

VEC & TVA Team Up to Help Customers Get the Most Out of Their Energy Dollar

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) and TVA want you to get the most out of your energy dollar. The new *energy right*® Home e-Valuation mail-in energy audits are now available at your local VEC customer service center. The audit is also available online at www.energydepot.com/energyright/index.asp

The *energy right*® Home e-Valuation energy audit program is free and it is designed to help you understand how you use energy in your home. Just complete the audit and follow the mail-in instructions and in 2 to 3 weeks you will receive an analysis of your energy use patterns and recommendations on how you can save energy – and money.

As an added benefit, anyone who completes the Home e-Valuation before April 30 will receive a free energy conservation kit. This kit includes two compact fluorescent light bulbs, outlet and light switch gaskets, a filter whistle, a low-flow shower head, a hot water temperature gauge, a thermometer magnet, and a “How to Save” brochure.

The audit is free and so is the energy conservation kit. So now is the perfect time to take control of your energy use and your electric bill.

VEC Moving Ahead With Plans for New Spring City, Georgetown Offices

The new year promises to be one of growth and enhanced customer service with plans for Volunteer Energy Cooperative's new Spring City and Georgetown offices in high gear.

Spring City | Design work has been completed and a winning construction bid has been selected for VEC's new Spring City office. The 9,970 square foot facility will be located at the intersection of Cemetery Road and Highway 68 near Spring City Middle School. In addition to an upgraded customer service lobby and office, the facility will also feature a warehouse and truck bays to better serve VEC customers in the area.

Groundbreaking on the new facility is expected for early 2007 and the new building is expected to be open for business in the fall.

Georgetown | VEC is also moving ahead with plans to open a new customer service center in Hamilton County. Property has been acquired for the project and the new office will be located at the intersection of Mahan Gap Road and Ooltewah – Georgetown Road.

VEC officials are still working on the design of the new office but expect it to be similar in size and design to the new Spring City office.

VEC officials said it is still too early in the process to predict exactly when the new Georgetown office will be ready for business.



Economic Development Efforts Pay Off for Communities

By Rody Blevins President/CEO

I believe that the strength of a community's economic development efforts have a tremendous impact on the potential for success of the citizens of that community. The Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) Board of directors and our management team are equally committed to raising the standard of living in VEC-served communities through economic

development efforts.

At VEC our economic development program can be divided into two areas. First, we realize that the majority of new jobs created in a community come from the expansion of businesses that are already located within that community. Secondly, we join with other agencies to recruit new businesses to VEC-served communities.

Existing Businesses | VEC supports strong economic development initiatives that target existing businesses. By combining in-house assets with those provided by TVA, we have been able to provide services that have helped several of our existing businesses cut costs and remain competitive. Recent services include power factor studies, energy audits, and lighting design. Beneficiaries of these services range from service industries to large manufacturers.

Attracting New Businesses | VEC's economic development programs, in conjunction with TVA and state efforts, has produced more coordinated efforts and a streamlined flow of information in response to inquiries and site visits. VEC actively participates in site visits by prospective companies to help ensure presentations are coordinated, needed information is available, and to make sure the area is presented as a place the company would be happy to call home.

VEC Economic Development Programs | Since 2005 VEC's organizational structure has included a department and a vice president whose responsibilities include providing support for economic development efforts. This structure centralizes efforts and provides coordination of the economic development efforts of VEC's Accounting & Finance, Engineering, Information Technology, and Operations departments.

We have also established Supporting Efforts toward Economic Development (S.E.E.D.) which serves as a funding source for economic development initiatives in VEC's 17-county service area. In just two years communities have already received thousands of dollars in support of efforts such as professional development, recruiting, and marketing. This allows VEC-served communities to compete more successfully with larger, better funded communities in attracting new businesses and industries.

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Groundbreaking | VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins (second from left) was on hand as ground was broken on a new major GE distribution facility in Bradley County. Pictured (from left) Todd Greener of General Electric, Blevins, Gary Farlow, and Jerry Bohannon of the Cleveland-Bradley County Chamber of Commerce.

