

READY TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT ENERGY-EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR HOME?

Federal tax credits are available for the purchase of heat pumps, insulation, windows, and other energy-efficiency improvements.

For more information: visit www.energystar.gov and consult your tax advisor.

Be a smart energy shopper: look for the ENERGY STAR logo on energy-efficiency products.



NOTICE OF ELECTION

In compliance with the bylaws of Volunteer Energy Cooperative, Article IV, Directors; Section 4.05, Notice of Directors to be Elected, I hereby give written notice that the following Directors' terms will expire this year:

- District No. 3 – Hamilton County
- District No. 4 – McMinn County
- District No. 7 – Roane and Loudon Counties

As set forth in Article IV, Section 4.06, in order for a member to become a qualified candidate for Director, he/she shall file with the Secretary of the Cooperative or with his/her duly appointed candidate, signed by him/her and not less than fifty other members in good standing whose premises served by the Cooperative are located in the directorate district of the candidate.

Qualifying petitions and other information pertaining to the elections can be obtained on or after May 29, 2009 by contacting Patty Hurley, Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322, or by calling 423-334-7050.

Qualifying petitions must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative or his/her designee at the VEC Corporate Office in Decatur, Tennessee by 5 p.m. EDT, June 5, 2009.

Sammy Norton
Secretary-Treasurer

VEC Taking Bids on Surplus Vehicles

Volunteer Energy Cooperative will be accepting sealed bids until 5 p.m. on June 1 for two Chevy Blazers and two Chevy pick-up trucks. For more information visit VEC's website at www.vec.org or call 423-334-7031.

VECcustomers Share Demonstrates What a Cooperative is all About

As I write this column, our VECcustomers Share program is preparing to give away its 3 millionth dollar in community service grants. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, grants have been awarded to school booster groups, food pantries, literacy programs, volunteer fire and rescue squads, and a wide variety of efforts to improve the communities we serve.

The program truly incorporates the spirit of a cooperative.

Getting your electricity from an electric cooperative is a very different experience than getting it through a municipally owned or an investor owned utility service and the VECcustomers Share program is a great example of how.



Rody Blevins is Volunteer Energy Cooperative's President/CEO

The VECcustomers Share program – just like Volunteer Energy Cooperative – was not formed to earn a profit. Both were founded solely to serve the community. Both are also operated by collective efforts. No one person shoulders the entire burden. In the case of the VECcustomers Share program, more than 77% of VEC customers participate and the average donation each participant makes is about 50 cents per month. This is a small amount of money, but when that pocket change is pooled with the change donated by all the other participants, together we can do tremendous things in our communities.

It's the same cooperative spirit that our mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, great aunts, great uncles, and others drew upon when they formed the electricity distribution company now known as VEC in the mid 1930s.

Back then, the for-profit power companies refused to come to this part of Tennessee. They calculated that people lived too far apart – meaning they would have to string too many miles of power lines to reach too few customers. They didn't think they could make enough money doing it, so they refused. That's when a group of citizens in Meigs County led by Willis Shadow and J.W. Lillard decided to form their own electricity distribution cooperative. Everyone shared equally in the effort and everyone shared equally in the benefits.

VEC is operated the same way today as it was in the beginning in 1935. We all share in the effort, we are all members of the cooperative, we all have an equal vote in electing the board that sets our policies, and we all share in the benefits.

The VECcustomers Share program and VEC are very much alike. When everyone pitches in, no one has to shoulder all the burden or bear all the responsibility. But when everyone's efforts are joined together, we find we can achieve great things for our communities.

Planting the Right Trees in the Right Places Helps Prevent Power Outages



In this part of Tennessee we are blessed with an abundance and a variety of trees that many climates can only dream about. It is just one of the many things that make this a wonderful place to live. But it can also be quite a challenge for the power company charged with keeping a reliable flow of electricity to 109,000 customers in all or part of 17 counties.

Studies have shown that about 85% of all power outages are caused by trees or tree limbs falling into power lines. VEC and our contractors trim or remove trees if they pose a risk to power poles or power lines. Often the tree owners are unhappy that trimming needs to occur, but VEC has no choice. We can either trim or remove the tree or we can allow many people to lose power without even trying to prevent the outage. VEC has even stepped up efforts to clear rights of way to prevent outages in the last few years.

