

# "Energized Guyz" Get Students Fired Up about Saving Electricity

Students at several elementary schools in the Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) service area have been learning about energy and electricity and how to use them efficiently with "The Energized Guyz," a live children's theater production from the National Theatre for Children.



Sponsored by VEC and TVA, the program has been presented to schools throughout the Tennessee Valley. During the fall 2009 semester the program has been presented to Benton Elementary School, Uffleman Elementary in Monterey, Bon De Croft Elementary School, Spring City Elementary School, and Homestead Elementary in Crossville in the VEC service area.



During the high-energy production, students learn about how energy is made and how using energy wisely is good for our budgets, good for the environment, and good for the future. The program

also offers follow-up resource materials for educators to help students implement the energy efficiency tips they learn at home and at school.

This is just one of the many programs VEC and TVA offer to increase consumer awareness on ways to use energy more efficiently and stretch our members' energy dollars. For

more information on simple steps to help save energy and money on your monthly electric bills, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).



Members of the Tri-County Ruritan Club present a donation to Danna Thorne, principal of Birchwood Elementary School. On hand for the presentation were (L to R) Justin Kelly, Brandy Baggett, Kristy Kelly, Corbin Kelly, Principal Thorne, Nancy Williams, Kymme Stacks, Terri Stacks, and Vernon Hart.

## Ruritans Donate to School

Members of the Tri-County Ruritan Club prepared hundreds of pancakes, cooking up 150 pounds of batter, for Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Annual Meeting in October. The Ruritans offered their pancake breakfast to all of the 1,900 attendees.

The club received a \$600 donation for their hard work and, in turn, donated the entire amount to Birchwood Elementary School to help with the costs of field trips.



Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

## VEC Wants to Help You Save Money on Your Electric Bill

Volunteer Energy Cooperative has a tradition of incorporating the latest proven technologies to improve the service we offer to our members. In keeping with that goal we rolled out our new, redesigned website on January 15th.

More and more of our members are discovering how quick and easy it is to manage their VEC accounts, get valuable energy-saving information, find out about VEC products and services, track planned and unexpected outages, and even keep up to date on local community events at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org). We've kept the most popular content in place and added a wealth of new content. And it has all been re-packaged into an easier to navigate format to make it fast and easy to locate exactly the information or services you need.

Whether you're paying your electric bill; figuring out which energy

efficiency improvements will get you the most for your dollar; or getting the most up-to-date information available about outages, rebates, specials, and discounts, or trying to get started on a school science project; [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org) is a great place to start.

A separate article in this edition of *Powerlines* contains more information about the new site and some of the tools it provides to help you save time and money while taking advantage of the variety of products and services available to VEC members.

I'd like to invite you to take a virtual stroll around [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org) and see for yourself. With such a wide variety of content and tools, I'm sure you will find plenty of useful information, links, and interactive tools to help you get the most out of your energy dollar.

*We've kept the most popular content in place and added a wealth of new content.*

## Make Sure Your Automatic Payments are Really Automatic

Signing up for VEC's Automated Bank Draft payment program takes the stress and the hassle out of paying your electric bill. If you take advantage of this program, however, it is essential that you notify VEC of any changes that might affect your payment.

Failing to notify VEC if there are changes in your bank routing number, credit card number, or other account information could result in delays and late charges. Don't let simple oversights offset the benefits of this simple, hassle-free program.



## You Don't Have to Sacrifice Comfort for Energy Efficiency



When some people hear the words "energy efficiency" they conjure up images of their family huddled around a flickering candle and shivering through a cold dinner while wearing heavy winter coats.

But William and Peggy Donohoo know better.

The Donohoos are VEC members who live in Harrison and who recently took advantage of VEC's In-Home Energy Evaluation program. VEC energy evaluator Ralph Braly came to the Donohoo home and made several recommendations on how they could live more comfortably and still save on their monthly electric bill.

"I heard about the program through a neighbor," William Donohoo said. "I've been wanting to make some improvements, but I just never got around to it. When I heard about this program, the rebates, and the tax incentives – it was just about a no-brainer at that point."

