

VEC Automated Meter Project Passes Halfway Point

In May of 2006 Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) began an ambitious project to automate the meter reading process. As of late August of this year more than 73,000 meters with automated reading capabilities have been installed.

The program has reduced the carbon footprint of meter reading by more than 50% and produces more accurate results, according to VEC's Systems Administrator Dion Cooper.

"That's a lot of trucks we don't have to roll to read meters," Cooper said. "And since we are able to get daily readings, it results in more accurate billing."

Automated meter reading (AMR) allows VEC to collect customers' usage information accurately, efficiently, and economically. It drastically reduces the chances of incorrect meter readings and allows VEC to pinpoint customer-use patterns and enhances load management.

It also helps VEC spot potential problems before they show up on a customer's bill.

"Before, we got a meter reading once a month," Cooper said. "Now we get daily readings which allow us to

VEC Adds Temperature Information on Bills

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) has begun including average temperature data on customer's bills. The data is intended to provide a useful tool for customers who want to monitor their energy use and make useful comparisons of temperature data from month to month and year to year.

The VEC bills include the average daily temperature for the month being billed, the same month a year ago, and the previous month. Since heating and cooling costs account for about 50% of the typical electric bill, customers can use this information to spot potential opportunities for saving money.

The temperature information is given in Fahrenheit degrees and, when compared to a customer's thermostat setting can indicate how much energy a customer uses to heat and cool their home. For example, if the information indicates the average

spot potential errors before they show up on a customer's bill."

Cooper said it is not just a case of a computer dumping a lot of information into the system without human oversight. "We still have people looking over the information to spot any unusual readings that could be a sign of a problem."

AMR also eliminates some of the other problems that hindered human meter readers such as limited access to meters and human errors.

VEC is remotely reading more than 64,000 meters and meter installations are proceeding at a pace of about 3,000 per month. Crews are currently installing meters in the Spring Creek area of McMinn County, in Jamestown, and in Crossville.

VEC Vice President of Operations Clyde Jolley said customers who are scheduled to have AMR meters installed get a phone call a few days before crews change their meters.

"The installation requires a very brief power outage of about one minute," Jolley said. "We call at least a couple of days and sometimes a week or two in advance."

Customers do not have to be home for the meter to be switched.

0.15	104.00	2.00	5.95
Average Temperature (Degrees F) for JUN 09: 76 MAY 10: 65 JUN 10: 72			
5.37	PAID BY BANK DRAFT		
TE FEE CHARGED TER 7/20/2010	TOTAL DUE \$ 15 111.95		

temperature for the month was 76 degrees, and a customer's thermostat is set at 72 degrees, it shows the home's cooling system had to cool the home an average of four degrees per day during the billing period. If the average temperature for the month was 65 degrees, then the customer's heating system had to heat the home an average of seven degrees each day to reach the thermostat setting of 72.

The average temperature varies depending upon where in VEC's service area a customer lives, so local data is used to generate the information on the bill.

Many customers have already responded positively to the added information, and VEC is pleased to offer this information to help customers manage their energy use as economically as possible.

Cooperatives are a Different Kind of Business

October is Cooperative Month in the United States. This designation helps cooperatives like Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) build awareness and educate the public about the cooperative way of doing business.

Each year, during the month of October, the nation's 48,000 cooperatives celebrate Cooperative Month by working to educate

people about the qualities that make cooperatives unique. Cooperatives are based on the principle of shared ownership by those who share a common need for a product or service. VEC was formed by Meigs County citizens in 1935 after investor-owned utilities refused to serve the area. VEC is one of the largest cooperatives – in terms of square miles served – in the nation and we are still owned by the customers we serve. And we are still a not-for-profit organization.

VEC is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors comprised of customers just like you. Besides fulfilling our mission of providing reliable electric service at the lowest possible price, we also offer programs and services to help people conserve energy and get the most from their energy dollar. We also offer programs to promote economic development, youth scholarships, leadership development, and to support communities throughout our 17-county service area.

