

VEC Launching New Website with "Find the Barn" Contest

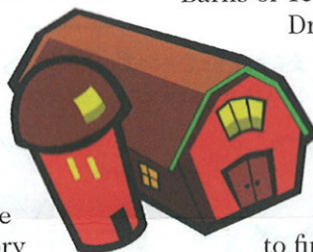


We are so sure that you will find a wealth of useful information on VEC's new website, we'll give you a chance to win a prize just for taking a look.

Just surf the VEC site and find the hidden barn logo and you can win a limited-edition, 8 1/2-by-11-inch, hard-bound book, "Barns of Tennessee." The 160-page pictorial keepsake is a tribute to Tennessee's agrarian history with 375 photographs.

The book was compiled by the staff of The Tennessee Magazine, The Donning Company Publishers and authors Caneta Hankins and Michael Gavin. Most of the images were contributed by Tennessee Magazine Readers.

This \$45 value can be yours FREE when you find the barn logo within the VEC website.



Just browse through the links on the VEC website. When you spot the barn logo, click on it. You'll be linked to a form. Fill out the required fields in the form and submit it. You'll automatically be entered into a monthly drawing for a FREE copy of "Barns of Tennessee."

Drawings will be held on the last business day of each month from January through June, 2010. To re-enter for the following monthly drawing, you'll need to find the barn again and submit a new form. But beware, the barn logo will be moved each month.

Enter as many times as you like, but only one book can be awarded per VEC service address and you must be a VEC customer to win.

Visit the VEC website at www.vec.org to get all the details and to find the barn logo.

Planting the Right Trees in the Right Place 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 power to 109,000 customers in all or part of 17 counties.

To prevent having a tree trimmed extensively or removed, the best solution is to plant the right tree in the right place. The University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension office prepared the following

guidelines for power line-friendly tree planting:

- 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.



Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Tree-Trimming, Spraying Helps Keep the Lights On

I'm sure many of our member/owners would prefer that Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) never trim trees or spray to control vegetation growth. We recognize that our trees are among our most beautiful and treasured natural resources. We also

recognize our responsibility to maintain a reliable flow of electricity to our members - and studies show that 85% of all power outages are caused when trees or tree branches come into contact with power lines.

Balancing those two priorities, VEC's vegetation control policies and techniques translate into a higher degree of safety, more reliable service, and lower costs for our member/owners. Our environmentally-friendly procedures also help protect the health of trees in our service area.

Perhaps the most important reason to trim trees that are encroaching on power lines is to eliminate the safety threat. A tree or a limb that is touching a power line creates a serious safety hazard. Any tree or tree limb that touches a power line can become energized and produce a serious shock to anyone who comes into contact with it. We have a responsibility to prevent these potential threats when we can.

A well-executed vegetation management program also enhances service reliability. Trees that touch power lines drain electricity from the power system, cause voltage

fluctuations, and can trigger safety devices to stop the flow of electricity along a power line.

Besides safety and service reliability issues, VEC has a financial responsibility to our member/owners to weigh the financial impact of

our vegetation management program. The return on the money we spend to control vegetation is significant.

Our trimming and spraying programs help control line loss and outage expenses. These savings translate into lower rates for our member/owners.

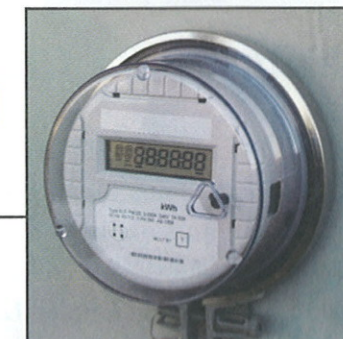
Another important consideration in VEC's vegetation control program is protecting the environment. VEC and our contract crews employ several methods and products to protect the environment. Our tree trimmers use lateral cut techniques which is the preferred method recommended by major universities, professional arborists, and the National Arbor Day Foundation.

In this issue of *Powerlines*, VEC's Vegetation Control Specialist Steve Scott talks more specifically about our right-of-way maintenance program.

I know it's hard to lose a tree – especially when it is one of your favorites. But when that tree causes a power outage, it certainly isn't one of your neighbors' favorites. And tall trees within range of power lines, are a threat to you and your neighbors' electric service.

A tree or a limb that is touching a power line creates a serious safety hazard.

VEC Automated Meter Project Nearing the Finish Line



In May of 2006 Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) began an ambitious \$9.2 million project to automate the meter reading process. VEC has more than 109,000 meters in service and currently more than 83,000 of them have automated reading capabilities.

The project was introduced in 2006 as an Automated Meter Reading (AMR) program. But currently the industry is changing the terminology to Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) to more accurately reflect the capabilities of the new networking technology.

