

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.

Fruit Cookies

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour, divided
- 1 1/3 tsp. soda
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 1/2 tbsp. milk
- 1/2 lb. chopped dates
- 1/2 lb. white raisins
- 1/2 lb. candied cherries
- 1/2 lb. candied pineapples
- 1/2 lb. chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325 degrees

Cream brown sugar and margarine. Add eggs and mix. Add milk and blend. Add 1 1/2 cups flour and the soda. Dredge fruits and nuts in 1/2 cup flour and combine all into batter. Drop by rounded teaspoon full on greased cookie sheet. Bake 15 minutes.

Provided by: *Irene Green-Jamestown, TN*

Steamed Dumplings

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg beaten
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons salad oil

Sift flour, baking powder, and salt together. Combine egg, milk, and oil. Add to dry ingredients to make a soft dough. Drop from a teaspoon into stew. Should have 3 cups of stew and it should be boiling. Boil dumplings for 12 minutes with lid on pot or kettle.

Provided by: *Valda Manis-Dayton, OH*

Pie Crust

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1/3 cup Crisco
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons water

Mix all ingredients together. First, flour and salt. Then, Crisco and water. Just add enough water to make it stick together. Do not mix too long. Bakeat 425 degrees for about 20 minutes. Take from oven and cool.

Provided by: *Valda Manis-Dayton, OH*



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.

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POWERLINES

VEC Customers Helping Soldiers Phone Home

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's VECustomers Share program is trying to help members of the 278th Regimental Combat Team stay in touch with loved ones back home.

The VECustomers Share Board of Directors voted in December to provide 550-minute phone cards to members of the 278th who are currently stationed in Iraq and who are Volunteer Energy Cooperative customers.

Glenn Wheaton, the chairman of the VECustomers Share Board of Directors and the Roane County representative, said board members wanted to find a very practical way to support VEC customers who are currently serving their country in Iraq.

"We just feel one of the best ways we could let our soldiers know how much we appreciate their sacrifices would be to help them stay in touch with their loved ones here at home," Wheaton said. "It's not easy for these men and women to be so far from home and it's not easy on their loved ones either. We just want to help ease their burdens a little."

The phone cards must be requested by family members and one phone card per soldier will be sent directly to the soldiers.

To be eligible for a free phone card, the soldier must be on duty with the 278th RCT in Iraq and they must live in a residence that receives electric service from Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

Family members

and loved ones can request the cards by filling out a short request form at their local VEC Customer Service Center. The one requesting the card will be asked to verify that the soldier resides in a home served by VEC if the VEC account is not in the soldier's name.

They will also need to provide the soldiers name, rank, and APO address, and the VEC account number for the soldier's residence.

The phone cards are being distributed through VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department.



Be an Active Voice During TVA Board Restructuring

by Bill Buchanan, President/CEO



An end-of-the-year federal energy bill passed in December included an expansion of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Board of Directors from 3 full-time members to 9 part-time members with a chief executive officer. This change represents perhaps the most sweeping change since TVA's inception during the New Deal days of President Roosevelt. Under the policy, board members must be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Since TVA is the regulatory body of Volunteer Energy Cooperative and the other utilities in the Tennessee Valley, this restructuring means that change lies ahead for many utility systems in the Southeast U.S. and their customers. Currently, TVA provides electricity to about 8.3 million people in Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Virginia.

As in any change of this type, there have been varying opinions of whether or not these changes will improve or hinder TVA's success. Some say the new structure will allow the utility to be more effective and allow it to make better decisions. Others feel that this process will lead to appointees with more political clout than knowledge and experience.

The Tennessee Valley Public Power Association (TVPPA) and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) have been watching this TVA legislation closely for months and are, for the most part, pleased with the result. Of course, the changes are not perfect.

The legislation requires 7 of the 9 board members to be residents of TVA states, stipulates that they must have "management expertise", restricts them from being TVA employees, and requires them to fully disclose any financial interest in an energy company. These requirements allow 2 of the board members to reside outside the Tennessee Valley. We can only hope all of the 9 nominees are those who understand and support public power and the TVA mission.

Current board members will be allowed to serve out their terms. Mr. Glenn McCullough serves until May of 2005, Ms. Skila Harris' term expires in 2008, and Mr. Bill Baxter is scheduled to serve until 2011. These directors will become part-time when Mr. McCullough's term expires or when at least three new members are confirmed, whichever is later. The new board will hire the CEO.

The restructured TVA board will be facing important issues in the immediate future: mounting TVA debt, pollution controls, capacity constraints, and leaner operations. It will be a challenge for board members to effectively address these and other issues.

Now more than ever it is imperative that cooperative members such as you ensure that our voices are heard in the process of selecting new members to the TVA Board of Directors. These selections could affect the fate of our energy grid in the years to come.

I encourage you to become an active advocate for your electric cooperative, Volunteer Energy. Educate yourself about the issues and about the nominees to the TVA board. Make your voice heard by contacting your congressional representative. Join the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.

What the future holds for public power and for Volunteer Energy Cooperative depends, in large part, on you.

VEC Customers Reach Out to Friends and Neighbors

Share

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers who pooled their pennies through the VECustomers Share program in November helped fund grants totaling \$33,200. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, a total of \$1,240,552.20 in grants has been awarded.