Peggy Donohoo said she had noticed several signs that the house was not as tight as she would like.

"I noticed cold drafts, especially downstairs, and when neighbors were burning leaves, I could smell the smoke," she said.

"If I set the thermostat on 72, the heat pump ran continuously and would never reach 72," William added. "The heat pump just never cycled off."

Braly, a contract energy evaluator for VEC, visited the Donohoo home and made a thorough inspection. He made several recommendations including adding insulation, caulking and weather stripping cracks around doors

and windows, a heat pump tune-up, and duct sealing. The Donohoos also decided to replace their old windows with more energy-efficient ones.

"Ralph's recommendations were easy to follow and easy to understand," William said. "He communicated to us in a way that was clear for us to understand and he communicated with the contractors in a way that made it clear to them exactly what needed to be done."

The Donohoos recently completed the weatherization upgrades and while they have not yet received an electric bill to determine exactly what their savings will be, they have no doubts that the program is already paying off for them.

Peggy said the cold drafts and odors are no longer sneaking into their home so she is much more comfortable. William said the heat pump can now easily reach his 72-degree comfort zone and now cycles off for extended periods. He also said the drafts that used to chill him in the mornings are a thing of the past.

"I can't say enough good things about the program," William said. "Ralph and Kristy (Kelly – who administers the program at VEC) and the contractors, Springdale Heating and Air (in Cleveland) were all wonderful to work with. And I like the fact that Ralph inspected on the front end and again after the work was done to make sure everything was done right."

For more information on VEC's free In-Home Energy Evaluation program, call your local VEC Customer Service Center and when prompted enter extension 7055.

# VEC Customers Share

## Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

The VECustomers Share program funded \$33,400 in community service grants in November. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$3.2 million in grants has 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](http://www.vec.org).

Organizations receiving grants in November include: Candlelighters Family Support Group, Hamilton County - \$2,000; Fentress County Chapter of the American Red Cross - \$2,000; Veterans Honor Guard, Monterey - \$2,000; McMinn County Foster Care Association - \$1,650; Pickett County Rescue Squad - \$1,500; Fair Park Senior Center, Crossville - \$1,500; Tennessee Wildlife Federation: Hunters for the Hungry - \$1,500; Operation REACH, Kingston - \$1,500; Meigs County High School Theatre Group - \$1,000; McMinn County Junior Livestock Association - \$1,000; Walker Valley High School Volleyball

Boosters - \$1,000; Luminary Health Fair, Roane County - \$1,000; Pickett County K-8, Third Grade Math/Science Explorers Club - \$1,000; Monterey Boy Scout Troop 18 - \$1,000; Banner Roslin Community Center, Jamestown - \$1,000; Cumberland County Imagination Library - \$1,000; Central Outreach Center, Spring City - \$1,000; Bread of Life Rescue Mission, Crossville - \$1,000; Polk County Gridiron Club - \$1,000; Women's Missionary Union, Grandview - \$1,000; Collegedale Adventist Youth in Action - \$1,000; Polk County High School Future Business Leaders of America - \$1,000; Spring City Middle School Boys Basketball Boosters - \$800; Meigs County Showteam - \$500; Springtown Community Support Group, Reliance - \$500; Meigs Historical Society - \$500; Health Occupations Students of America, Decatur - \$500; Kingston Lions Club - \$500; Decatur Civitan Club - \$500; Polk County High School Baseball Dugout Club - \$500; Trinity Tabernacle's Helping Hands, Crossville - \$500; Riceville Parent/Teacher Organization - \$375; McMinn County Senior Citizens, Inc., - \$300; and Polk County Food Bank \$275.



VECcustomers Share Board Member Jerry Stephens, center, presents a check to (L to R) Amber Cannon, Shi Reagan, Tiffany Ross, and Rachel Cross of the Polk County High School Future Business Leaders of America.

## New VEC Website Provides Powerful Energy Management Tools

Volunteer Energy Cooperative unveiled a new, improved website January 15th at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

The website will continue to offer the convenience of VE-Bill, VEC's online bill pay and account management tools; outage updates; extensive information about rates, services, and energy-efficiency tips, and community events. VEC is also adding some powerful new tools – HomeEnergySuite™ and “Kids Korner.” There's also a reference library that allows visitors to research a wealth of energy-related topics.

