

Save Money this Winter with a Free Energy Evaluation or Heat Pump Financing

When temperatures drop electric bills rise. But you can help offset higher electric use this winter with a free In-Home Energy Evaluation or by installing a high efficiency heat pump - and VEC is ready to help.

There are not many companies that will work as hard as Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) will to help you spend less money on their products. That is one difference that separates VEC from most other businesses.

It sounds like a strange way to run a business, but VEC is a not-for-profit cooperative – owned and operated by, and for the sole benefit of the people who get their electricity from VEC. And since there is no profit motive, VEC makes a big effort to help customers use less electricity, use electricity more efficiently, and spend less money on electricity.

VEC is committed to the idea that conserving electricity and using electricity more efficiently isn't just good for our family budget, it's good for the environment as well.

Now is a great time to consider a few of VEC's most popular programs designed to help electricity consumers spend LESS of their hard-earned money on energy costs.

Free In-Home Energy Evaluation

Under the free In-Home Energy Evaluation program customers can get a free in-home inspection from an energy-efficiency professional. The customer is under no obligation to make any of the suggested improvements, but if they choose to make any improvements, they can qualify for rebates on 50% of what they spend up to \$500. As of press time, about 1,323 VEC customers have had free evaluations performed at their home and 957 have received rebates.

Heat Pump Financing

Under the *energy right solutions*® program customers can also get financing to install energy efficient heat pumps. The program features interest rates as low as 6% for qualifying heat pumps, convenient payment arrangements, and a streamlined application process.

VEC works closely with heat pump contractors throughout the region to make the process quick and easy. And a new high-efficiency electric heat pump will pay dividends in lower electric bills. In fact, many customers report that their savings on energy costs more than offset their heat pump payment.

www.vec.org

VEC also offers a powerful web-based tool to help customers see exactly how much money they can save by making energy efficiency improvements to their home. The "Home Energy Suite" at www.vec.org uses localized climate data and real rate data to give customers very accurate results that can be used to anticipate electric bills and see exactly how much selected improvements can save customers over the course of a month or a year.

About 425 customers visit the "Home Energy Suite" web pages each month. VEC has been serving the East-Central Tennessee region since 1935 and during that time the goal has never been to make a profit. In fact, VEC has never earned a profit. The goal has been to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible price. If that means helping our customers purchase less of our product, we're happy to do that.

Call your local VEC Customer Service Center or VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department at 423-334-7051 for more information on how you can take advantage of your cooperative's programs designed to save energy and save money.

Carmichael and His Contributions to VEC Will Be Long Remembered

Gene Carmichael, who served as chairman of the VEC Board of Directors since 1987, passed away Friday, July 22 at the age of 74.

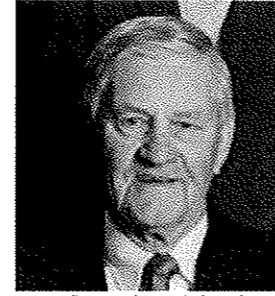
A lifelong McMinn County resident, Carmichael was first elected to the VEC Board of Directors in 1974 and helped guide the cooperative through a period that saw tremendous growth and significant challenges throughout the energy industry.

"Gene was a great asset to VEC and a great friend," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "We are going to miss his leadership, his commitment to the cooperative and its members, and his friendship." He was a son of the late Curtis and Grace Whiteside Carmichael and was also preceded in death by a brother, James H. Carmichael.

He was a member of Calhoun First Baptist Church.

A 1955 Calhoun High School graduate, Carmichael was honored for his career in agriculture, including serving on a number of agricultural-related organizations. Gene was a member of the Valley Farmers Cooperative board and was a member of the board of directors of the Dairy Farmers of America in 2003. He was also a member of the Calhoun Cemetery Board and he served a tour of duty with the Tennessee National Guard.

He is survived by his wife, Clara Brannon Carmichael; two sons and daughters-in-law: Rod and Donna Carmichael and Russ and Tina Carmichael; one grandson, Cole Carmichael, all of Riceville; one step grandson and his wife, Chris and Shannon Cassada; two step great-grandsons: Teigan Cassada and Ralieg Cassada; one sister and brother-in-law, Mildred and Jerry Prince of Riceville; one uncle and his wife, Jack and Betty Whiteside of Riceville; two aunts: Helen Scoggins of Etowah and Sue Goodwin of Houston; and several nieces and cousins.