Automated Meter Reading Now in Operation for Some VEC Customers



Bill Ntwali, left of DCI, the company providing AMR components to VEC, and Darrell Crisp, VEC's superintendent of metering and substations oversee crews as they activate automated metering at the Ten Mile Substation.

The first phase of Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) four-year, \$9.2 million project to automate meter reading functions is nearing completion and meter readings of some VEC customers are already being gathered electronically.

Early in November VEC began reading the first batch of about 4,000 meters electronically. The readings were gathered from customers served out of VEC's Ten Mile Substation in north Meigs County and Harrison Bay Substation in Hamilton County. Crews had installed about 7,800 Automated Meter Reading (AMR) meters but only those served out of the Ten Mile and Harrison Bay substations were being read electronically because those are the only two substations that had been outfitted with the AMR communications equipment.

VEC Vice President of Information Technology Duell Grubb said plans call for the Sanford Substation in the Riceville area to be equipped next with the West Crossville Substation to follow.

“We are already beginning to see the benefits of this project,” Grubb said. “We are expecting this project to tremendously enhance the efficiency of our meter reading process.”

One of the main functions of the AMR system will be to efficiently and accurately gather billing information. Eliminating opportunities for errors in the meter reading and data entry aspects of billing is an important benefit of the AMR system. But the AMR system will help VEC manage load demands better, help speed up the power restoration process in the event of an outage, and detect meter tampering.

The customers' meters will be constantly feeding information to the AMR system. If information from a customer's meter stops, there is either some equipment malfunction or the customer is out of power.

With VEC's AMR system tied into the cooperative's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, managers can quickly identify affected customers and view all the equipment on the line. That allows crews to pinpoint the source of the trouble and restore power much more quickly.

VEC Customers *Share*

Tops \$2M in Grants Awarded

Never under estimate the value of pennies, nickels, and dimes.

By allowing their electric bills to be rounded up to the next dollar, VEC customers have now funded more than \$2 million in community service grants in just five years. The VECustomers Share program was initiated in October in 2001. In October of 2006 the program funded \$38,800 in community service grants which pushed the total amount of money awarded through the program to \$2,001,051. "This is a testament to what you can accomplish through cooperation," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "The average donation to this program is 50 cents per customer, per month. No one really misses that small of an amount. But when you pool that with all the other donations from our participating customers, you can really do some significant things in your community."

The deadline for grant applications is the last day of each month. For additional information, contact the office of Marketing and Economic Development, at 423-334-7051. Applications are also available online, at www.vec.org.

Organizations receiving grants in October include:

Operation REACH of Roane County - \$4,000; Manna House Ministries of Jamestown - \$3,000; Pickett County High School Football Booster Club - \$2,000; Am Vets Post 90 of Decatur - \$2,000; Monterey Lions Club - \$2,000; Helping Hands Ministry of Crossville - \$1,826; Avalon Center of Crossville - \$1,500; VFV Post 5146 of Athens - \$1,500; Riceville Roundhouse Boosters - \$1,500; Children's Advocacy Center of Hamilton County - \$1,500; Athens Travelers - \$1,000; Bradley County High School Band Boosters - \$1,000; Pickett County Junior High Book Club - \$1,000; Polk County Golf Boosters - \$1,000; McDonald Cemetery Association - \$1,000; Meigs County Fair Association - \$1,000; Hebbertsburg Community Center of Crab Orchard - \$1,000; Meigs County Literacy Council - \$1,000; Frank P. Brown Elementary School PTO of Crossville - \$1,000; West Polk County Empty Stocking Fund Committee - \$1,000; Friends of the Library of Spring City - \$700; Luminary Children's Fund of Spring City - \$700; Cumberland County 4-H - \$700; Bradley FFA Alumni - \$650; Spring City Bible Quiz Teams - \$600; Quilts for Kids of Decatur - \$500; Polk County Education Foundation - \$500; Cumberland County Habitat for Humanity - \$500; Helping Hands Ministry of Georgetown - \$500; Chilhowee Youth Girls Softball League - \$500; Cumberland County High School Lady Jets Softball Booster Club - \$400; Stone Panthers Softball Booster Club - \$400; Cumberland County High School Varsity Wrestling Booster Club - \$400; Calhoun Elementary School PTO - \$324; Bradley County Committee on Aging - \$200; Blue Springs School Cheerleading Boosters - \$200; and Kinser Benevolence Board of Cleveland - \$200.



