

Lillard-Shadow Scholarship Applications Available

The March 2 deadline for graduating seniors to apply for one of four Volunteer Energy Cooperative Lillard-Shadow scholarships is fast approaching. VEC will be awarding four \$2,000 college scholarships to members of the graduating class of 2008 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 3, 2008.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative teamed up with Cleveland Utilities and the Tennessee Valley Authority to host an energy efficiency workshop for local builders featuring nationally recognized energy consultant Doug Rye, "The King of Caulk and Talk" in November. Doug Rye is featured in newsletters and magazines across the country and is well known for hosting his radio call-in show, "Home Remedies". His live radio show has been broadcast for more than 17 years and is broadcast by satellite to 15 states including Chattanooga's WGOW 102.3.

What is Your Best Green Energy Option?



The extensive discussions regarding global warming in the media have focused national attention on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy production. There are currently a number of legislative initiatives that are designed to mandate certain levels of production from these sources. While well-intentioned, these legislative mandates are often costly and short-sighted.

Wind and Solar Solutions

A typical solar system that is installed for residential applications costs between \$25,000 and \$30,000. It is producing energy only in the daytime on sunny days and will produce just a fraction of the needs of a typical household. There is not enough wind in most of the Southeastern U.S. to support viable wind energy systems using today's technology. As with solar systems, wind turbines are very expensive to install and maintain.

Green Energy

So what's the best way to go "green" in your household? How can we all make a difference right now? Remember the old adage: the cheapest – and greenest – kilowatt hour is one that is never produced. If we make a concerted, nationwide effort to reduce our usage, less energy will need to be generated and older, dirtier, and less efficient power generation plants can be taken out of service.

Compact Fluorescent Lighting

Consider this: If every American home replaced just one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars (Source: http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cls.pr_cls). Compact fluorescent bulbs are available in a variety of shapes and sizes for all types of household applications. They are more expensive than regular bulbs but typically last years longer.

Programmable Thermostats

These devices automatically adjust your home's temperature settings, allowing you to save energy while you're away or sleeping. They are more convenient and accurate than manual thermostats and improve your home's comfort. They save energy for the nation and help you save money on utility bills. Using less energy helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production.

Seal it Up

Experts estimate that air infiltration caused by the holes cut for plumbing, electrical, and other infrastructure in the typical home is equivalent to leaving a door open at all times. Sealing these air leaks makes your home more energy efficient. Using insulating materials (insulation, foam, caulking, etc.) is an inexpensive way to make your home greener and less costly to heat and cool. While you are at it, check your attic to make sure that it is insulated to at least R-30.

Energy Labels

Always consider the energy usage labels when purchasing new or replacement appliances, windows, and heating and cooling units. These labels provide important information about the item's energy efficiency and cost to operate.

The Bottom Line

It is everyone's responsibility to become better informed about global warming issues, green energy, and the costs and benefits of conservation measures. We can all take immediate, affordable, measurable steps to reduce our needs so that energy can effectively be managed for future generations. Renewable energy is a great idea whose technology needs to be improved and enhanced in order for these systems to be reliable producers of energy adequate to sustain economic growth.

There are more ideas about how to save energy in this edition of *Powerlines*. And there are more energy saving tips as well as information about renewable energy sources at our website at www.vec.org.

When Temperatures Go Down, Electric Bills Can Go Up

Use These Tips to Keep the Lid on Your Electric Bill This Winter

Keeping electric bills under control during a cold snap doesn't require a degree in rocket science. If you are willing to develop some good energy-saving habits this winter, you can save money, save energy and still remain comfortable. If you heat your home with a new, energy-efficient heat pump - congratulations. You're already halfway there. If you use another type of heating system or one that is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a new energy-saving heat pump. Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) can help finance a heat pump through TVA's energy right® program.