During Cooperative Month we

want to remind you that we are a customer-owned utility that is managed and governed by citizens who live in the areas we serve. As a cooperative, quality service is our bottom line - we work for you.

In addition to electing directors to oversee our operations, our customers enjoy the benefit of some

of the lowest electricity rates available. Since we are owned by our customers – and not a group of stockholders who expect to see their share of the profits – VEC can offer lower rates than investor-owned utilities.

We also operate VEC in accordance with the seven guiding principles of cooperatives:

- 1) Voluntary and open membership;
- 2) Democratic member control;
- 3) Members' economic participation;
- 4) Autonomy and independence;
- 5) Education, training, and information;
- 6) Cooperation among cooperatives; and
- 7) Concern for community.

Being a member of a cooperative is different than just being the customer of an electric company. We work hard to make those differences as beneficial to our members as possible. And we hope our customers appreciate the difference.



Rody Blevins is Volunteer Energy Cooperative's President/CEO

"ELECTRICITY ROCKS" 4-H'ers at 2009 Electric Camp

A group of enthusiastic 4-H'ers from the Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) service area traveled to the University of Tennessee June 23-26 to attend the 2009 4-H Electric Camp, an annual event bringing hundreds of seventh and eighth-grade students from across Tennessee to the Knoxville campus each summer to learn about electricity.

VEC offered a total of 34 scholarships – two in each of the 17 counties VEC serves – for students to attend the camp free of charge.

These 4-H'ers were among 270 youth representing counties across the state who explored energy, electricity and the basic sciences through fun-filled, hands-on learning centers led by electric cooperative employees and representatives from other utility companies. This year's camp, themed "Electricity Rocks," featured six interactive learning centers: Wiring an Extension Cord, Energy-Vampire Slayers, Electric Motors, Robotic Arms, Electric Vehicles, and Electrical Safety.

In addition to the learning centers, the camp also featured other educational activities such as "Dr. Mike's Science Laboratory" presented by Dr. Mike Buschermohle, a professor with UT Extension, and "Watt is Electricity?" by Science Zone presenter Ben Roy. The campers also spent a fun-filled afternoon at Dollywood theme park in nearby Pigeon Forge.

VEC's Tracey Allen was one of the adult leaders at the camp.



VEC's Tracey Allen and Robert McCarty, right, pose with students from VEC's service area at 4-H Electric Camp.

"The focus of the 4-H Electric Camp is to improve young people's knowledge of electricity, energy conservation, alternative energy sources, electronics, computer applications and electrical safety," said Buschermohle. "Campers develop a better understanding of the important role electricity plays in their lives — plus they have a lot of fun and get to make many new friends from across the state."

4-H Electric Camp is made possible through a unique partnership of UT Extension, the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its member cooperatives like VEC, the systems of the Tennessee Municipal Electric Power, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and other industry donors.

"4-H Electric Camp is special because it utilizes fun, hands-on activities to teach students about science, electricity, and safety," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "We're proud of our partnership with utilities across Tennessee to offer this valuable learning opportunity to young people from our service area."

