Save Money on your **Energy Costs**

Electricity is so easy to buy. We often forget that every time we adjust our thermostat, every time we turn on a light switch, and every time we turn on the television we are using and buying electricity.

Old habits are hard to break. And sometimes it's even harder when you tackle several at a time. But adjusting your lifestyle to incorporate good energy conservation habits will really pay off in the long run. If the following tips and suggestions are too much for you to bite off all at once, why not commit to adopting one of these practices this month. Then, next month, start practicing a new one. In a very short time, you'll see some real savings on your energy costs.

Heating and cooling your home typically uses much more energy than any other use category. So it makes good sense to start here.

- Avoid over using your air conditioning unit and heating unit(s) as much as possible. Use ceiling fans or floor fans to move air.
- Close the shades or curtains on sunny windows during summer. In winter keep these shades open during the day.
- Thermostats should be set no higher than 70° F in the winter and no lower than 78° F in the summer.
- Chimney flues should be closed except when the fireplace is in use.
- Keep the filters on all your heating and cooling units clean.
- Make sure your home doesn't have major energy leaks. Weather stripping, insulation, caulk, and storm doors and windows are typically home improvement projects that can quickly pay for themselves in energy savings.
- Closing vents in unused rooms can cut heating and cooling costs, but closing too many can force your heating or cooling system to work harder. So strike a
- If you use window air conditioning units to cool your home, try not to put these units in windows that receive a lot of direct sunlight. That makes the unit work even harder.
- Homeowners who are looking to upgrade their heating system with a new, energy efficient electric heat pump may qualify for financing through the TVA energy right® program. Contact your local VEC Customer Service Center for more details.

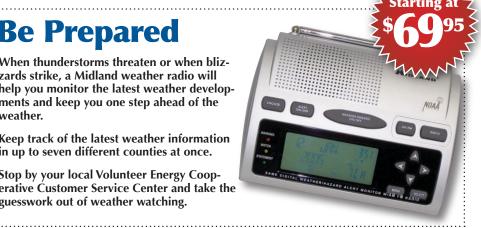
Next month we will look at ways to keep you from getting taken to the cleaners on energy costs while you are doing your laundry.

Be Prepared

When thunderstorms threaten or when blizzards strike, a Midland weather radio will help you monitor the latest weather developments and keep you one step ahead of the

Keep track of the latest weather information in up to seven different counties at once.

Stop by your local Volunteer Energy Cooperative Customer Service Center and take the guesswork out of weather watching

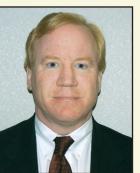








POWERLINES



TVA is not Immune to **Spiraling Costs**

By Rody Blevins President/CEO

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) recently announced they will increase the rate they charge power distributors like Volunteer Energy Cooperative by 7.6%. That is not good news to electricity customers in the Tennessee Valley but it is also not a big surprise.

TVA officials say the main reason for the rate hike is the rising costs of coal, natural gas, and power purchased by TVA.

Our regional association, the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association (TVPPA), has met several times with TVA over the course of the summer to review data supporting TVA's case for a rate hike. Based on the data presented, TVPPA's Rates and Contracts Committee concluded the need for the rate hike is understandable.

TVA officials also presented the results of their efforts to contain costs and increase efficiency. TVA has made significant strides in keep the lid on costs and TVA's capability to generate power in several different ways has helped the October 1 rate increase from being an even bigger one. But we believe even more can be done. VEC and the other 156 power distributors TVA serves are encouraging TVA to find even more ways to cut costs.

For every dollar VEC receives from its customers, 78 cents goes to TVA to purchase power.

That leaves us an extremely small margin with which to operate and maintain our distribution system, maintain our customer service centers, and pay our other bills. And we are also subject to the same pressures of rising costs. Anyone who has made a trip to the gas pumps recently can probably imagine how much ris-

For every dollar VEC receives from its customers, 78 cents goes to TVA to purchase bower.

ing gas prices affects us in our efforts to keep our trucks on the road and serving our customers.

