

Safety Demonstrations Available

If there has been a traffic accident involving a utility pole, and a power line has fallen across a vehicle, what should you do? When should you stay in the vehicle? When and how should you get out of the vehicle?

In an emergency situation, knowing the right answers to these questions could save you from serious injury or maybe even death. (The answers to these questions are included below).

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) wants to spread the word about electrical safety and will bring an informative safety lecture/demonstration to your school, church, or civic organization. The lecture/demonstration can be modified to accommodate different age groups and time requirements. It's a great way to introduce the general principals of electricity and electrical safety to young and old alike.

To schedule a safety lecture/demonstration for your class or group, call Robert McCarty at Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Member Services Department at 423-334-7052. Or you can call your local VEC Customer Service Center and when prompted to enter an extension number, enter 7052.

Now, for the answers to the questions at the beginning of this article.

In most cases, you are safe from elec-

tric shock if you remain in the vehicle. The rubber tires act as insulation and keep the vehicle from becoming grounded. This may not be the case, however, if the vehicle is still in contact with the utility pole, a fence, or some other object that can "ground" the vehicle. The best course of action is to stay in the vehicle until the utility company can be summoned to shut down the power.

But if there is the threat of fire, additional collisions, or if other hazards make staying in the vehicle unsafe, you must exit the vehicle very carefully. Put your feet on the edge of the door frame and jump away from the vehicle.

It is important that you never touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Knowing the right way to respond in an emergency situation can make a big difference. Let VEC help. Call to schedule your safety lecture/demonstration.



Lori Green, customer service representative at VEC's Crossville Customer Service Center, demonstrates electric safety techniques at the recent Crossville Home Show.

Electrical Fires and Water Don't Mix

According to the U.S. Fire Administration nearly 4,000 Americans die and approximately 25,000 are injured in fires every year. Knowing how to react in the event of a fire might not just save damage to your home, it could save your life.

Previous editions of Powerlines have featured articles on how to prevent electrical fires. The best way to fight fires is to prevent them before they ever start.

In case those efforts fail, however, it is important to remember that an electrical fire is different from other types of fire. It must be treated differently.

The first important rule to remember is that water conducts electricity. Using water on an electrical fire can actually cause the fire to get bigger. Never use water on an electrical fire.

Secondly, as quickly as possible turn off the main power to the house. If the fire cannot be

put out safely, leave the house and make sure to take everyone out with you. Call 911 or your local fire department as quickly as possible. Be sure to tell them that it is an electrical fire.

If the fire can be put out safely, be sure to use a proper chemical fire extinguisher. If you don't have a chemical fire extinguisher, flour can be used on smaller electrical fires.

When purchasing a chemical fire extinguisher, consider purchasing two and using one to allow everyone in the family to practice using it. The fire extinguisher will be of little use if everyone in the family is not prepared to use it in the event of an emergency.

It's important for families to have a fire safety plan. Make sure everyone knows several ways to get out in case fire or smoke block primary exits. Have a central meeting point outside to verify that everyone has gotten out safely. And once you've evacuated the house, don't go back in.

www.vec.org **VEC** vec@vec.org
VOLUNTEER ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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.

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POWERLINES

DON'T TALK
TO STRANGERS...



...ABOUT YOUR
LONG DISTANCE.

Why talk to strangers about your long distance service when you can go with someone you've known and trusted for years—Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Plus, when you sign up today, you'll receive a FREE 30-minute calling card. For years, we've been a part of your life. You've trusted us to bring power into your home, and now you can trust us to provide you with reliable, affordable long distance service.

- As low as 5.9¢ a minute
- No codes to dial or term plans
- No monthly fees or minimums
- Six-second incremental billing
- Responsive customer service

Give us a call and talk to someone you know you can trust about your long distance service.

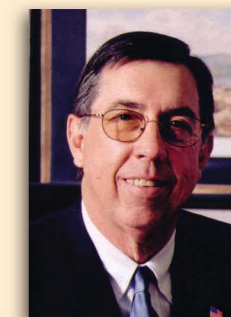
For additional information or to sign up and start saving today, call toll-free 1-866-240-2158.

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Budget Time

Balancing Equity, Debt and Low Rates While Providing for Growth Takes Planning

by Bill Buchanan, President/CEO

This is the time of year that Volunteer Energy Cooperative develops its budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 2004 - June 2005). Managers in all areas at VEC are compiling data from the past year, setting goals, making plans, and determining what the cost of operations will be for the upcoming year.