To prevent having a tree trimmed extensively or removed, the best solution is to plant the right tree in the right place.

- **Small trees** – 30 feet or less in height – should be planted at least 10 feet from buildings and 20 to 25 feet away from power lines.
- **Medium trees** – 30 to 70 feet in height – should be planted at least 15 feet from buildings and 30 to 35 feet from power lines.
- **Large trees** – those reaching 70 feet or more in height – should be planted at least 25 feet from buildings and 40 to 45 feet from power lines.
- **No tree trunk**, no matter how small the tree, should be within 10 feet of a utility pole.

The University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension office prepared the following guidelines for power line-friendly tree planting:

Recommended Trees For Planting Under Utility Lines.			
Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Note
<i>Acer ginnala</i>	Amur maple	15-20 ft	Small tree native to China
<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese maple	15-25 ft	Numerous varieties, colors, forms
<i>Acer tataricum</i>	Tatarian maple	15-20 ft	Bushy, spreading tree
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	Serviceberries	15-25 ft	Many varieties and hybrids; a few reach 30 ft
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern redbud	20-25 ft	Showy flowers, varieties come in many colors
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	White fringetree	12-20 ft	White, drooping flowers. Native
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering dogwood	20-25 ft	White flowers, varieties come in different colors
<i>Cornus kousa</i>	Kousa dogwood	20-25 ft	White flowers, varieties come in different colors
<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>	Common smoketree	10-15 ft	Avoid the American smoketree, which grows to 30 feet
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Hawthorns	15-25 ft	Avoid Washington hawthorn, which grows to 35 feet
<i>Hamamelis</i> spp.	Witchhazel	15-20 ft	Many varieties & cultivars; common witchhazel grows to 30 feet
<i>Ilex x attenuata</i>	Foster holly	10-15 ft	An evergreen, used as a barrier in landscapes
<i>Koeleruteria paniculata</i>	Golden raintree	20-25 ft	Yellow flowers in late spring, can grow to 35 feet in some locations
<i>Lagerstroemia</i> spp.	Crape myrtle	15-25 ft	Many varieties & cultivars. Most grow under 25 feet in TN. Avoid the "tree" types
<i>Magnolia x soulangiana</i>	Saucer magnolia	20-30 ft	Grows smaller than 30 feet in TN. Many varieties, but bold flowers are susceptible to late freeze
<i>Magnolia stellata</i>	Star magnolia	10-20 ft	Delicate, white flowers. Attractive landscape tree
<i>Malus</i> sp.	Flowering crabapples	20-25 ft	Many ornamental varieties, all colors of flowers, small fruit that some consider messy. Good wildlife tree
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Common lilac	10-20 ft	Small tree or large shrub

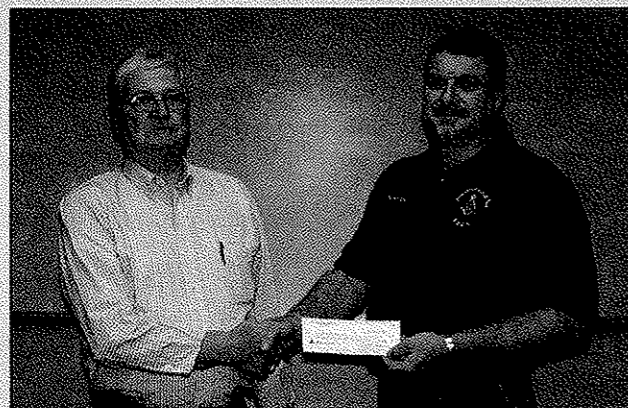
VEC Customers Share

A Little Change Can Go a Long Way

Through the generosity of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers who allowed their electric bills to be rounded up to the next whole dollar, the VEC Customers Share program funded \$32,800 in community service grants in February. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$2.9 million in grants have 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 February include: American Red Cross Hiwassee Chapter, McMinn County - \$1,500; Benton Elementary School PTO - \$1,500; Chattanooga Central High School Wrestling Booster Club - \$1,185; VFW Post 6277, Monterey - \$1,032; Plateau Pregnancy Services, Crossville - \$1,000; Lady Wildcats Softball Booster Club, Delano - \$1,000;