Gene Carmichael
1937 - 2011

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment

Effective August 1, 2011

2.887¢

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

TVA is now reflecting the full cost of fuel used to generate electricity in the Fuel Cost Adjustment. Previously the FCA only included a fraction of this cost and the energy charge included the remainder. As a result of TVA's most recent change, the Fuel Cost Adjustment for electric consumers throughout the Tennessee Valley shows a substantial increase beginning in April. The energy charge drops as the fuel cost is removed from this segment of the charge.

VEC Sponsors Students at 4-H Electric Camp

Nearly 300 sixth and seventh graders from across Tennessee converged on the University of Tennessee campus in Knoxville June 28 - July 1 for this year's 4-H Electric Camp. Titled "Twenty Years of Energizing the Future," the camp was sponsored by UT Extension, Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association, the Tennessee Valley Authority and a number of individual electric cooperatives and municipal electric utilities, including Volunteer Energy Cooperative.

Students explored energy conservation, technology, the basics of electricity and electric safety through various "hands-on" learning centers, which were led by professionals from electric utility companies. Groups of about 45 students spent around an hour at each of the five learning centers, which demonstrated the many uses of electricity.

VEC's Connie Landrum and Greg Hutsell were among the volunteer instructors at this year's camp. Landrum, department assistant in VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department assisted students in building their own electric lamp out of an old electric meter. Hutsell, VEC's superintendent of safety and construction, demonstrated lineworker safety equipment and taught the campers about safety concerning buried electric lines and pad-mount transformers. 4-H'ers learned basic wiring by making a meter lamp in a two-session learning center.

Each student was able to take the wheel of a golf cart, with an adult supervisor riding shotgun. After their rides, students were invited to examine a state-of-the-art hybrid automobile (a car that relies on both electricity and gasoline for power) — the car of the future.

In other learning centers, students learned about renewable forms of electric generation and time-of-use electric rates — a tool that will be used in the future to encourage energy conservation. They also learned how to make their homes more energy-efficient to reduce their energy use and lower electric bills.

No electric camp would be complete without safety demonstrations. Before their amazed eyes, students saw the awesome power of electricity with a high-voltage demonstration presented by Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation. They also learned how underground utilities are located with a fun activity presented by Tennessee One-Call.

The camp was not all lectures and demonstrations, however. Each afternoon, students had free time to socialize with each other at pool parties and regional group meetings. Other highlights included an afternoon at Dollywood theme park in Pigeon Forge and entertaining and informative opening and closing programs.



VEC's Greg Hutsell (far left) and Connie Landrum (far right) pose with students who were sponsored by VEC for 4-H Electric Camp on the University of Tennessee campus.

VEC Customers Share

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) members who participate in the VEC Customers Share program funded \$31,400 in community service grants in July. By rounding their electric bills up to the next whole dollar and donating the change to the program, members have funded more than \$3.8 million since its inception in October of 2001. 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.



VEC Customers Share Board Member Joyce Callahan, second from right, presents a grant check to, from left, Ruth Ann Woolbright, Margaret Stephenson, and Theresa Pugh-Godsey of Monterey Downtown, Inc.

Organizations receiving grants in July

Monterey Downtown, Inc., - \$2,500;
Sierra Hull Bluegrass Festival,
Byrdstown - \$2,500;
Fentress County Food Bank - \$1,500;
Luminary School Backpack Committee,
Ten Mile - \$1,500;
Rhea County Health Council - \$1,250;
Cherokee Removal Park (Blythe Ferry),
Birchwood - \$1,000;
Meigs County Fair Association - \$1,000;
Cumberland County Imagination
Library - \$1,000;
Habitat for Humanity of Cleveland - \$1,000;
Benton Fall Festival Booster Club - \$1,000;
Benton Food Fund Booster Club - \$1,000;
Ooltewah High School Band Boosters - \$1,000;
Roane County Imagination Library, Inc., - \$1,000;
CHA Resident Council, Crossville - \$750;
McMinn County Education Foundation - \$750;
Fentress County Public Library - \$750;
Spring City Historical Museum - \$750;
McMinn United Futbol Club - \$750;
Meigs County Quest for Success - \$500;
Meigs County Historical Society - \$500;
Plateau Longbeards, Crossville - \$500;
Lake Forest Middle School Girls Softball
Boosters, Cleveland - \$500;