The demand for capital investments in the electric utility industry is extremely high. Each year at budget time the VEC Board of Directors review projected revenue and equity-to-debt ratios as they examine how much will be available for system improvements and growth. If the needs for accommodating growth and making major improvements to the system exceed the margins generated, then VEC must borrow to provide the necessary improvements.

Revenue generated must exceed the demands of day-to-day operations. This equity belongs to all VEC members. The VEC Board of Directors and VEC managers must determine an optimum level of equity financing for capital improvements and how these capital needs should be financed.

Tennessee and other TVA cooperatives have historically maintained higher equity levels than other cooperatives throughout the country. This is the result of the whole-sale contract between cooperatives and TVA. Section 6 of the contract, titled Use of Receipts, states for what cooperative revenues may be used.

Basically Section 6 says the cooperative must pay operating expenses, pay current debt payments, maintain reasonable reserves, and keep adequate working capital. The revenue over and above the amount needed to fulfill the above requirements may be used for new construction or retirement of debt as long as the cooperative keeps its customers' rates as low as practical.

Because VEC is a member-owned cooperative, we are fortunate to be able to invest net margins into making our system better for our customers. There are areas we serve that have experienced tremendous growth over the past several years and without our continued investment in our system, we simply would not be able to keep up with the power demands in these areas.

Each member's equity is not in a bank account or cash register. It is invested in substations and transformers, utility poles, and thousands of miles of electric lines.

It has been used to serve additional members. This is consistent with the cooperative spirit, "people helping people," which has guided our actions from the beginning.

To be sure, VEC runs a tight ship. *Approximately 79¢ of every dollar collected from VEC customers is spent to pay power costs to TVA.* The board's job is not an easy one. They are charged with developing a financial plan that balances the need for the lowest rates possible along with the mandate to provide reliable, efficient service in a timely fashion. But we are committed to build and maintain the best electric system possible while being responsible stewards of the funds entrusted to us by our customers.

VECCustomers *Share*

*No One Can Do Everything
But Everyone Can Do Something*

Disaster relief and disaster education, books for toddlers, and fire fighting equipment for volunteer fire departments were among the causes assisted by Volunteer Energy Cooperative customers who pooled their pennies through the VECustomers Share program in February. The VECustomers Share board of directors funded grants totaling \$28,800 in February. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, a total of \$942,404.25 in grants has been awarded. 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. Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org.

Organizations receiving grants in February include:

Fentress County Retired Teachers Association - Jamestown	1,400
McDonald Cemetery Association - Ooltewah	1,400
Luncheon Pilots Club - Athens	1,300
Cumberland County American Red Cross - Crossville	1,200
Fairfield Glade Volunteer Fire Department - Fairfield Glade	1,200
Child Advocacy Center	1,050
Pickett County High School Baseball Boosters - Byrdstown	1,000
Meigs County Chamber of Commerce - Decatur	1,000
Grandview Fire District Association - Grandview	1,000
Ocoee Outreach - Cleveland	1,000
First Fruits Food Ministry - Monterey	800
Joseph's Storehouse Food Storage - Monterey	800
Linsdale Community Services - Delano	800
Chilhowee Middle School Baseball Boosters - Benton	800
Northwest Fire Station #5 - Benton	800
Parents of Project Graduation 2004 - Monterey	800
American Legion Post 238 - Crossville	700
On the Rise - Crossville	700
Riceville Elementary School PTO - Riceville	550
Sharp Community Center - Jamestown	500
Pickett County Library Summer Reading - Byrdstown	500
Food Pantry Luminary UMC - Ten Mile	500
Pine Have Community Center Organization - Jamestown	500
Wolf Creek Fire Association - Spring City	500
Walker Valley High School Choir Boosters - Cleveland	500
Meigs County High School Softball Boosters - Ten Mile	500
Friends of the Art Circle Public Library - Pleasant Hill	500
Mayland Senior Citizens, Inc. - Crossville	500
Pine Grove Fire District Association - Spring City	500
Cleveland/Bradley Chamber Foundation - Cleveland	500
New Bethel Community Awana Clubs - Harrison	500
Snow Hill Science Club - Ooltewah	500
Pickett County High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes - Byrdstown	500
McMinn County Middle School Baseball Booster Club - Athens	450
Boy Scout Troop #304 - Ten Mile	400
Company A, 305th Infantry TN State Guard - Rockwood	400
Senior Lighthouse Center - Spring City	400
Cleveland Hoopstars - Cleveland	400
Lady Tigers Booster Club - Ten Mile	400
Byrdstown Senior Center - Byrdstown	400
Roane Choral Society - Kingston	300
Meigs County High School Football Booster Club - Decatur	250
Etowah Friendly Garden Club - Athens	100

VEC President and CEO Bill Buchanan, left, and VECustomers Share Board Member Don Padgett, right, show off a model "CorVEC" created at Camp E-San-Alee's woodworking class that was funded in part by a VECustomers Share grant.