Another great way to battle electric bills that spike in extremely cold or extremely hot weather is to sign up for VEC's Levelized Billing option. Levelized Billing means no big swings in your electric bill. It takes the guesswork out of your household budget. (See the Levelized Billing article in this issue.) Here are more tips on how to keep from wasting energy and money this winter: If you haven't replaced your heating system's air filter in the last month, do it now. A dirty filter will reduce air flow which makes your system work harder. Also, cover the filter slot with a piece of wide tape to keep air from getting in around filter edges without passing through the filter.

Be sure your ducts are delivering all the warm air they can. If you can see the duct seams where the metal comes together, seal these joints with shiny foil tape with a UL-181 label or duct mastic (also called duct sealant).

You can also take off the duct registers in your rooms (usually all you need to do is back out two screws) and check the connection between the duct and the drywall. You may see a gap. This gap allows heated air to escape into the walls. Cover this gap with foil tape or fill it with duct mastic. Also, with the register off, check for any other gaps that would allow heated air to flow behind walls. If there is a gap or a hole, seal it up.

If you have any ducts that run into the attic or through a cold basement or crawlspace, be sure the ducts are well insulated. If the insulation is missing or falling off, most home improvement stores sell insulation for ducts. Try to insulate to at least an R-6. Be sure to seal any leaks in the ducts first, then wrap the duct in insulation. If you have flex-duct (shiny metal flexible duct tubes), be sure there are no rips or tears and the ducts are as straight as possible.

You can also prevent heat loss by sealing air leaks around window and door frames with caulk or weather stripping.

Keep shades and curtains open during the day so the sun can help make your home warmer. Close them in the evening to keep the heat in. Use ceiling fans to circulate the warmer air found near the ceiling throughout your home.

Consider installing glass doors in front of your fireplace to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney. Always keep the fireplace damper closed when the fireplace is not in use.

Be sure to turn off bathroom and kitchen vent fans when their work is done. Remove window air conditioning units in the winter. If this can't be done, enclose the unit with an air conditioner cover to prevent drafts.

VEC Customers *Share*

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

By allowing their electric bills to be rounded up to the next dollar Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers funded \$34,500 in community service grants in November. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, a total of \$2,434,171 in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant applications is the last working 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 November include: Rural Health Clinic of the Cumberlands, Crossville - \$2,800; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6277, Monterey - \$2,000; West Polk County Empty Stocking Committee - \$2,000; Decatur Firemen's Fund - \$2,000; Pall Mall Fire Department - \$2,000; Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison - \$1,960; Frank P. Brown Elementary School PTO, Crossville - \$1,600; Full Circle Women's Services, Athens - \$1,500; Kiwanis Club of Spring City - \$1,500; Creating Christmas Memories, Cleveland - \$1,200; Birchwood Senior Neighbors - \$1,040; Banner Roslin Community Center, Jamestown - \$1,000; Pickett County K-8 Student Council - \$1,000; Senior Citizens of Cumberland County - \$1,000; Avalon Center, Crossville - \$1,000; Midway Quarterback Club - \$1,000; McMinn County Foster Care Association - \$1,000; Knights of Columbus Council 8152, Crossville - \$1,000; Tennessee Christian Academy, Cleveland - \$1,000; Meigs County Show Team - \$1,000; Midway Youth League - \$1,000; Tennessee Valley Theatre, Spring City - \$600; Infusion Solutions, Crossville - \$600; Polk County Food Bank - \$500; Spring City 8th Grade Washington DC Trip - \$500; Spring City Elementary School PTO - \$500; Oak Grove Youth Mission Team, Ocoee - \$500; Friends for the Library at Shenandoah Baptist Academy, Cleveland - \$500; MAC Club, Kingston - \$500; Chestuee United Methodist Youth Group, Cleveland - \$300; United Christian Youth, Byrdstown - \$200; and Mayland Community Organization, Inc., Crossville - \$200.



VEC Customers Share Board Member Alton Lingerfelt, center, presents a grant check to Barry Narramore of Midway Youth League, left, and John Burnum of the Midway Athletic Club.