Manna House | VECustomers Share Board Member Don Padgett, second from right, presents a grant check to (from left) Shane Matthews, Darrell Price, Sandy South and Trish Rankin of Manna House Ministries.

Use Emergency Generators Carefully

You can use a portable emergency generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But, if used improperly, they can kill you and the people who are working to restore power. They can also damage the appliances you connect.

Home emergency generators are usually powered by gasoline, which must be properly handled as well.

Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, licensed electrician. Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your local VEC Customer Service Center.

If you connect an emergency generator to the main electrical supply coming into the house, the electrical generator could feed back into Volunteer Energy Cooperative's system and electrocute workers who are repairing the electrical lines.

Determining Wattage Requirements

You must also never exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Overloading can cause serious damage to the generator or appliances. Before operating a generator, list all of the appliances that are going to operate at the same time. Then determine the starting wattage requirements and the running wattage requirements. The starting load lasts only a few seconds, but is very important when figuring your total wattage to be used. Your generator must be rated to handle the total wattage.

Extension Cords

When using an appliance or tool at a considerable distance from the generator, a 3-wire extension cord that has a 3-prong grounding plug and a 3-slot receptacle that accepts the tool's plug should be used. A cord of adequate size must be used.

Under no circumstances should an extension cord be run from one house to another.



Economic Development Efforts Pay Off for Communities continued...

VEC also participates in the Rural Utilities Service's zero-interest loan program. Two businesses in the VEC service area have recently benefited from this program and we are always on the lookout for more opportunities to extend the benefits of this program even further into our service area.

We also try to assist education initiatives in our service area firstly because it elevates the standard of living for individuals and secondly because potential new businesses are frequently interested in local education. We offer college scholarships, leadership development and creative problem solving seminars, provide safety education, and cooperate with 4-H, Junior Achievement and other community education programs.

Each and every one of these activities enhances the ability of communities – and their residents – to succeed.

The Results | The results of these efforts have been dramatic. General Electric recently opted to locate a major distribution facility in Bradley County, a small manufacturer has made plans to occupy a vacant building in Meigs County, and as I write this column a major employer is set to announce a project in our service area early next year. Almost every area that VEC services has been visited by a potential new business recently.

In a time when many experts are hinting of a partial economic slowdown, in the VEC service area, the future looks bright. And we at VEC are very proud to be a part of that future.

Lillard-Shadow Scholarship Applications Available

The March 2 deadline for graduating seniors to apply for one of Volunteer Energy Cooperative's four Lillard-Shadow scholarships will be here sooner than you think.

VEC will be awarding four \$2,000 college scholarships to members of the graduating class of 2007 through the Lillard-Shadow Scholarship Program.

Applications are available at all VEC Customer Service Centers and in the guidance office of the following high schools: Pickett County High School, York Institute, Clarkrange High School, Cumberland County High School, Stone Memorial High School, Monterey High School, Rhea County High School, Midway High School, Meigs County High School, McMinn County High School, McMinn Central High School, Bradley Central High School, Cleveland High School, Walker Valley High School, Chattanooga Central High School, Polk County High School, and Ooltewah High School.

Applications are also available at VEC customer service centers and online at www.vec.org.

Students who are dependents of VEC electricity customers attending high schools not listed above are also eligible for scholarships. Students who are dependents of VEC or TVA employees are not eligible.

The scholarships honor the community spirit of Willis A. Shadow, the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Agent for Meigs County in 1933 and J.W. Lillard, a Meigs County attorney. Their leadership was instrumental in creating Meigs County Power Association, the organization that would ultimately become Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

Because of this history an applicant's community service activities and citizenship are weighed heavily by an independent panel of judges who determine scholarship winners. 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, including all documentation, must be received at Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Corporate Headquarters in Decatur, Tennessee no later than 5 p.m. EST on March 2, 2007.