VEC Customers Share

Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

Through the generosity of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) customers who allowed their electric bills to be rounded up to the next whole dollar, the VECustomers Share program funded \$31,000 in community service grants in July. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$3 million in grants have been awarded. 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 July include: Pickett County Youth League - \$1,610; Midway Athletic Club - \$1,500; Crawford Community Club - \$1,500; Stone Memorial High School Broadcasting Club, Crossville - \$1,500; Cumberland County School Supply Depot - \$1,500; Make-A-Wish Foundation of East Tennessee - \$1,500; Skills USA VICA, Jamestown - \$1,500; Bradley County Livestock Association - \$1,100; Benton Lions Club - \$1,000; Plateau Longbeards - Cumberland Chapter of the Wild Turkey Federation - \$1,000; Monterey Rural Health Clinic - \$1,000; Meigs County-Decatur Public Library - \$1,000; Downtown Crossville Inc., - \$1,000; Learning Center for Adults and Families, Cleveland - \$1,000; Midway High School Golf Booster Club - \$1,000; Fentress County Retired Teachers Association - \$1,000; West Polk County Empty Stocking Fund Volunteer Committee - \$1,000; Riceville Youth Football Program - \$750; Rogers Creek Youth Football and Cheerleading League - \$750; Grandview Community Club - \$600; Veterans of Foreign Wars and Post 9686 Auxiliary, Crab Orchard - \$560; First Baptist Church TeamKids Fall Festival, Spring City - \$550; Mt. Carmel Ladies of Action, Decatur - \$500; "Give a Kid a Chance" Back to School Outreach, Decatur - \$500; American Cancer Society, Bradley County - \$500; American Cancer Society, Hamilton County - \$500; American Cancer Society, McMinn County - \$500; American Legion Post 79, Decatur - \$500; Mountain First Responders, Crawford - \$500; Meigs County Quest for Success - \$500; Polk County Community Advisory Board - \$500; Linsdale Community Services - \$500; Cumberland County Community Chorus - \$440; Rhea County Volunteer Fire Department - \$400; Pickett County High School Art and Drama Club - \$390; Rhea County Health Council - \$300; American Cancer Society, Rhea County - \$300; Tennessee Rush AAU 10 and Under Basketball, Byrdstown - \$250.



VECustomers Share Board members Pauline Sherrer, Jim Purcell, and Carlton Norris, present a grant check to an appreciative group from the Plateau Longbeards.

Generation Partners Program Makes A Believer Out of Crossville Customer

You don't have to convince Evelyn Dybzinski that the TVA/VEC Generation Partners program can pay off for customers - she has the low power bills to prove it.

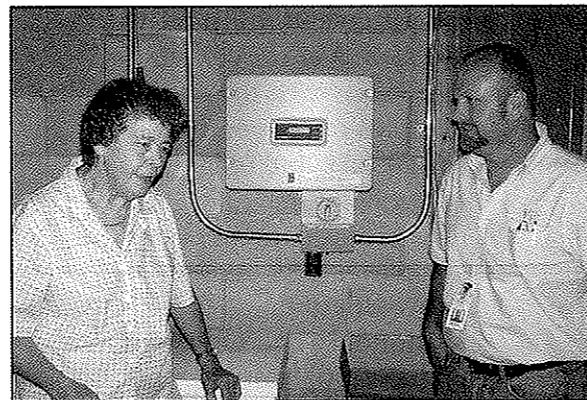
Dybzinski has had power bills as low as \$5 for an entire month of service. And she expects that will go even lower this fall. But her low power bills are attributable to more than her participation in the Generation Partners program. She's been "green" long before "green" became a popular environmental buzzword.

She and her late husband built the log cabin she lives in 30 years ago and they incorporated features that are considered "cutting edge" for green construction today.

"None of this is really new," Dybzinski said. "It just takes about 30 years for these things to come back around and get attention again. The Pueblo Indians knew how to use the sun."

Dybzinski knows how to use the sun too.

Her home is set five degrees from due south and most of the southern façade of the home is glass. In winter

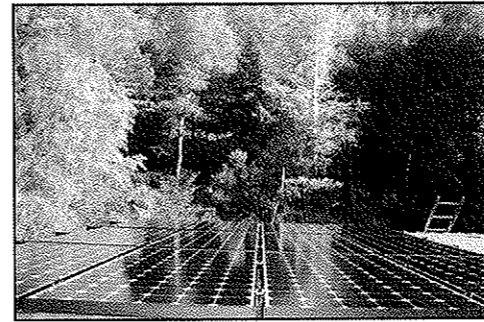


Evelyn Dybzinski shows part of her photovoltaic solar system to VEC's Michael Cook.

the sun's position provides lots of heat and light. The north-facing façade has very small windows, so in summer she gets little solar heat gain.

She also uses the sun in a way that is gaining in popularity quickly. She has solar panels on the roof of her home and by using electricity very conservatively, she finds the panels provide almost all the electricity she needs.