### HomeEnergySuite™

HomeEnergySuite™ allows customers to easily see the impact of the weather on their energy use. In addition, this new intuitive interface allows users to view charts that break down energy use system by system.

The ability to run an energy analysis specific to a home's construction, local weather and utility rates provides valuable data to homeowners allowing them to make cost-effective energy choices.

The HomeEnergySuite™ is run by a sophisticated energy use analysis system developed by APOGEE Interactive, Inc. a software development

firm based in Atlanta, Georgia that specializes in online solutions for the energy industry.

### Kids Korner

Capturing the hearts and minds of today's younger generation is a tough job -- after all, it's hard to compete with PlayStation games and other high-tech entertainment.

Recognizing the power of the Internet, VEC has added an action-packed section to its Web sites called “Kids Korner” to increase interaction with its younger customers.

Kids Korner delivers engaging and informative “energy edu-tainment.” Using colorful animations, playful graphics, interactive games, puzzles, science experiments, house projects and online coloring books. Kids Korner explores everything from power generation sources, transmission and distribution to electrical safety, energy efficiency and utility careers.

You can see HomeEnergySuite, Kids Korner and all the other new, easy to navigate content at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).



## Appliance Rebate Program Gets the Green Light

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development recently announced approval by U.S. Department of Energy for Tennessee's State Energy and Efficiency Appliance Rebate Program (SEEARP). Tennessee will receive \$5.9 million for the program's rebates and administrative costs and will be funded by federal dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The program will be administered at the state level through ECD.

“This funding provided by the Recovery Act will help Tennessee

families lower their utility bills and have a positive impact on the environment,” said Governor Phil Bredesen. “This will be a welcome addition to Tennessee's ongoing energy conservation initiatives.”

Eligible appliances will include air source heat pumps, central air conditioners and room air conditioners with the Energy Star® designation. A rebate of \$250 will be available for the air source heat pumps and central air conditioners, while room air

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conditioners will be eligible for a \$40 rebate. The target date for the launch of the program is Earth Day, April 22, 2010.

The state of Tennessee plans to partner with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) on the program to reduce administrative and processing costs, as well as to help market and promote SEEARP. The collaboration will allow the state of Tennessee to focus the majority of the ARRA funding on consumer rebates. Consumers receiving rebates under the state's program may also be eligible for additional financial assistance through Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) and

TVA's existing residential efficiency programs.

Only qualifying Energy Star® heating and cooling units purchased after the program launch will be eligible and rebates will not be retroactive. For the latest updates visit [www.tnecd.gov/recovery/energystar](http://www.tnecd.gov/recovery/energystar).

The information in this article was provided by Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and is printed here, with permission, as a service to VEC members. For more information on the program, call (615) 741-2994 or (800) 342-1340, email: [ecd.energypolicy@tn.gov](mailto:ecd.energypolicy@tn.gov)

## VEC Offers College Scholarships



Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) wants to reward students who have used their time and talents to benefit their local communities. VEC's Lillard-Shadow scholarship program rewards academic and community service achievements by awarding four \$2,000 scholarships to students who will graduate from high schools in VEC's service area in the spring of 2010.

The scholarships honor J.W. Lillard and Willis A Shadow, two community leaders who spearheaded efforts to bring electric power to Decatur and Meigs County in the 1930s, forming the organization that would become Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

Four awards of \$500 per semester each (renewable for up to four semesters) will be presented to spring 2010 high school graduates whose parents or guardians are VEC electric

customers. Applications will be judged by an independent panel based on student's community service activities and citizenship - 40%; written communication skills - 20 %; financial need - 25%; and academic achievement - 15%.

Scholarship applications are available at any VEC Customer Service Center or from high school counselors in the VEC service area. Applications are also available online at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

**HURRY! All application materials must be completed and delivered to VEC's Cooperate Office in Decatur no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1, 2010.**

## Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

### Residential Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective January 1, 2010

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For the most current FCA information, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org)