VEC Vice President of Operations Clyde Jolley said the program is resulting in better service while saving money for VEC customers. "That's a lot of trucks we don't have to send out to read meters," Jolley said. "And since we are able to get daily readings, it results in more accurate billing."

AMI 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.

VEC's Systems Administrator Dion Cooper said 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 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."

AMI 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 76,000 meters and meter installations are proceeding at a pace of about 3,500 per month. Crews are currently installing meters in the Jamestown, Monterey, and Lantana areas of Cumberland County

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 or less," 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.



VEC Customers Share

Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

The VECustomers Share program funded \$33,100 in community service grants in December. 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.

Organizations receiving grants in December include: Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison - \$2,000; Friends of Monterey Branch Library - \$2,000; Fentress County Ministerial Association - \$2,000; Rhea County Imagination Library - \$1,811; Meigs County High School Future Business Leaders of America - \$1,500; Stone Memorial High School PTO, Crossville - \$1,500; Bradley/Polk County Foster Adoptive Care Association - \$1,500; Pickett County Imagination Library - \$1,295; McMinn County FFA - \$1,125; Midway Music Club - \$1,000; Mt. Carmel Ladies of Action, Decatur - \$1,000 Veterans Service Office, Crossville - \$1,000; Putnam County 4-H - \$1,000; Polk County High School Lady Wildcats Softball Booster Club - \$1,000; Christmas on the Mountain, Crossville - \$1,000; Benton Lion's Club - \$1,000; Linsdale Community Services - \$1,000; Midway Youth Cheerleading Association - \$1,000; Great Gift Give-Away, Crossville - \$1,000; Pickett County Junior High School Boys Basketball Boosters - \$980; Bachman Academy, McDonald - \$800; Midway High School Hall of Fame - \$750; Candlelighters "Funday," Benton \$750; Infusion Solutions, Crossville - \$600; Martin Elementary School Boys Basketball Boosters Club, Crossville - \$600; Spring City Elementary School PTO - \$589; Cub Scout Pack 561, Ten Mile - \$500; AMVETS Post 90, Decatur - \$500; LBJ & C, Jamestown - \$500; Cumberland County High School Wrestling Booster Club - \$500; Monterey Boys Basketball Booster Club - \$500; Spring City Women's Club-Pillow Division - \$200; Tennessee Blitz 12 and Under Fastpitch Softball Team, Decatur - \$200; Bradley Central High School Chess Club - \$200; and United Way of Bradley County \$200.



VECustomers Share Board Chairman Carlton Norris, left, presents a grant check to Debbie McMahan of the Brown Elementary School PTO.

VEC is Holding Unclaimed Property

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is holding unclaimed property of at least \$50 due to the persons listed below. The owner may claim this property by contacting VEC at the address and/or telephone number listed below:

Volunteer Energy Cooperative, 18359 Highway 58 N. P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322, (423) 334-7017.

If an owner has not contacted us by April 15, 2010, the law requires us to submit this property to the Tennessee Treasury Department Unclaimed Property Division.

Apache Junction, AZ - Bruce Adkins; **Athens, TN** - Tania Andrews; Miranda Denham; Annette McNabb; Marisha Peters; Diane Salazar; Jonathan Wiseman; **Benton, TN** - Joe Bates; Cindy Chreene; Justin Garrison; John Greenway; Melissa Stollings; **Burlington, NC** - Laboratory Corp Of America ; **Charleston, TN** - Billie Allman; Robert Johnson; **Chesterfield, VA** - Martha Ortega; **Clarkrange, TN** - Rebecca Aytes; Jason Frady; **Cleveland, TN** - Christopher Cannon; Phillip Daniel; Kathleen Duke; Clyde Haynes; Gianni Iadanza; Shiela Kichak; Marcella Kincannon; Arlene Lane; Wendy Lombard; Trisha Macdonald; Paul Noble; Evelyn Thomas; **Collegedale, TN** - Rondon Development Group; **Cookeville, TN** - Scott McCowan; **Crossville, TN** - Lisa Back; Oscar Banales; Terry Beaty; Wayne Bible; Chris Bowles; David Cook; Teresa Emerson; Donnie Findley; Randall Ford; Robert Gibson; Regina Hajny; Teddy Hawkins; Jennifer Hendrick; Larry Hesh; Timothy Knipfer; Linden Lyons; Donna Merrill; Nicholas Miller; Billy Miller; Marvin Moore; David Orrock; Joyce Padgett; Kevin Pannebaker; Ashley Philpot; Clovis Potter; Paul Ritchie; Charlene Roberts; Walter Russell; Joseph Sadula; Joshua Weller; James Westhoff; Glenda Williams; Ray Woody; Hilleary For Congress; Dr. D. Pitts;