About 15 months ago Dybzinski joined the Generation Partners



Evelyn Dybzinski and her late husband built their log home 30 years ago with a roof that was pitched to maximize the productivity of solar panels.

program which provides incentives and technical support for the installation of renewable electricity generation systems. Participants benefit by defraying the costs of their renewable systems installation and lowering their monthly energy bills through the revenue they receive from selling their green power back to TVA.

Eligible renewable systems include solar, wind, low impact hydro, and biomass.

TVA will purchase all of the solar energy output at a rate of 12 cents per kilowatt-hour above the customer's retail rate and any fuel cost adjustment. The typical 2 kW solar photovoltaic system in the Tennessee Valley produces an average of about 200kWh per month which translates to about \$44 per month generation credit.

So it's clear that Dybzinski is doing a lot more to keep her costs down.

"This is a Mother Earth home," Dybzinski said. "We got a lot of the idea from Mother Earth magazine."

For heat, she burns wood and she's even installed a heat exchanger that allows her to heat more than enough hot water to meet her needs with the wood burning stove. In winter she also hangs her laundry in the basement to dry by the heat of the stove, which she says also adds humidity to her home.

"The logs are eight to 10 inches thick and that provides a lot of insulation. And we put one inch of foam insulation in the basement walls," she said.

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She has also used florescent lighting in the home from the very beginning.

This fall Dybzinski says that by using electricity very conservatively, she hopes to "zero out" - meaning she hopes to generate as much or more electricity than she uses.

Dybzinski's results aren't typical. Most VEC customers don't use electricity as sparingly as she

does, so just adding solar panels would not get them the same type of results. But she's living proof that folks who are willing to make energy-saving lifestyle changes can dramatically reduce their consumption and their costs. They can be on the cutting-edge of energy saving technology - just like Evelyn Dybzinski has for the last 30 years.

No Need to be Afraid of VEC's New, Improved Automated Telephone Services



It's a dark, stormy night. Suddenly your electricity goes out. It's a situation that can cause uneasy feelings among even the strong-hearted. But thanks to Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) new, simplified automated telephone services, reporting your outage will be the least frightening part of the situation.

On July 18th VEC put new streamlined automated telephone services into action that direct customers to the help they need more quickly and more efficiently.

VEC's Vice President of Information Technology Karen Davis said customers will enjoy the added convenience and efficiency of the new system.

"We've revised and streamlined the menu options in a way that helps get customers where they need to go more quickly," Davis said. "And we've added automated options that even allow customers to check on the status of their outage. A big advantage of the automated system is that we become aware of the extent of the outage much sooner because customers can report them so efficiently. That helps us get power restored."

Davis said the new system even offers more options and services for customers during non-outage situations as well.

"Customers can take care of even more tasks at their convenience - not just during business hours," she said.

When customers call they get four basic menu options: 1 - report an outage; 2 - get account information or make payments through the automated system; 3 - customer service options including transferring, stopping, starting, or re-starting electric service, etc.; and 4 - allows VE Natural Gas

customers to report a dangerous natural gas situation. Option 5 repeats the menu options.

If a customer can't decide which menu option fits their particular situation they hold without entering a response to be transferred to a customer service representative. But during extensive outage situations, hold times could be longer.

"During normal conditions, hold times are usually less than one minute," Davis said. "But during heavy outages those times will be longer."

Davis said the new menu is not only simplified, it includes more options for customers to use the automated system to take care of even more business quickly and conveniently. Options have been added to allow customers to check the status of their outage and to update the phone number VEC has on file for the customer's account.

That's an important feature because having a correct phone number on file with VEC allows customers to breeze through reporting an outage or checking the status of an outage without having to enter an account number. Customers who want to update their telephone information or who want to pay their bill via telephone will still need to enter their account number.

The automated telephone payment system accepts checks, and Visa or MasterCard credit or debit cards.

There will always be some scary situations in life, but now, using VEC's automated telephone services to report an outage, check the status of an outage, paying a bill, checking your account status, or access several other services, isn't one of them.