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## PROJECT DESERVE NEEDS YOU

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Project Deserve program allows you to help the elderly, handicapped, low income and unemployed with their electric bills in emergency situations. You can do this by pledging a specified amount of money to be added to your monthly bill.

All funds collected through Project Deserve go directly to an energy fund. No funds will be used to administer the program. Eligibility will be determined solely by human resource agencies and/or community relief groups in all or portions of VEC's 17-county service area.

Winter weather is upon us, and this is the time of year when more families ask Project Deserve for assistance with their electric bill. Your contribution to Project Deserve will help these families in their time of emergency.

You may contribute monthly or you may make a one-time contribution. One-time contributions should be mailed to Project Deserve, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322. Should you ever wish to cancel your monthly Project Deserve contribution, you can do so by contacting your local VEC customer service center.



## 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. VEC can draft payments automatically from a checking account or a credit card account.

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 little oversights offset the benefits of this simple, hassle-free program.

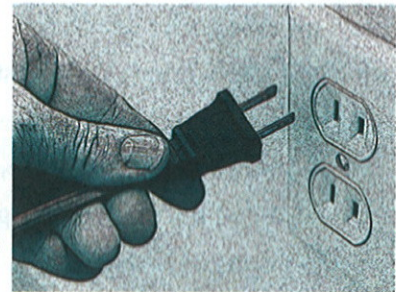
## Safety Checklist: Check the Items on This List Created By the National Electrical Safety Foundation

**Outlets:** Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. Replace any broken or missing wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.

**Cords:** Make sure cords are in good conditions- not frayed or cracked. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard, or to another object. Do not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them.

**Extension Cords:** Check to see that cords are not overloaded. Additionally, extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis; they are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure extension cords have safety closures to help prevent young children from shock hazards and mouth burn injuries.

**Plugs:** Make sure your plugs fit your outlets. Never remove the ground pin (the third prong) to make a three-prong fit a two-conductor outlet; this could lead to an electrical shock. NEVER FORCE A PLUG INTO AN OUTLET IF IT DOESN'T FIT. Plugs should fit securely into outlets. Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances.



**Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs):** GFCIs can help prevent electrocution. They should be used in any area where water and electricity may come into contact. When a GFCI senses current leakage in an electrical circuit, it assumes a ground fault has occurred. It then interrupts power fast enough to help prevent serious injury from electrical shock. Test GFCIs regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions to make sure they are working properly.

**Light Bulbs:** Check the wattage of all bulbs in light fixtures to make sure they are the correct wattage for the size of the fixture. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage than recommended; if you don't know the correct wattage, check with the manufacturer of the fixture. Make sure bulbs are screwed in securely; loose bulbs may overheat.

**Circuit Breakers/Fuses:** Circuit breakers and fuses should be the correct size current rating for their circuit. If you do not know the correct size, have an electrician identify and label the size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size fuse.

**Appliances:** If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or if it has given you a shock, unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

**Entertainment/Computer Equipment:** Check to see that the equipment is in good condition and working properly; look for cracks or damage in wiring, plugs, and connectors. Use a surge protector bearing the seal of a nationally recognized certification agency.



**Lightning:** During an electrical storm, do not use appliances (i.e., hairdryers, toasters, and radios)

# VEC Customers Share

## VEC Members Make a Difference in their Communities

The VECustomers Share program funded \$32,500 in community service grants in October. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$3.5 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).



VECustomers Share Board Members Holly Neal, far left, and Jim Purcell, far right, present grant checks to, from left, Shylah Gora of the Cumberland County Youth Center and Isabella Williams and Pastor Shane Williams of the Manna from Heaven Food Pantry.

### ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING GRANTS IN OCTOBER:

- Operation Reach, Kingston - \$3,000
- First Baptist Church TeamKid Fall Fest, Spring City - \$1,700
- Cumberland County Youth Center - \$1,500
- Manna From Heaven Food Pantry, Crossville - \$1,500
- Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber Foundation - \$1,500
- East Tennessee Region Spring Beef Show, Athens - \$1,500
- Pickett County Historical & Genealogical Society - \$1,300
- Boy Scout Explorer Troop 540, Crossville - \$1,000
- Jamestown Rotary Club - \$1,000
- SkillsUSA, Jamestown - \$1,000
- Benton Fall Festival Booster Club - \$1,000
- Birchwood Senior Neighbors - \$1,000
- Candlelighters Family Support Group, Hamilton County - \$1,000
- American Legion Post 137, Jamestown - \$950
- Creating Christmas Memories, Cleveland - \$800
- Youth Achievement Foundation, Crossville - \$750
- E.K. Baker Elementary School PTO, Athens - \$750
- Meigs County Choir Booster Club - \$700
- Meigs County Youth Association \$600
- Homestead Elementary School PTO, Crossville - \$500
- Stone Elementary School Beta Club, Crossville - \$500
- Benton Food Fund Booster Club - \$500
- Meigs County High School Baseball Booster Club - \$500
- Polk County Anti-Drug Coalition - \$500
- McMinn County Senior Citizens - \$500
- West Polk County Empty Stocking Fund Committee - \$500
- Crush Cheerleaders, Clarkrange - \$500
- Hull-York Memorial Chapter 5 DAV, Byrdstown - \$500
- Juvenile Character Program, Calhoun - \$500
- Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Cleveland - \$500
- Hamilton County FOP #22 - \$500
- McMinn County High School Cheerleading Booster Club, \$500
- God Spot Block Party, Decatur - \$480
- SpiritHorse Therapeutic Riding at Black Fox, Cleveland - \$450
- Friends of the Cherokee Memorial, Decatur - \$300
- Spring City Women's Service Club - \$300
- Meigs Middle School Cheerleading Boosters - \$270
- Martin Elementary School Boys Basketball Booster Club, Crossville - \$250
- Polk County High School Band Boosters - \$250
- AmVets Post 90, Decatur - \$250
- Polk County High School Girls Basketball Booster Club - \$250