Decatur, TN - Tracy Ashenfelter; John Dimisa; Lester Ellison; **Decatur, GA** - Yeni Roman; **Delano, TN** - Naomi Lance; **Englewood, TN** - Travis Bridges; **Evensville, TN** - Christina Morgan; **Fairfield Glade, TN** - Michael Payne; **Harrison, TN** - Jason Maginness; Lindsey Turner; **Hixson, TN** - Adrian Harden; **Jacksonville, FL** - Joan Hash; **Jamestown, TN** - Abigail Bartlett; Gary Blevins; Carl Edwards; Angela Johnson; Jessica Kassow; Kathleen Nicholas; **Kingston, TN** - Justin Beeler; Brian Brock; Jennifer McFadyen; James Overton; Laura Parkman; **Knoxville, TN** - Ooltewah Providence LLC ; **London, TN** - Victoria Houser; **Memphis, TN** - LB Radio Of Chattanooga; **Monroe, TN** - Douglas Owen; **Monterey, TN** - Elva Gonzalez; Brenda Pike; **Niota, TN** - James Mathis; **Ocoee, TN** - Jon Buschatzke; Zach Patterson; **Old Fort, TN** - Thomas Bivens; Carol Lynn; **Ooltewah, TN** - Johnny Jones; Russell Qualls; **Pagosa Springs, CO** - Kevin Kephart; **Pikeville, TN** - Jennie Alley; David Denney; **Reliance, TN** - David Neeley; **Riceville, TN** - Sherry Hutson; Yulonda Smith; Brian Woods; **Spring City, TN** - Rose Bailey; Nicki Cagle; Timothy Ermer; Gilbert Gibson; Kevin Kidwell; Rhonda McConnell; Richard Robitaille; Melanie Sharp; Carl Shumate; Frederick Stiefvater; Sarah Stinnett; Dustin Taylor; and **Wiggins, MS** - Catherine Sharkey.

Aggressive Right-of-Way Maintenance Means Fewer Outages

In July of 2005 Volunteer Energy Cooperative began an aggressive right-of-way maintenance and pole inspection program in an effort to cut down on power outages. VEC Vegetation Control Specialist Steve Scott is the man in charge of implementing the program.

Scott said clearing trees away from VEC's 9,000 miles of power lines is paying off in fewer outages.

"We are seeing the results systemwide," Scott said. "Everywhere we've been we are seeing fewer outages. This has proven to be a good return on our investment."

Scott said the program is often misunderstood and under-appreciated by VEC customers. He said VEC must maintain a clearance of 20 feet on each side of the power lines for a total right-of-way of 40 feet.

"This has nothing to do with property lines or road rights-of-way," Scott said. "It is measured from the pole. Many times these might be the same, but often they are not the same."

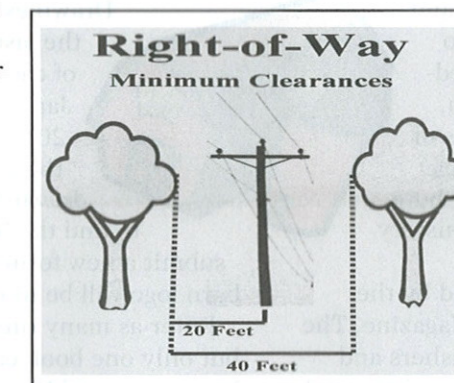
Scott said when trees must be removed crews chip and clear brush from maintained areas and where

animals are kept. They do not clear brush from unmaintained areas such as woodlands, woodland buffers, and overgrown areas.

Crews also do not chip and remove dead trees because chippers

spit out the dead wood, posing a safety hazard for crews.

"Dead trees are going to fall on their own," Scott said. "We try to eliminate the threat to power lines and to people and property by taking them down. But we can't chip them and clear them away."



Scott said during the near future crews will be focusing on the following areas:

Decatur

Hunter Bend • City of Decatur • Decatur Hills • Riceville-Decatur Road Highway 30 • Centerpoint • Clearwater area • Highway 68

Crossville

Highway 127 - North • Potato Farm Road • Plateau Road • Rennie Road Lantana Area • Pigeon Ridge • Tansi • West Crossville • Holiday Hills

Cleveland

Hopewell • No Pone • Mt. Zion • Eureka Road • Frontage Road Highway 60 - East • Harrison Bay

Jamestown

Highway 127 - South • Highway 154 to Pickett State Park • City of Jamestown Wilder Area

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective February 1, 2010

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For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org