Bread of Life Rescue Mission, Crossville - \$500;
Walker Valley High School Freshman
Cheerleading Boosters, Cleveland - \$500;
Spring City Red Dogs - \$500;
Meigs/McMinn Boy Scouts of America - \$500;
Polk County Fair Association - \$500;
Disabled American Veterans, Ocoee - \$500;
Women of Hope, Jamestown - \$500;
Jones Chapel UMC Food Pantry, Etowah - \$500;
Cumberland County School Supply Depot - \$500;
Cumberland Artisans for Creative Expression,
Pleasant Hill - \$500;
Dorton Family Community Education Club,
Crossville - \$500;
Ooltewah Sideout Club - \$500;
Crossville Lions Club - \$500;
Art Circle Public Library Teen Summer Reading,
Crossville - \$500;
Mt. Carmel Ladies of Action, Crossville - \$250;
Rogers Creek Youth Basketball, Athens - \$250;
Riceville Youth Football Organization - \$250;
North Cumberland Football Boosters - \$250;
York Agricultural Institute Dragon Renaissance,
Jamestown - \$250;
Bradley North 8-Year-Old All Stars - \$150.



Rody Blevins is President/CEO of Volunteer Energy Cooperative

October is Cooperative Month

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 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.

It is also worth noting that in 75 years VEC has never made a penny of profit. VEC is a not-for-profit cooperative that is owned and operated by the customers/members/owners who use our service. That's one reason our customers enjoy the benefit of some of the lowest electricity rates available in the nation. 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.

AVOID COMMON ELECTRIC HAZARDS THIS WINTER

Colder temperatures, shorter days, and holiday decorations mean more electricity being used in the typical household during the late fall and winter months and that can translate to an increased risk of electrical shock and electrocution. Review the following safety tips to help keep your family safe.

Electrical Appliances

Large electrical appliances are a major cause of electrocutions. Make sure appliances are purchased from reputable dealers and have been certified by testing labs such as CSA, UL, or ETL. Use of a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) can help avoid electrical shock. If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse or trips a circuit breaker, or if it has ever given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damaged wires, plugs, switches, and connectors.

Lighting

Use the correct wattage bulb for lamps and light fixtures and make sure these bulbs are screwed in securely. Loose bulbs and bulbs with a higher than recommended wattage can overheat and become a fire hazard. Handle nightlights carefully. Avoid twisting or putting too much pressure on the nightlight. This can cause components to break off and expose wiring. Halogen lamps operate at high temperatures. Make sure halogen bulbs do not come into contact with draperies, clothing, or other flammable materials.

Holiday Decorations

Before decorating, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Use lights that are certified for indoor use indoors and lights certified for outdoor use outdoors and make sure they have been certified by an independent testing laboratory such as those listed above. Check for cracked or frayed components before plugging decorations in and always unplug decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses. Don't use nails or staples to hang lights as this can damage the cord's insulation. Don't allow children or pets to play with decorations. Even small light decorations can produce a deadly shock if they are misused. Always turn electrical decorations off before leaving home or going to bed.

Portable Heaters

Keep portable space heaters at least three feet away from all flammable materials such as bedding, furniture, and draperies. Plug portable space heaters directly into the outlet. Do not use extension cords or 3-in-1 adapters. Don't run cords under rugs or carpets as this can cause overheating. Always put heaters in a place where they can't be tipped over easily and don't use portable heaters in damp areas such as bathrooms, unless they are specifically built for that purpose. Don't leave young children unattended in rooms where portable heaters are in use and always turn the heater off and unplug it when it is not in use.

Extension Cords

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission estimates that 3,300 residential fires and more than 300 injuries and deaths are caused each year by improperly functioning extension cords. To avoid a fire hazard make sure extension cords are certified by an independent testing lab and properly rated and properly insulated for the job. Do not overload extension cords. If any part of the cord feels warm, the cord is drawing too much power and it poses a fire or shock hazard. Never try to repair an extension cord with electrical tape. Replace it. Cover unused outlets on an extension cord to prevent children from making contact with a live circuit. Use special heavy-duty extension cords for larger appliances such as portable heaters. And outside the home make sure you use extension cords that are designed and rated for outdoor use.