VEC opened the new Spring City Customer Service Center located at 425 Wassom Memorial Highway, on December 10.



VEC Family Shares Their Best Recipes with Your Family

Volunteer Energy Cooperative employees are putting together a sumptuous sampling of some of their favorite family recipes to share with your family. The recipes are available, absolutely free, at www.vec.org. Just look for the recipe link on the home page. Here's a little sneak peek:

Lazy Sunday Breakfast Pizza

- 1 pkg. regular pork sausage
- 1 can (8.5 oz) refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 cup frozen hash brown potato cubes-thawed
- 4 oz. (1 cup) shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 tbsp milk
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 3 tbsp each diced red and yellow pepper (optional)
- Green onions (optional)
- 2 tbsp grated parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 375. In large skillet, cook sausage. Separate rolls into eight triangles. Place in ungreased 12" rimmed pizza pan with points toward the center. Press together, seal perforations and form a circle 1" larger in diameter than pan bottom. Turn edges under to make a slight rim. Sprinkle sausage over crust. Top with potatoes. Add peppers and or green onions. Sprinkle with cheese. Stir eggs, milk salt and pepper in small bowl; pour over pizza. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Bake 20 minutes or until eggs are set and crust is golden.

ATTENTION AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

Effective January 1, 2008 farmers, timber harvesters, and nursery operators must qualify for and receive an Agricultural Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption from the Tennessee Department of Revenue to make agricultural purchases exempt from tax. **A copy of this certificate MUST be on file in the local VEC office in order for the tax exemption to apply to electric service.** More information is available from the

Tennessee Department of Revenue
(1-800-342-1003 or www.tennessee.gov/revenue).

Levelized Billing Puts You in Control

It's a predictable cycle. Each year, electric customers experience "sticker shock" as temperatures dip in the winter and more electricity is used to heat their homes.

VEC's Levelized Billing program will keep electric bills more consistent from month to month and help you avoid sticker shock.

Levelized Billing calculates an average cost based on a 12-month moving average of electric usage. Levelized Billing customers do not have a yearly "true-up" - the average is re-calculated each month. As the name implies, the goal of levelized billing is to make customer bills more LEVEL. Levelized Billing is now available to VEC customers. Customers with previous usage history can sign up at any time during the year. Levelized Billing helps customers better manage their household expenses.

You can get more information about VEC's Levelized Billing option and even request to be enrolled in the program at the VEC website at www.vec.org.

Steve Scott Earns Certified Arborist Title

Steve Scott, who joined Volunteer Energy Cooperative as right-of-way superintendent in the spring of 2007, was recently awarded the title of Certified Arborist by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Steve supervises VEC's efforts to trim trees back from powerlines to prevent outages. The Certified Arborist title means that he has completed an extensive schedule of education and training to insure that he can perform these duties in keeping with the highest standards of tree care. He successfully completed his examinations in November. "The knowledge and experience that I've gained is what will ultimately help me do my job to the highest possible standards," Scott said. "But the certification is a nice official recognition to have."



VEC's Right-of-Way Superintendent Steve Scott has earned his Certified Arborist designation.

Steve is a life-long Meigs County resident. He graduated from Meigs County High School and went on to earn his Bachelor's of Science Degree in Forest Resource Management from the University of Tennessee in 1996. He is a member of the Tennessee Forestry Association, the Tennessee Urban Forest Council and the International Society of Arborists. He is also an officer in the Lion's Club, a member of F&M Meigs Lodge 213, and a member of Goodfield United Methodist Church. Steve has been married to his wife, Julie, for nine years and they have two children, Ella Kate who is four years old and Joseph Landon who is two years old.

The ISA Certified Arborist program was started to improve the level of knowledge and raise standards within the tree care profession. It is designed to assist the public in identifying those arboriculture professionals who have demonstrated, through a professionally developed examination and education program, a thorough knowledge of tree care practices. The ISA is a scientific and educational organization devoted to the dissemination of information in the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees.