

Hamilton County Farmer was a Champion of Rural Electrification



Mr. and Mrs. Connor Bacon pose outside the home that was touted as one of the most modern and progressive homes in the area. Conner is holding the gavel that was awarded to his father, J. Fred Bacon, after he retired from serving as president of the VEC Board of Directors.

In 1938 the late J. Fred Bacon, a quiet, conservative, industrious and community-minded farmer in Hamilton County, began a campaign among his neighbors to bring electric lines to his Georgetown-area community. For those who knew Bacon, the campaign was an extension of his constant efforts to use the latest technologies and scientific information to improve his 393-acre farm and his community.

Bacon won the 1937 "Farm to Prosper" award from *The Chattanooga News* and in 1941 *Progressive Farmer Magazine* named Mr. and Mrs. Bacon as the Champion Farmers in Tennessee's Third Agricultural District which encompasses 23 counties for their pioneering efforts in farming, homemaking, and community service. Bacon was among the first in the area to embrace progressive farming techniques.

He had one of the first telephones in the area and he was always on the lookout for ways to put new technologies to work on his farm and in his home. Bacon had a Delco battery-powered electrical system at the home that required a gas-powered generator to re-charge the batteries, but he was convinced that electric lines would be more useful and economical. After

convincing enough of his neighbors to join in, he convinced Volunteer Energy Cooperative (then operating under the name of Meigs County Electric Membership Corporation) to run lines into the community.

His son, Conner Bacon and his wife, still live in the beautiful brick home in Georgetown that was featured as a modern marvel in the late 30s and early 40s. Conner, who was just out of high school and working on his father's farm, said he still remembers the day they were able to switch on the electric

milking machines. "It was wonderful," Conner said. "Before then you'd grab a stool, put the pail between your legs and hope she didn't kick."

Considering the Bacon farm drew its main income from its dairy herd, the emphasis on the milking machines is understandable. But

Continued on page 6



Mr. and Mrs. J. Fred Bacon had one of the first electric washing machines in the area.

Mrs. Bacon mostly remembers the state-of-the art kitchen her mother-in-law had.

A 1941 article from *The Chattanooga News-Free Press* marveled that the kitchen contained "electric stove, refrigerator, washing machine, egg beater, a pressure cooker for canning, and many other items." The article also proclaimed the Bacon's "modern French telephone" and marveled that, "there are only seven others on the party line."

But J. Fred Bacon was not content to keep prosperity to himself. He was determined to see his community prosper as well. He served as president of the Chickamauga Producers' Association, president of the Walnut Grove Farm Loan Association, member of the Tenants Purchase Committee which helped tenant farmers purchase land, chairman of the Hamilton County Land Use Committee, director of the Hamilton County Farm Bureau, and director of the Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

And he also helped guide Volunteer Energy Cooperative through a period of explosive growth. He was elected president of the VEC Board of Directors and served in that capacity from 1947 until 1968.

J. Fred Bacon remained humble about his lifetime of service and achievement. He was quoted by *The*

Chattanooga News-Free Press in 1941, "I never did go to school much. I wanted to farm. I'm glad I made that choice, because it has proven worthwhile for me."

His efforts also proved worthwhile for a great many others as he helped guide Volunteer Energy Cooperative from a fledgling enterprise serving just 55 members in 1935 to an organization that now serves about 110,000 members in all or part of 17 Tennessee counties. During the 75 years VEC has been in existence, the cooperative has never made a penny in profits – charging only what it costs to serve the members who own the cooperative.

J. Fred Bacon was a pioneer in that effort.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is celebrating its 75th year during 2010. To mark the occasion, we are asking readers to submit stories or story ideas about early rural electrification and the impact it had on people and communities within the VEC service area. Submissions should be directed to Robert McCarty at 423-334-7052 or rmccarty@vec.org.

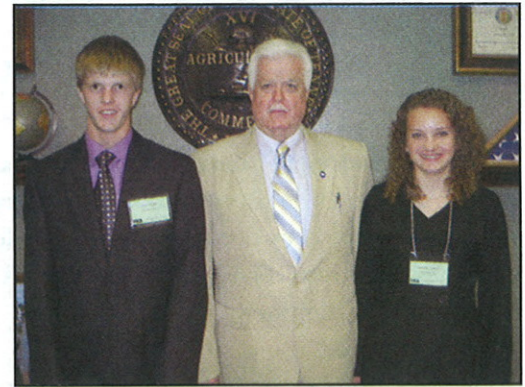
Rhea County Students Attend Leadership Summit

Jacob Kidd and Divinity Tallent of Rhea County High School were 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 15-17 in Nashville. Jacob is the son of Rob and Beth Kidd of Spring City, and Davinity is the daughter of David and Krissy Tallent, also of Spring City. Both attended the Youth Leadership Summit courtesy of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC).

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

"Considering the highly competitive and selective process they undergo to earn a spot on the trip, it's no surprise that we had another excellent group of outstanding young leaders attend this year's summit. Local electric cooperatives, along with school officials and guidance counselors, chose these students based on their interest in government and their leadership abilities," Jackson said.

"The Magic of Leadership" was the theme of the 2010 summit hosted by TECA and funded in part by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative



Jacob Kidd and Divinity Tallent met with State Representative Jim Cobb.

Finance Corporation, a not-for-profit cooperative financing institute that provides an independent source of financing to member cooperatives nationwide.

"It is encouraging to see such motivated students in our service area," said VEC President/CEO Roddy Blevins. "These young people will one day be the leaders of our communities, and VEC is privileged to provide them with this opportunity to join their peers from across Tennessee to learn about state government and rural electric co-ops."

The summit began Monday evening, March 15, 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 2009 Miss Tennessee Stefanie Wittler and Tennessee Titans cheerleader Lindsey Roznovsky.

Students rose early on Tuesday, March 16, for breakfast and preparations for a visit to Legislative Plaza to meet their state legislators and sit in on House and Senate committee meetings. Motivational speaker Lynn

Continued on page 5



Jacob Kidd and Divinity Tallent participated in team-building exercises at a Nashville-area YMCA camp.

This Spring Be Safe – Be Aware

For a Limited Time, bring this coupon in to you local Volunteer Energy Cooperative Customer Service Center and get:

\$15 Off

Midland WR 300 Weather Radio
Special price: \$59.95 plus tax



VEC
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www.vec.org

Offer good for weather radios purchased in any Volunteer Energy Cooperative office. Limit one per customer while supplies last. **Offer ends June 30, 2010.**

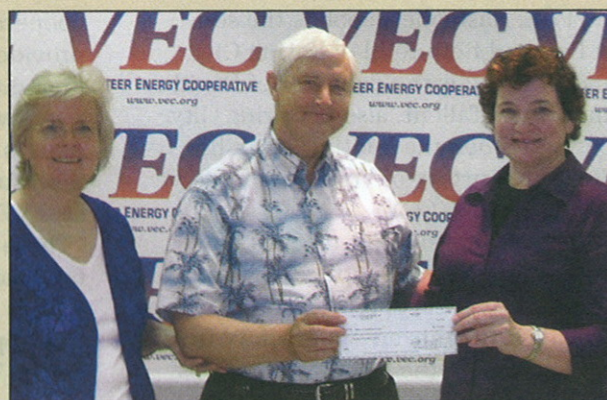
VEC Customers Share

Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

The VECustomers Share program funded \$33,000 in community service grants in March. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$3.3 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 March include: Cumberland G.A.P. Mission, Jamestown - \$2,500; Standing Stone Historical Society, Monterey - \$1,800; Support Group for Benton and West Polk County Fire and Rescue - \$1,500; Cumberland County Literacy Council - \$1,300; Bradley County Genealogy Society - \$1,200; Midway Youth Basketball League - \$1,200; Cumberland County Young Marines - \$1,000; Lighthouse Counseling and Life Skills Center, Hamilton County - \$1,000; Eastanallee Baptist Youth Mission Project, Riceville - \$1,000; Cumberland County Vietnam Veterans - \$1,000; Polk County Alumni Association - 1,000; Cumberland County

Imagination Library - \$1,000; Benton Food Fund Booster Club - \$1,000; Friends of the Pickett County Library - \$1,000; Bradley Initiative for Church and Community - \$1,000; Hanging Limb Community Center, Monterey - \$1,000; Birchwood Senior Neighbors - \$900; Spring City Elementary School Kindergarten PTO - \$900; Pickett County Junior High School Boys Basketball Boosters - \$800; Tranquility Community Center, Athens - \$750; Youth Achievement Foundation, Crossville - \$700; Midway Youth League - \$600; Meigs County High School Baseball Booster Club - \$500; Meigs County Health Council - \$500; Brown Elementary School Renaissance Organization, Crossville - \$500; Circle of Friends, Grandview - \$500; S.T.O.R.M. Student Ministries, Birchwood - \$500; Riceville Parent Teacher Organization - \$500; Rhea Medical Healthcare Foundation - \$500; Health Occupations Students of America, Decatur - \$500; Ooltewah High School Girls Soccer Boosters - \$500; Hebbertsburg Community Center, Crab Orchard - \$500; Royal Family Kids Camp, Cleveland - \$500; Partners of the Cherokee National Forest, Riceville - \$500; Lady Wildcats Softball Booster Club, Benton - \$500; Plateau Pregnancy Services, Crossville - \$500; Pickett County High School Student Health Council - \$500; Midway High School Cheerleader Booster Club - \$500; Girl Scout Troop #314, Spring City - \$450; and Spanish Dance Club, Kingston - \$400.



VECCustomers Share Board Member Harold Reno, center, presents a grant check to Debbie Moore and Ruth Bailey of the Bradley County Genealogy Society.



