

Watt's Cooking?

This edition of Powerlines features more fantastic recipes from our readers. Thanks for the response and keep those recipes coming. You can mail them to: **Volunteer Energy Cooperative**, c/o Robert McCarty, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322 or email them to rmccarty@vec.org.

Chocolate Crunch Brownies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter or margarine softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 6 tablespoons baking cocoa
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 jar (7oz.) marshmallow cream
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 cups (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 cups crisp rice cereal

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar, add eggs. Stir in cocoa, flour, vanilla and salt. Spread into a greased 13-inch x 9-inch x 2-inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until brownies test done. Spread marshmallow cream over brownies. In small saucepan, melt peanut butter and chocolate chips over low heat, stir constantly. Remove from the heat, stir in cereal. Spread over marshmallow layer. Chill before cutting. Store in refrigerator. Makes 3 dozen.

Provided by: *Margaret Clark - Philadelphia, TN (came from "Country Woman" magazine)*

Hot Fudge Ice Cream Bar Dessert

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz.) jar chocolate syrup
- 3/4 cup creamy peanut butter
- 19 ice cream sandwiches
- 12 oz whipped topping
- 1 cup salted peanuts

Microwave the chocolate syrup on high in a medium microwave-safe bowl for 2 minutes; do not allow to boil. Add the peanut butter and stir until smooth. Cool to room temperature. Line the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish with 9 1/2 ice cream sandwiches. Layer the whipped topping, chocolate mixture and peanuts 1/2 at a time over the ice cream sandwiches. Repeat the layers. Freeze for 1 hour or until firm. Cut into squares and serve. Yield: 18 servings.

Provided by: *Jane Gesse - Decatur, TN*

Rum Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1-3/4 oz. pkg. instant vanilla pudding mix
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup rum

Glaze:

- 1/4 lb. butter
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup rum

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease and flour 10-inch tube pan. Mix all ingredients together. Pour batter over nuts. Bake 1 hour. Cool. Invert on serving plate. Prick top. Drizzle and smooth glaze evenly over top and sides. Repeat until glaze is used up.

For glaze, melt butter in saucepan. Stir in water and sugar. Boil 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in rum.

Provided by: *Irene Green-Jamestown, TN*

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



The Way We Were - 70 Years Ago

by *Bill Buchanan, President/CEO*

January is always a time of reflection and looking ahead to new and better things to come. The year 2005 marks the 70th anniversary of Volunteer Energy Cooperative. When VEC was formed in 1935 as Meigs County Electric Membership Cooperation, many events were shaping the world:

- The Board game "Monopoly" went on sale for the first time.
- Sandy Koufax, the great Dodger pitcher and multiple Cy Young award winner was born.
- The Sugar Bowl and the Orange Bowl were played for the first time.
- The first U.S. automatic parking meter was installed in Oklahoma City.
- Persia was renamed Iran.
- Amelia Earhart flew from Honolulu to Oakland California (non-stop, of course).
- The Social Security Act became law.
- "Fibber McGee & Molly" was broadcast on the radio for the first time.
- The first commercial plane crossed the Pacific Ocean.
- Jerry Lee Lewis was born.
- The cost of a first-class stamp was \$.03.
- The Luftwaffe was created as Germany's air force.

We have come a long way since 1935. Now VEC serves one of the largest areas of all the electric cooperatives in the United States. Our customer base stands at more than 101,000, all of whom are member-owners of the cooperative.

In 2005, we are using state-of-the-art technology to help us work smarter and serve the customers better. Outage management and interactive voice systems are improving our response time to customer problems. A planned upgrade to our computer system this spring will give us more and better information, allow us to better manage resources, and permit us to offer online bill payment via the Internet.

Did our founders, Willis A. Shadow and J. W. Lillard, envision the growth that has occurred in the last 70 years? Probably not. But we can all be grateful for their efforts to bring electricity to our rural area. We are better for their work and commitment.

January 2005 POWERLINES

Bradley County Upgrades near Completion

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is in the final stages of its \$2 million in system upgrades in northwest Bradley County.