Higher gasoline prices also add to the costs of materials that VEC has shipped to us. Copper, aluminum, and steel are costing more and more. TVA and VEC are not immune to these higher costs of doing business. But it is worth noting that customers in this area enjoy some of the lowest electricity costs in the nation.

We at VEC are just as committed as always to bring you the best possible service at the lowest possible price.

Wamp Talks Energy Bill, Project Funding During Visit to VEC Headquarters

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Chattanooga, recently addressed a luncheon meeting of the Meigs County Chamber of Commerce at Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Decatur, TN corporate offices and updated the audience on various provisions in the energy bill that was recently signed into law by President George Bush.

Wamp said alternative energy sources were a big winner in the new energy bill. He said the bill is loaded with incentives for consumers as well as manufacturers and researchers.

He said the bill promotes green power sources such as wind and solar electricity generation, hybrid gasoline/electric automobiles, and hydrogen fuel cell technology.

"All these things are going to help us reduce our dependence on foreign sources," Wamp

VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins said he believes rural electric cooperatives are generally pleased with the energy bill.

"It includes tax credits for renewable energy sources and that's something we really wanted to see included," Blevins said. "We also worked hard to avoid additional regulations that would have increased our costs."

Wamp also announced that \$1.3 million in federal funds have been appropriated for the Cherokee Memorial Park in the southern part of Meigs County. The park will ultimately include nature trails, a Cherokee monument and displays, an overlook, a genealogical research center, canoeing, and fishing.



Blevins and Wamp

VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins, right, welcomes Congressman Zach Wamp to VEC Headquarters.



receptacle to prepare the unit for test-1. Push the "Reset" button of the GFCI

'NO ad bluoda 2. Plug in the light and turn it on. Light

4. Push the "Reset" button again. Light receptacle. Light should go OFF, 3. Push the "Test" button of the GFCI



came with the appliance. should follow the safety instructions that consumers need heightened awareness and Wherever water and electricity are present, behavior whenever using electrical products. replacement for common sense and prudent GFCI as a back-up satety device, and not a installed. Consumers should consider the working properly or has not been correctly button is pushed, either the GFCI is not pushed. If the light remains on when the should go out when the test button is A light plugged into the GFCI receptacle

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electrician; and 2. Have your GFCIs installed by a qualified

occurrence such as a severe electrical month or whenever there is an unusual

nest.org) along with other graphical sup-Electrical Safety Foundation website (www. GFCI test is available at the National An interactive demonstration of a proper

> but they are of little use if they are worn proximity. They are great safety features, water are most likely to be used in close and out-of-doors where electricity and installed in kitchens, baths, laundry rooms, button on them and they are most often GFCIs are those outlets that have a reset inadvertently come in contact with water. cially when electrical circuits in appliances reduce the chances of electrocution, espeis a device designed to minimize shock and

> larly - every month according to experts. in test button, which should be used reguverify they are working. GFCIs have a builters, however, don't check their GFCIs to installed across the country. Many consum-An estimated 400-million GFCIs have been

> > out, damaged, or faulty.

quent and severe electrical storms or power even more important in locations with fretant part of protecting your family. This is "Regular testing of all GFCIs is an importo NESF Executive Director Walt Biddle. injuries in the last three decades," according lives and prevented thousands of serious "GFCIs have probably saved hundreds of

to all receptacles on that individual circuit. cuit breakers and provide GFCI protection often used as replacements for standard cir-Additionally, circuit breaker GFCIs are which most consumers will be familiar. to a common wall outlet, is the type with often used "receptacle type" GFCI, similar There are three types of GFCIs. The most

tested prior to every use. regular GFCL. Temporary GFCIs should be not be used as a permanent alternative to a trimmers, and similar devices. They should outdoor settings with electric tools, mowers, are frequently used in construction and in the circuit. Temporary or "plug-in" GFCIs nect power to all lights and appliances on button on the breaker, which should disconchecked monthly by pressing the "Test" Circuit breaker GFCIs should also be

operating correctly, consumers should plug certain that your receptacle GFCIs are be energized (connected). To be absolutely button is pushed, but the circuit may still The trip button may activate when the test