VEC Sends High School Juniors to Youth Leadership Seminar

Meigs County High School juniors Jacob Garrett and Katosha O'Daniel spent three days in Nashville recently learning about state government and how cooperatives operate, and honing their leadership skills. Volunteer Energy Cooperative sponsored the duo at Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's 2004 Youth Leadership Seminar.

Jacob and Katosha were among about 50 students selected from across the state to participate in the three-day event. They met with legislators, watched state government in action, and participated in several leadership-development and team-building activities.

"It taught me some new ways to work together with other people," Katosha said following the event. "You have to get to know people before you can understand how they will respond to different methods of leadership."



Katosha O'Daniel tries on Jamie Watkins' Miss Tennessee crown.

Jacob said he particularly enjoyed getting to know other student leaders from around the state and working on problem-solving activities with them. He also said he learned quite a bit about VEC and other electric cooperatives and how they operate.

"I had no idea how much goes into it," Jacob said. "I thought you just worked on the lines and stuff."

Both Jacob and Katosha said their personal goals and ambitions didn't change as the result of the event, but they did feel they learned things they feel will be helpful in achieving their goals.

The group toured the State Capitol, met with lawmakers, and heard from speakers that

ranged from State Rep. Chris Newton and Deputy to the Governor Dave Cooley to reigning Miss Tennessee Jamie Watkins and University of Tennessee Student Government President Sarah Keeton. Newton and Keeton are both Youth Leadership Seminar graduates.

Students also briefly met with Gov. Phil Bredesen.

Participants also joined in several leadership-development and team-building activities in which they were encouraged to join forces, think "outside of the box," and find non-traditional solutions to puzzles and challenges.



Katosha O'Daniel, left, and Jacob Garrett, right, pose at Nashville's War Memorial Plaza during the Youth Leadership Seminar.



Katosha and Jacob started their trip to Nashville with a trip to the recently-accredited Nashville Zoo.

Students also attended a Nashville Predators hockey game, enjoyed a tour of the city, and were treated to an ice cream social in the revolving restaurant at the top of downtown Nashville's Sheraton Hotel.

The activities were capped off with the Energy Battle Competition in which students teamed up in a knowledge-bowl type event with the winners taking home cash prizes.

The Youth Leadership Seminar is an annual event sponsored by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and individual electric cooperatives around the state. VEC selects high school juniors from schools in VEC's 17-county service areas. Schools are rotated each year to allow students from each school to participate.



Katosha "gets a lift" from fellow Youth Leadership Seminar participants during team building activities.



Jacob Garrett, center, helped his team advance to the semi-final round of the Energy Battle Competition.

VEC also sponsors high school juniors on an annual Washington, D.C. Youth Tour, 4-H Electric Camp, and funds four scholarships for graduating seniors.

"It's important for us to provide these opportunities for students," said VEC President and CEO Bill Buchanan. "Our commitment to these young men and women reflects our commitment to the future of the community."

NOTICE OF ELECTION

In compliance with the bylaws of Volunteer Energy Cooperative, Article IV, Directors; Section 4.05, Notice of Directors to be Elected, I hereby give written notice that the following Directors' terms will expire this year:

District No. 2	Bradley County
District No. 6	Bledsoe and Rhea Counties
District No. 8	Cumberland County west of Highway 127

As set forth in Article IV, Section 4.06, in order for a member to become a qualified candidate for Director, he/she shall file with the Secretary of the Cooperative or with his/her duly appointed candidate, signed by him/her and not less than fifty other members in good standing whose premises served by the Cooperative are located in the directorate district of the candidate.

Qualifying petitions and other information pertaining to the elections can be obtained on or after June 4, 2004 by contacting Patty Hurley, Manager of Member Services, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322, or by calling 423-334-7050.

Qualifying petitions must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative or his designee by 5 p.m. EDT, July 2, 2004.

Kenneth Vaden
Secretary-Treasurer