Rody Blevins, VEC's vice president of System Planning and Engineering said VEC's major renovations to the Hopewell Substation on Rabbit Valley Road off Highway 60 are nearing completion. The improvements will double the substations existing capacity, improve the system's reliability, and lower costs.

VEC engineers energized and tested the substation's new equipment in late November. Customers have been gradually added and the majority of customers in the area are expected to be added by late February.

The Hopewell Substation overhaul has three major components:

- VEC is doubling the substation's current capacity to accommodate growth in the area.
- VEC will receive delivery of electricity from TVA at 161,000 volts instead of receiving it at the current level of 69,000 volts. Blevins said this will enhance the reliability of the system and result in fewer outages.

"We experienced more frequent outages from TVA on the older 69,000-volt lines," Blevins said. "They have a lot fewer outages on the 161,000-volt lines."

- VEC will be able to distribute power at 25,000 volts instead of at the current level of 12,000 volts. Blevins said this will reduce the amount of energy VEC loses along the distribution lines and that will cut costs.

Blevins said VEC crews are also replacing several utility poles in the area.

The improvements have forced VEC to interrupt power to customers in the area.

Blevins said VEC is working to see that these interruptions affect a few customers at a time and are as brief as possible.

"We do apologize for the inconvenience these outages cause," Blevins said. "But we hope our customers find the improved service in the area worth the nuisance."



Volunteer Energy Cooperative crews, as well as contract crews, are completing major renovations at the Hopewell Substation on Rabbit Valley Road in northwest Bradley County.

Other Upgrades

Site work is also being completed on VEC's new Wolfreaver Substation in Hamilton County. VEC is looking to have the substation up and running in spring of 2005. Design work is in the final stages for a new substation in the Fairfield Glade area of Cumberland County. Site work is scheduled to begin early in 2005.

VEC Customers Share

If all do some, none are forced to do all

Electricity Customers Raise \$34,200 for Flood Relief

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers who participate in the VECustomers Share program raised \$34,200 to assist their neighbors in the Spring City area of Rhea County. Several families were rendered homeless and many suffered extensive damage to their homes and businesses when the remnants of Hurricane Ivan swept through Rhea County last month.

With very limited assistance expected from state and federal authorities, the VECustomers Share Board of Directors voted to fund a \$34,200 grant to assist those flood victims with the most immediate needs.

The VECustomers Share funds are derived through VEC electric customers who opt to round their bill up to the next dollar each month. The spare change is then pooled and the proceeds granted to fund worthwhile community projects each month. The program is administered by an independent board of directors. This grant to flooding victims marks only the second time the board has opted to grant all of the funds available in a particular month to a single cause.

The previous such grant was awarded in November of 2002 and went to tornado victims in Cumberland County.

H.B. Rankin, the VECustomers Share board member who represents Rhea County, said he feels the board made a great decision in granting these funds to flood victims.

"I feel really good about this decision," Rankin said. "This is exactly what we hope to do each month as we allocate these funds – help people."

The North Rhea County Ministerial Association (NRCMA) is working in conjunction with the Rhea County Interfaith Disaster Relief Committee to administer the funds.

Randy Schmittendorf of NRCMA said flood victims in the area were denied any individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the VECustomers Share funds will be a tremendous help in assisting families.

"The extent of the needs here has not been fully calculated, but we know that 57 families and 25 businesses have been affected," Schmittendorf said.

Jerry Henley, who represents Rhea and Bledsoe counties on the VEC Board of Directors agrees that this donation is a good reflection of the VECustomers Share program.

"This is exactly the kind of thing we had in mind when we set up the VECustomers Share program," Henley said. "We want to help those with the most immediate needs as much as possible."

Bill Buchanan, VEC President/CEO, said neighbors joining together to help each other is a tradition he is pleased to be a part of.

"These funds come from the 75,000 or so VEC customers and members who participate in the VECustomers Share program," Buchanan said. "It's their pennies and nickels, dimes and quarters that are going to help these neighbors who are in such need."