Cumberland County TAD - \$1,000; South Fentress Outdoor Sports, Inc., - \$1,000; Byrdstown Masonic Lodge #496 - \$1,000; Midway Athletic Club - \$1,000; Crossville Housing Authority - \$1,000; Clyde York 4-H Center, Crossville - \$1,000; Polk County Alumni Association - \$1,000; Allardt Fire Department - \$1,000; Horizon Alternative School Teachers/Parents Association, Cleveland - \$1,000; Midway Middle School Beta Club - \$1,000; Friends of the Pickett County Library - \$1,000; Cumberland Artisans for Creative Expression, Crossville - \$1,000; Meigs United Methodist Church Parish Ramp Builders - \$918; Central Outreach Center, Spring City - \$900; Mountain First Responders, Crawford - \$850; Birchwood Senior Neighbors - \$815; Monterey Depot Historical Society - \$750; Decatur Fire Department - \$750; Rogers Creek Youth Basketball Program, Athens - \$750; Friends of the Library of Spring City - \$700; Reading is Fundamental, Monterey - \$600; Muddy Pond Volunteer Fire Department, Monterey - \$550; Meigs Middle School Fellowship of Christian Athletes - \$500; Walker Valley High School Softball Booster Club - \$500; American Red Cross Hiwassee Chapter, Meigs County - \$500; Tri-State Therapeutic Riding, Cleveland - \$500; Delano Lions Club - \$500; Fentress County Food Bank - \$500; Taylor's Ruritan Club, Cleveland - \$500; Church of the Harvest/Loaves and Fishes Food Bank, Grimsley - \$500; Pickett County High School Football Booster Club - \$500; Charleston Elementary School PTO, Panther Club Choir - \$400; Girls Scout Troop #314, Spring City - \$400; Senior Lighthouse Center, Spring City \$400; and River Ridge Environmental Education Program, Ten Mile - \$300.



VEC Customers Share Board Member Galen Rector, left, presents a grant check to Thomas Hill of the Byrdstown Masonic Lodge #496.

Clarkrange Junior Attends Leadership Summit

Roman West, a junior at Clarkrange High School, was among 44 high school juniors representing 22 electric cooperatives across the state who attended the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's (TECA) annual Youth Leadership Summit March 16-18 in downtown Nashville. West was sponsored by Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC).

"The annual summit teaches students the important roles of electric cooperatives in Tennessee's rural communities and provides an opportunity to see, in person, the legislative process in the Tennessee Capitol," said Joe Jackson, TECA director of youth and member relations.

Robert McCarty, VEC's communications and public relations coordinator, served as chairman of the event planning committee and also served as a chaperone.

"We try to help equip promising young people to assume leadership roles in their communities," McCarty said. "We focus on leadership development, creative problem solving, and team building activities in addition to giving them a look at the legislative process."



Roman West, right, and his "Energy Battle" teammates test their knowledge in a quiz show game.



Roman West and Ashley Fuqua met briefly with Governor Phil Bredesen during a tour of the Tennessee State Capitol Building.

Hosted by TECA and funded in part by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, a not-for-profit cooperative financing institute that provides an independent source of financing to member cooperatives nationwide, the 2009 summit's theme was "Leadership Rocks."

Roman is the son of Roger and Marty West and lives in Wilder, TN. "I had a complete blast," West said. "The activities at the YMCA were the best part. The weather was great and I was surrounded by nice, funny, and very bright young people."

The summit kicked off Monday evening, March 16, with dinner at the group's hotel, the Millennium Maxwell House. Get-acquainted and leadership-development activities followed, led by cooperative employees and special guests, including 2008 Miss Tennessee Ellen Carrington and Tennessee Titans cheerleaders Lindsey Roznovsky and Melissa Hodges.