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

Organizations receiving grants in November include:

Telephone Calling Cards for the 278th RCT	\$6,500
Food Bank Support Club, Allardt	2,400
Bradley/Polk County Foster Care Association, Cleveland	200
Valley View Storehouse, Cleveland	200
Boy Scouts of America Troop 190, Crawford	1,000
Polk County Education Foundation, Benton	1,000
McMinn County Amateur Radio Club, Inc., Athens	1,000
Hull-York DAV Chapter 5, Byrdstown	6,300
Cleveland State Community College Foundation, Cleveland	300
Camp Lookout – Holston Conference	5,000
Black Fox Young Adults, Cleveland	300
McMinn Retired Teachers, Athens	500
Project Helping Hands, Cleveland	2,500
Paint Rock Masonic Lodge, Kingston	500
Calhoun Elementary School PTO, Calhoun	500
Cumberland Emergency Communications Group, Crossville	5,000



Members of the Hull-York Disabled American Vets (DAV) Chapter 5 accept a grant check from VECustomers Share Board Member Barbara Rector. Pictured are: (From left) Ben Crabtree, Doyle Poore, Billy Moody, Robert Huddleston, Allen White, Barbara Rector, Allard White, Mike Sells, and Larry Baker.

We’ve Updated our Menu

You spoke – and we listened.

VEC customers asked us to simplify our telephone system and make the options for callers easier to follow. We responded by making the menu shorter and the process more simple. The upgrades will also help route calls in an even more efficient way.

We are always glad to hear suggestions for improvements from our members. After all, our members are not just customers; they’re the owners of the business.

Having Your Correct Phone Number on File at VEC Helps get Electricity Back on Fast

The following steps help insure your power outage is responded to quickly. Note that the first step is to make sure VEC has your correct phone number on file:

1. Verify your phone number with your local VEC office. If you skip this step, you will be unable to report a power outage using the automated system.
2. If your power goes out, simply call your local VEC Customer Service Center from the phone number you verified on your electric bill. The system will record your outage with just a few simple steps. It is very important that you call from the phone number on the electric bill for the location where the power is out in order to use the system most efficiently.
3. If you must call from a different phone, please follow the prompts carefully. The system will tell you the number you are calling from is not in the system and it will give you the opportunity to enter the account number or phone number that is matched with your electric account. This is required if you are calling from a cellular phone.
4. If you are calling from a phone number matched to another electric account, you will have an opportunity to tell the system the power is off at a different location and enter the appropriate account number or phone number for that location.

Helpful hints:

- Always try to call from the phone number associated with your electric account. Make sure you have at least one phone in your home that does not require electricity to work. Remember, cordless phones require electricity.
- If you must call from another phone number, be prepared to enter the appropriate account number or phone number. This is important to remember if you must call from a cellular phone.

Why does VEC have an automated system?

- *To serve you faster.* While you are reporting your outage on the automated system, the VEC dispatcher is calling crews to go to the problem.
- *To gather information quickly.* If you have verified your phone number on your electric bill when you call, VEC will immediately know where you live and other information related to your account that is necessary to restore power.
- *For customer convenience.* Reporting an outage at a place where the phone number is correct in our system is fast and easy.

VEC Wants to Help You Save Money on Your Electric Bill



Not many businesses will make much of an effort to teach you how to give them less of your money. But at Volunteer Energy Cooperative, we’ll not only teach you how to save money on your energy expenses, we’ll also give you money to take our advice.

Working in conjunction with the TVA energy right® program, VEC offers three great ways to save money on your monthly energy expenses. And each of the three offers comes with either a credit on your next electric bill or a competitive interest rate.

Here are three great ways to save money on your energy expenses:

Heat Pump Installation

If you are tired of paying outrageous gas bills, you can install a new, energy-efficient electric heat pump and start saving big money. Cost-conscious homeowners throughout the Tennessee Valley are discovering the economical, year-round comfort the new lines of energy-efficient electric heat pumps offer.

If you are ready to make the switch and start saving money, Volunteer Energy Cooperative will even help you by offering financing and a low 7% interest rate. The extra payments for the new heat pump can be added to your monthly electric bill.

The new heat pump must meet energy-efficiency standards and homeowners must agree to a TVA-approved inspection. Other requirements may apply.

Water Heater Purchase

Now that you are saving money with a new energy-efficient heat pump, why not stretch those savings even further with a new electric water heater. New, energy efficient models can help you save money on your electric bill. VEC will add to your savings with a \$30 credit on your next electric bill.

To earn the \$30 credit the water heater must be a replacement for an existing water heater and must have a capacity of at least 40 gallons. Other conditions may apply.

New Home Construction

If you want to build in the saving of an energy-efficient all-electric home, VEC can help with a \$50 credit on your next electric bill.

VEC will provide a \$50 credit on the next electric bill and a free TVA-approved inspection on new all-electric homes that meet energy-saving standards on insulation, windows, and heat pumps. (Homes with gas logs and dual-fuel heat pumps may still qualify for the electric bill credit.)

Get the Details at Your Local VEC Customer Service Center

If you are interested in saving money and want to take advantage of VEC’s incentives, call or stop by your local VEC Customer Service Center for all the details.

The requirements and restrictions for participating in the incentive programs mentioned above are not intended to be an all-inclusive list. Check with your local VEC Customer Service Center for a full list of requirements and restrictions.