Since the inception of the VECustomers Share program in October 2001, a total of \$1,207,332.20 in grants has been awarded.

The deadline for grant applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contact Pat Hurley, vice president of Marketing and Economic Development, at 423-334-7050. Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org.



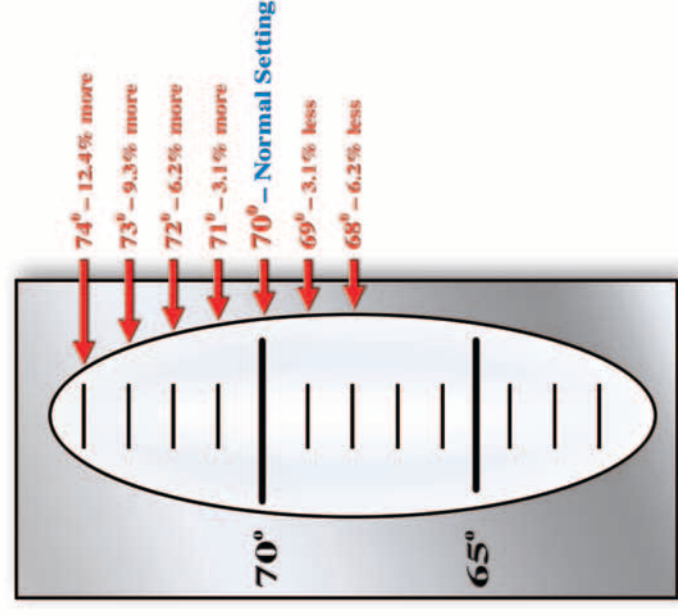
(From left to right) VEC Board of Directors member Jerry Henley and VECustomers Share board member H.B. Rankin present a grant check in the amount of \$34,200 to Randy Schmittendorf as VEC President/CEO Bill Buchanan looks on.

Cutting Energy Costs: Every Degree Counts

Winter is here and lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees can mean savings on your heating bill.

For example, lowering your thermostat from 70 degrees to 68 degrees will save 6.2 percent on your heating bill. Lowering the thermostat just one degree will save you 3.1%.

However, raising the thermostat to 76 degrees will increase your heating bill by 18.6%.



Lillard-Shadow Scholarships to be Awarded to Community-Minded Grads



Volunteer Energy Cooperative wants to reward your high school graduate's commitment to academics and community service.

Applications for VEC's Lillard-Shadow Scholarships are being distributed to high schools in VEC's service area and four graduating seniors from the class of 2005 will be awarded \$2,000 scholarships based on community service and citizenship, academic achievement, written communication, and need.

The scholarships are named in honor of Willis A. Shadow and J.W. Lillard, two pivotal men in the formation of the electric cooperative that has evolved into Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Because of their vision and commitment to the community, Mr. Shadow and Mr. Lillard were instrumental in improving the lives and livelihood of thousands of residents through electric power. These scholarships seek to honor the community spirit of Willis A. Shadow and J. W. Lillard. Volunteer Energy Cooperative is committed to the strength of individuals and organizations in its service area and recognizes the importance of volunteerism and community activities to a young person's growth. This scholarship program will reward students who have "given back" to their communities by assisting the students with college costs.

Completed application packets must be received at VEC's cooperate headquarters in Decatur, TN no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 4, 2005.

Application packets are available in the Guidance Department of area high schools or at any Volunteer Energy Cooperative office. For more information, call your local Volunteer Energy Cooperative Customer Service Center.

Electricity Safety Demonstrations Available

Electricity has helped bring prosperity and convenience to the Tennessee Valley and Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is proud to be a part of that. But electricity is also a power source that demands respect.

VEC offers free electricity safety demonstrations to teach groups of all ages how we can enjoy the benefits of electricity while avoiding some of the most common dangers.

Presentations can be tailored to any age group and to fit almost any time requirements.

To schedule a free safety demonstration for your group, phone Robert McCarty at 423-334-7052. You can also email a request to rmccarty@vec.org.



Happy Holidays

from the Staff, Management and Board of Directors of Volunteer Energy Cooperative