Students rose early on Tuesday, March 17, for breakfast and preparations for a visit to Legislative Plaza where they would meet their state legislators and sit in on House and Senate committee meetings. Amy Gallimore, director of leadership with TRI Leadership Resources, LLC, gave an excellent presentation on leadership before TECA Director of Government Affairs David Callis introduced State Rep. Phillip Johnson of Pegram. He welcomed the students to Tennessee's capital and discussed the legislative process with them. Callis then explained current bills affecting cooperatives and described what everyone should expect from the legislative committees they were to visit.

The 11th graders then took a tour of the State Capitol and moved on to Legislative Plaza, where they saw state government in action and posed for photos in front of the historic Capitol.

Following the visit to Capitol Hill, the group enjoyed lunch and leadership activities at a Nashville-area YMCA camp. After dinner, students were treated to a tour of Nashville before returning to the hotel for a special competition playing on the summit's 2009 theme — a virtual "battle of the bands" featuring the interactive "Rock Band" video game. Finally, the busy day was capped off with an ice cream social.

Wednesday morning, the students learned more about Tennessee's electric cooperatives. The vital role co-ops play in the communities they serve was emphasized through activities in which students formed their own co-ops, making decisions on such important topics as rights-of-way maintenance, bill disputes and power outages. Later, they put it all together, answering trivia questions about electric cooperatives and the state in the "Energy Battle" competition.

"We offer these educational experiences for our students — our future members — because we want them to understand what makes a cooperative special," McCarty said. "We want them to be able to appreciate their electric cooperative and understand why it was so important to form electric cooperatives in the first place."



Roman competed in a battle of the bands with the Rock Band video game.

Right-of-Way Spraying Schedule

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's right-of-way (ROW) spraying program is scheduled to get under way in mid June to September, according to Steve Scott, VEC's vegetation control specialist.

Scott said the spraying is necessary to help prevent extended power outages caused by falling trees and to assist with quick power restorations by improving access for service crews.

"We spray when growth is most active," Scott said. "We only use EPA-approved herbicides that are rated the safest and we use them in low concentrations."

Scott said the herbicides work on woody growth without affecting flowers and grass. The herbicides VEC will be using have been tested and deemed harmless to humans and animals. Copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets for each herbicide are available at VEC customer service centers.

Scott said the spraying technique used is selective, low volume and low concentration, backpack spraying to prevent drift.

Organic growers with questions in the Cleveland and Decatur service districts should contact Scott at 423-334-7034. Organic growers in the Crossville service district should contact Tommy Walker at 931-839-2217 ext. 7411 and organic growers in the Jamestown service district should contact Butch Smith at 931-864-3685 ext. 7651.

2009 ROW Spraying Schedule

Benton Service Area

Athens Road, Baker Bridge Road, Benton Springs Road, Bowater Road, Columbus Road, Dentville Road, Hwy 314, Linsdale, Oak Grove Road, Patty Road, 411 South, Welcome Valley Road.

Byrdstown Service Area

Bloomington, Caney Creek, Eagle Cove, Greenbrier, Love Lady, Jones Chapel Star Point, Smyrna.

Cleveland Service Area

Benton Pike, Charleston, Candies Creek, Cates Lane, Chatata Valley, Council Road, Dry Valley, Eureka Road, Frontage Road, Hwy 11 South, Lower River Road, Mouse Creek, Old Charleston, Tasso Lane, Upper River Road, Walker Valley.

Crossville Service Area

Biglick, Clint Lowe Road, Deep Draw Road, Dunbar Road, Homestead, Hwy 127 South, Turner Greenhouse Road, Turner Road, Vandever Road.

Decatur Service Area

Athens, Cedar Springs Road, Clearwater, Eastanallee, Hwy 11, Hwy 39, Hwy 307, Longmill, Meadowfork, Mt Harmony, Mt Verd, Piney Grove, Riceville, Riceville-Decatur Road, Rodgers Creek, Rocky Mount, South Liberty, Spring Creek.

Georgetown Service District Gamble Rd, Grasshopper, Hwy 58 North, Snowhill.

Monterey Service District

Cumberland Cove, Jim Garrett Road, Highway 70, and Mayland.

Spring City Service District

Hwy 302, Hwy 68 East, New Lake Road, Yellow Creek, Watts Bar, Wolf Creek.