## VEC Closing Out a Fruitful 2010

Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

2010 was a busy but productive year for Volunteer Energy Cooperative. During the year we've completed a number of major projects with one objective in mind – to provide the best possible service to our members at the lowest possible price.

During the year we've put two new substations into service. Our Hiwassee River Substation was completed this year in the Walker Valley area of Bradley County. The new substation has increased our capacity in the growing Charleston area.

We've also experienced a great deal of residential growth in the Ooltewah area of Hamilton County near the Bradley County line. To keep capacity on pace with this growth we recently completed our North Ooltewah Substation.

We completed major upgrades at our Riceville Substation in McMinn County and we've also increased system capacity in areas of Polk and Cumberland County.

As 2010 drew to a close we are reaching 90% completion on our Automated Meter Reading project. This project is allowing us to provide more accurate billing data at a lower cost and helps us reduce our carbon footprint significantly.

Our multi-year project of renewed emphasis on right-of-way clearing and pole inspections proceeded at a brisk pace this year. We've undertaken this project in an effort to reduce the number of outages and the duration of outages when they do occur. Unfortunately, we won't ever be able to completely eliminate all outages, but we are already seeing positive results from this program. When major weather events occur, we are seeing fewer outages resulting from these events.

During the year we've cleared about 1,800 miles of right-of-way. We've also replaced about 800 poles that have deteriorated over the years.

We've also upgraded our communications networks that help us respond more quickly and more efficiently to outages and to receive and process billing information more efficiently.

During the year we've also upgraded our ability to serve customers with an upgraded website that provides a number of tools including bill pay options, energy efficiency assistance, and account management tools that are there for our members 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Your electric cooperative has been busy in 2010 – doing our best to respond to our members' needs and provide quality service at an affordable price. And we plan more of that in 2011.

## Children's Theater Program Energizes Students

Will Nikki Neutron and her volunteers from the audience thwart the Sneaker and his energy-wasting ways? Groups of youngsters from across Volunteer Energy Cooperative's service area are learning the answer to that question, as well as learning how to use energy wisely when they see the National Theatre for Children's production of "The Energized Guyz."

The high-energy production is co-sponsored by VEC and TVA and was presented at 13 schools in VEC's service area this fall. The program's goal is to help students and their families learn how to get more for their energy dollars through a live show that helps educate grade-school students about how energy is made and how using energy and water wisely is good for the family budget, good for the environment, and good for our future.

"If we can teach youngsters about the need to conserve energy, not only will it encourage their families to become more diligent, but they will also be more likely to practice what they've learned when they become adults," said Bob Balzar, TVA's vice president of Energy Efficiency & Demand Response.

The 25-minute show is presented by the National Theatre for Children - a Minnesota-based educational theater company. It features memorable characters like Nikki Neutron, Bert the Dirt Farmer, Dr. Maybe, and the Sneaker. During the show students are encouraged to help Nikki defeat the Sneaker and his energy-wasting ways. "Open your eyes, be energy wise," is their battle cry and excited students raise their voices to a fever pitch, repeating the phrase with the characters on stage.



After the show, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of online resources that help students implement energy-saving tips at home and at school.

In September and October VEC co-sponsored the show at 13 elementary schools in the VEC service area and VEC President-CEO Rody Blevins said VEC is happy to be involved in the effort to get young people started in forming energy-wise habits.

"Forming good habits from the beginning is always easier than trying to break bad habits later," Blevins said. "This program fits in nicely with our youth programs and our other energy-efficiency programs that are aimed at older folks. We take a lot of pride in being one of the few companies out there that is working hard to help our customers spend less money on our product."

For more information on how you can save money, save energy, and help the environment, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).



Students from Birchwood Elementary School in Hamilton County met with cast members following an Energized Guyz production. Pictured are: Back row - Dr. Maybe, Jacob James, and Nikki Neutron. Front row - Luke Prichard, Corbin Kelly, Connor Mason, Mikaelyn Smith, Lexi Runyan, and Bree Roark.