The courtesy call will be done in addition to the mailed notices that VEC will continue disconnect and again to reconnect." fees," Grubb said. "And it saves VEC the expense of sending crews out twice - once to

"It saves money for the customer because they save on any disconnect or reconnect

Grubb said that during the test, the majority of customers responded and brought their

said. "Our plan is to give the customers a courtesy call about 24 hours before service is

"We performed some tests in the Spring City area and it worked very well," Grubb

Grubb said the idea is to make sure customers are aware of potential problems before

announced that VEC's Interactive Voice Response system will soon be used to notify

Duel Grubb, vice president of VEC's Information Technology Department, recently

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) will soon be putting some new technologies to

Stay in Touch With Customers

work to help keep customers up to date on the status of their VEC accounts.

VEC is forced to discontinue service.

pact, tabletop design.

customers when their account becomes severely delinquent.

VEC Using Technology to

accounts up to date before VEC was forced to go out and discontinue service.

to use to notify customers of impending disconnects.

that it is less likely that a customer who is scheduled to be disconnected will not receive tomers who are not scheduled for disconnection will receive one of the calls. He said Grubb said that no system is perfect but if errors are made, it is more likely that cus-

phone number on file for every customer, Grubb said. One of the most important ways we can avoid these mistakes is to have a correct

the phone number we have on file for their account is correct. He urged customers to phone their local VEC Customer Service Center to verify that

 $\overline{\mathrm{VEC}}$ can reach a customer when we need to. make reporting an outage faster and easier for customers, and it will help insure that Grubb said it will not only increase efficiency with these courtesy calls, it will also

> when conducting the following test: a nightlight or similar device into the outlet A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)

> Test GFCI Receptacles Monthly

Impending Electrical Safety Foundation Says

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1. Use only GFCIs which have been listed GFCP's reliability: There are three steps to be sure of your

testing laboratory or certification orgaor certified by a nationally recognized

3. Test your GFCIs at least once each

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Club (Decatur) - \$3,030; Cumberland County Playhouse - \$2,230; Monterey McMinn County Amateur Radio Club - \$5,000; New Beginnings Carden :9buləni ylul ni etnorg gniviəsər enoitasinagr Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org. tact the office of Marketing and Economic Development, at 423-334-7051. applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contotal of \$1,504,465.20 in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant \$33,200 in July. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, a

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers funded grants totaling

Chilhowee Fire Station No. 5 - \$500; Byrdstown Senior Center - \$500; Shiloh Center (9th Judicial District) - \$600; Cleveland Express Track Program - \$500; Foundation - \$750; Linsdale Community Services - \$750; Child Advocacy Plateau Pregnancy Services (Crossville) - \$870; Polk County Education Meigs County Lions Club - \$976; Mayland Community Organization - \$900; Committee - \$1,000; Church of the Harvest Food Bank (Grimsley) - \$1,000; Cemetery Association (Ooltewah) - \$1,000; Relay for Life of Pickett County - \$1,000; Luminary Children's Fund (Spring City) - \$1,000; McDonald IN, Inc., (Birchwood) - \$1,000; Good Neighbors Theatre, Inc., (Byrdstown) Public Library - \$1,000; Hilltoppers, Inc., (Crossville) - \$1,000; BASIC of \$1,894; Cleveland/Bradley Chamber Foundation - \$1,800; Fentress County Special Projects - \$2,000; Anchor Club of McMinn Central High School -

Creek Elementary School PTO - \$200; Pilot Club of Athens, Inc., - \$175; and

Charleston Elementary PTO - \$500; Midway High School PTO - \$400; Rogers

Heritage Society - \$500; Three Rivers Antique Tractor Club (Kingston) - \$500;

Cemetery Association (Ten Mile) - \$500; McMinn County Historical and

Calhoun Elementary Booster Club - \$125.

Hoyt Branham, Sylvia Beavers, and Carolyn Roark of BASIC of TM, Inc. VECustomers Share Board Member **Bobby Scott**, left, presents a grant check to, from left,