estimates that investing just \$8 per month (the purchase of 2 blocks of green power) equals the environmental benefits of planting an acre of trees in the Tennessee Valley. Commercial and industrial customers also have the opportunity to participate in the program.

You will receive more information about the *Green Power Switch®* program in July; materials are currently being sent to your VEC customer service center. I want to encourage you to be forward-thinking and consider participating in this program. I plan to purchase one block of green power for each of my four grandchildren. I feel it's one small thing I can do to invest in the improvement of their world.

*By Bill Buchanan, President/CEO*





# Replace your old water heater and get a \$30 rebate!

**Volunteer Energy Cooperative and TVA now offer a \$30 rebate to customers who replace their existing water heaters with more energy efficient electric models!**

Older water heaters can be energy hogs. Right now, if you replace your old electric water heater with a new model, you may qualify for a \$30 rebate. Get details at any VEC customer service center.

**Rebates will be offered if the new water heater:**

- Is a replacement for an existing water heater,
- Has a capacity of at least 40 gallons,
- Has been purchased after 2/15/2003 and installed within 60 days of purchase,
- Meets Department of Energy minimum requirements, AND
- Is installed and operable at the location designated on the account (rental properties must have prior approval from VEC's Member Services Department). The unit must be installed at a location served by VEC and is subject to a validation inspection by VEC and/or TVA.

**To qualify for the cash incentive:**

1. Pick up a Water Heater Rebate Application from any VEC customer service center.
2. Complete the application within 60 days of the water heater purchase.
3. Attach *all* of the following to the application:
  - a. proof of purchase (copy of sales receipt)
  - b. proof that the water heater that was purchased is electric (copy of manufacturer's description of the water heater).

Return the application and documentation to any VEC customer service center. Your rebate will be mailed once validation is complete. Allow 6-8 weeks for processing.

# VEC Customers Share

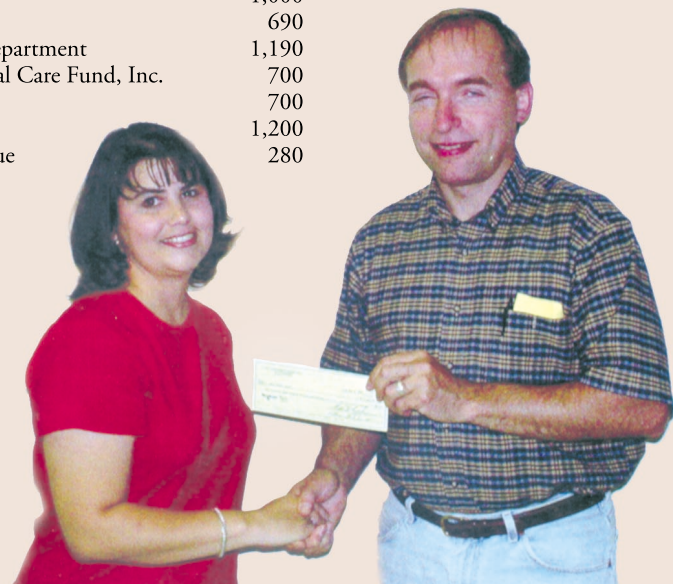
Grants totaling \$31,762 were awarded by the VECustomers Share board of directors in April 2003. VECustomers Share is a non-profit, tax exempt charitable organization covering VEC's 17-county service area. The foundation's funds are derived from Volunteer Energy Cooperative members who allow their electric 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.

VECcustomers 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.

**Organizations receiving grants in April include:**

Meigs County Historical Society	\$1,500
McMinn-Meigs Association of Baptists	690
Riceville Elementary School PTO	345
McMinn Centennial Celebration Committee	345
E.K. Baker PTO	1,500
McMinn County 4-H Clubs	345
McMinn County Historical and Heritage Society	345
Rhea County AYSO	1,500
Rhea County Junior Miss Scholarship Program	230
Senior Lighthouse Center	690
Pine Grove Fire District Association, Inc.	230
Rhea County Arts Council	230
Walker Valley High School Band Boosters	1,500
Ocoee Middle School PTO	460
Cleveland Emergency Shelter, Inc.	460
Traditional Music Resource Center, Inc.	460
Central High School Quarterback Club	305
Tri-State Resource and Advocacy Corp., Inc.	850
Birchwood Senior Neighbors	1,420
Ooltewah High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes	305
Delano Lions Club	690
Polk County Dizzy Dean Baseball	1,500
Northwest Polk Fire Station Number Five	690
Midway Youth League	1,095
National Kidney Foundation of East Tennessee, Inc.	1,462
Midway Athletic Club	1,095
Crossville Housing Authority	690
Plateau Pregnancy Services	690
Hospice of Cumberland County	1,590
New Horizons Adult Day Care	690
Crab Orchard Elementary School PTO	1,600
Neighbors Together	500
Armathwaite Disaster Shelter	1,000
Helping Hands Mission	690
Clarkrange Volunteer Fire Department	1,190
Whittaker Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund, Inc.	700
Cub Scout Pack 15	700
First Fruits Ministry	1,200
Monterey Youth Soccer League	280

*VECcustomers Share Board member Randy Schmittendorf, right, presents a grant to Angie Rose, left, safety director for the Rhea County AYSO.*



# It is Barbeque Season!

Check out the electric grills and smokers available at your local VEC customer service center. Cooking and clean-up is a snap on these solid, American-made appliances. All operate on a standard household outlet.



**Stainless Double-Grid Electric Water Smoker**

**\$149.99 + tax**  
Top-of-the-line model, stainless steel hood and body

**Deluxe Electric Cart Grill**

**\$134.99 + tax**  
Food view window, sturdy construction, removable side trays, and lower shelf.

**Deluxe Electric Combo Water Smoker and Grill**

**\$77.99 + tax**  
Grill or smoke foods easily with minimal clean-up

**Volunteer Energy Cooperative Service Charges and Fees Effective July 1, 2003**

Meter Set (Regular Hours)	\$30.00
Meter Set/Reconnection (After Hours)	\$100.00
Returned Check Charge	\$30.00
Collection/Reconnection Charge	\$30.00
Meter Test Charge	\$15.00
C.T. Meter Charge	\$250.00
<i>(Applies only to single-phase 400-amp service or less when modifying multi-single phase meter locations.)</i>	
Outdoor Light – Add Pole	Wood Pole \$3.00/mo. Steel Pole \$5.00/mo.
Outdoor Light – Add Transformer	\$300.00
Temporary Service Charge	\$200.00
Meter Tampering/Power Diversion	\$400.00
<i>(Plus Estimated Power Use.)</i>	

# Get Prepared for the HOT WEATHER to come



If your old heat pump has seen better days, VEC can help. Through TVA's *energy right*® program, you may qualify for financing on a new, higher efficiency heat pump. Now is the time to call and find out more information about the program. Contact your local VEC customer service center or call 423-334-7051.