LAST CHANCE! Have You Found the Barn?

"Barns of Tennessee" contains 375 beautiful pictures that preserve Tennessee's disappearing agrarian tradition.

Web surfers are finding a wealth of money-saving information on Volunteer Energy Cooperative's new website. And they are also finding the hidden barn logo and qualifying for a chance to 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 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.

Six VEC customers have already won this \$45 value and you can join their ranks when you find the barn logo within the VEC website.

Just browse through the links on the VEC



Find this logo on the VEC website for your chance to win "Barns of Tennessee."

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 are held on the last business day of each month and the contest will run through the end of 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 find tools to save money and make your life easier. And while you're there get all the details and to find the barn logo.

March's Winners: Shirley Cravens of Jamestown and Amy Clark of Georgetown.



VEC's Wholesale Rate Structure to Change

Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is planning to change the way it charges Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) for the electricity we purchase.

Beginning in October of 2010 the wholesale rates that TVA charges VEC for electricity will be based on energy and peak energy "demand" charges.

The wholesale costs for electricity will be higher in the summer to better reflect the higher costs of electricity production during that time.

VEC will be doing a cost of service study to determine the most equitable to set retail rates to reflect TVA's new wholesale billing structure.

Many folks may assume that it costs the same amount of money to produce a kilowatt of electricity no matter when it is generated. But that isn't the case.

When demand is low, TVA can rely mainly on coal, hydro-generated, and nuclear-generated electricity. But when demand exceeds the capacity of those generation methods, TVA is forced to use more expensive methods such as natural gas generation and purchasing power on the open market to meet peak demand.

For VEC customers the new rate structure will mean that customers who schedule their energy use more wisely can see those efforts pay off with lower electric bills.

Since VEC is a non-profit cooperative owned by the customers we serve, we'll continue to help our members save as much money as possible on their electric bills.

Continued from page 1

Hodges, a former Tennessee Valley Authority employee, gave the keynote address "The Magic of Choice" before TECA Director of Government Affairs David Callis introduced State Rep. Phillip Johnson of Pegram. Johnson answered questions submitted by the students, and Callis explained current bills affecting cooperatives and described what everyone should expect from the legislative committees they were to visit.

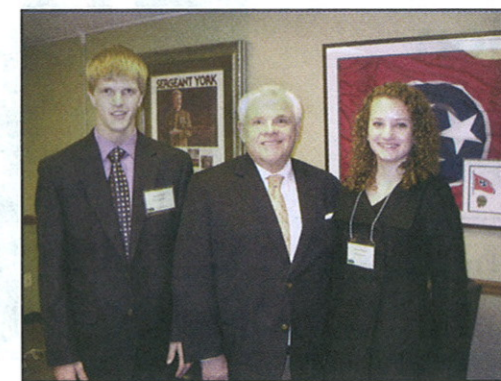
The 11th-graders then took a tour of the State Capitol. Jacob and Divinity also met with State Senator Ken Yager and State Representative Jim Cobb before attending a meeting of the Senate Environment, Conservation, and Tourism Committee. During the committee meeting Jacob and Divinity were recognized by Sen. Yager who serves as vice-chair of the committee.

Following the visit to Capitol Hill, the group enjoyed lunch and leadership activities at a Nashville-area YMCA camp. After dinner, students attended a Nashville Predators hockey game at Bridgestone Arena followed by a tour of Tennessee's capital city. Finally, the busy day was capped off with an ice cream social.

Wednesday morning, the students learned more about Tennessee's electric cooperatives and the vital role co-ops play in the communities they serve. Students got an overview of the history of electric cooperatives from the "Mission Possible" activity. Then they were divided into teams and

competed in "M.A.G.I.C." (Mastering A Game of Interactive Cooperation), forming their own co-ops and working together to "buy" and "sell" power distribution supplies — power poles, wire, transformers, meters and trucks.

Later, they put together all they'd learned, answering trivia questions about electric cooperatives and the state in the "Energy Battle" competition. Trent Sanders, founder and president of Leaders across America, brought the three-day



Jacob Kidd and Divinity Tallent met with State Sen. Ken Yager.

event to a close with his address, "Road to Success."

Both Jacob and Divinity said they learned quite a bit but also had quite a bit of fun.

"It was definitely a lot more fun than I expected," Davinity said. "It was well worth my time. I learned a lot including the importance of being a team member and that everyone's job is equally important." She added, "I also officially became a hockey fan!"

Jacob was equally enthusiastic. "I really enjoyed this trip," he said. "It's amazing to see how students from all across the state can be so alike."

"We offer these educational experiences for our students — our future members — because we want them to understand what makes a cooperative special," Blevins said. "We want them to appreciate all their electric cooperative provides for their communities and understand why it was so important to form electric co-ops in the first place."

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective May 1, 2010

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