

VEC Customers Share Reaches Out to Local Communities



Members who participate in the VEC Customers Share program funded \$31,400 in community service grants. By rounding their electric bills up to the next whole dollar and donating the change to the program, members have now funded more than \$4 million since the program's 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

VEC Customers Share board member Gloria Schouggins, center, presents a grant check to Vinny Castellani and members of the Meigs County High School Spanish Club.

Did You Know...
During 2011 the VEC Customers Share program funded 445 grant applications, providing more than \$370,000 to community service organizations in VEC's 17-county service area.

Organizations receiving grants in December

Fair Park Senior Center, Crossville	\$2,000	Peavine Care Center, Crossville	\$1,000
Monterey Masonic Lodge	\$1,750	The Caring Place, Cleveland	\$1,000
Health Occupations Students of America, Decatur	\$1,700	Pickett County Junior High Math Club	\$1,000
Clyde York 4-H Center, Crossville	\$1,500	Toys for Children, Spring City	\$1,000
Meigs County High School Spanish Club	\$1,300	Midway Middle School Beta Club	\$750
Pickett County K-8 Grade 7 Language Arts Club	\$1,200	Midway High School Hall of Fame	\$750
Friends of the Fentress County Library	\$1,250	Fentress County Public Library	\$750
Monterey Lions Club	\$1,250	Pickett County Junior High Reading Club	\$750
Nocatula Civitan Club, Decatur	\$1,200	Spring City Middle School 7th Grade	\$725
Cherokee Removal Park	\$1,000	Tremont Booster Club	\$725
Chestuee Youth Club, Polk County	\$1,000	Spring City Middle School 8th Grade	\$625
Chestuee Youth Club, McMinn County	\$1,000	Washington D.C. Booster Club	\$625
Cumberland County Clay Crushers	\$1,000	Brown Middle School PTO	\$550
Scholastic Clay Trap Program	\$1,000	Midway Youth League	\$500
National Center for Youth Issues, Hamilton County	\$1,000	The Trousdale School, Cleveland	\$500
Midway High School PTO	\$1,000	FCE Woody Club UT Extension, Crossville	\$500
Fentress County Children's Center	\$1,000	Tennessee Valley Theatre, Spring City	\$500
		Etowah Area Senior Citizens Center	\$300

VEC Sheds Some Light on Energy Efficiency

In many applications commercial lighting can use a great deal of energy and it can be a big cost for many businesses. Warehouse lighting, in particular, can be particularly costly.

VEC is no exception to that rule. As part of an in-house energy-saving program VEC is completing lighting upgrade projects at the Jamestown, Decatur, Jamestown, Byrdstown and Benton service centers and at the corporate fleet maintenance facility in Decatur.

The projects take advantage of high bay T-8 fixtures and lamps that use 50% less energy than the 400-watt high-pressure sodium lights that were previously used. In addition to the energy savings, the T-8 lights provide about 30% more light, longer bulb life, faster on and off, and eliminate the buzzing sound of the previous lighting fixtures.

Scott Woodlee, VEC's special projects coordinator, said the upgrades were initiated under TVA's EnergyRight Solutions® for Business Program. Under the program TVA evaluators inspected the warehouses before and after VEC completed the work. TVA also provides incentives and rebates.

"It's a better quality of light and it's less expensive," Woodlee said.

Woodlee added that better lighting is also a significant contributor to better safety. Another added feature of the T-8 lighting is that it produces less heat and lowers cooling costs in summer.

VEC is also incorporating L.E.D. lighting into renovations at the Jamestown Customer Service Center in customer service areas and in external lighting applications.

VEC Jamestown Service Area Superintendent Louie DeLorenzo said the lighting upgrades have already drawn a lot of interest from other local businesses and churches.

"We've had several businesses and churches come by and they are especially interested in our LED exterior lighting," DeLorenzo said. "That's a big reason we wanted to make these changes. We want to be a resource for local businesses that are looking for ways to save energy. They can come to our office and see how these technologies might work for them."

The EnergyRight Solutions® for Business incentives are available for a variety of businesses and non-profit organizations. For more information, contact VEC Marketing and Economic Development Department at 423-334-7051.

VEC's Louie DeLorenzo (left) and Scott Woodlee are both pleased with the results of lighting upgrades at VEC's Jamestown Customer Service Center.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative Newsletter

MAR 2012

Talk the Talk Walk the Walk

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is Committed to Being a Leader in Energy Efficiency and Peak Demand Reduction

There's an old adage that says it's always best to lead by example. When it comes to energy efficiency and reducing peak demand, I want VEC to lead by example.

If you are a frequent *Powerlines* reader, I'm sure you noticed many articles offering energy-saving tips and many articles about different programs and tools we make available to our members/customers to help them save energy and reduce peak demand. In this issue of *Powerlines* we highlight some of those programs again. But we're also going to feature some of the ways that your cooperative is "walking the walk" in energy efficiency.

VEC has undertaken several projects to make sure we are following our own advice and doing the things we can to use energy efficiently, to conserve energy as much as possible, and to provide a resource for other area businesses that are interested in getting ideas about how to save energy also.

Many of these projects were completed with the help of TVA's EnergyRight Solutions® for Business program.

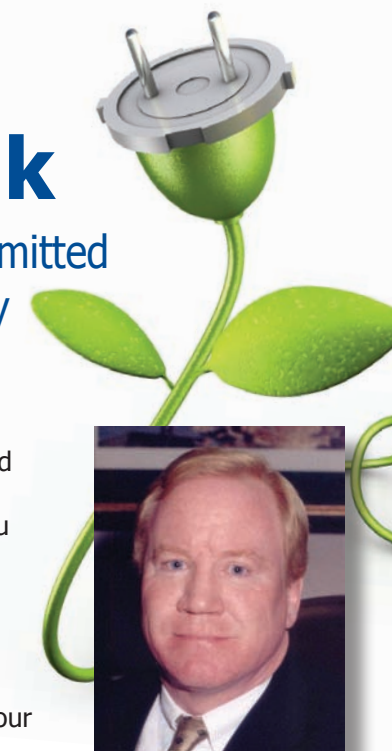
In this edition you'll see two separate articles about energy efficient lighting and a resourceful cooling system we are using at several of our offices.

We also highlight two of our most popular programs we offer to help our customers save money and save energy – our free In-Home Energy Evaluation program and our Heat Pump Loan program. We also draw your attention to one of the most comprehensive resources we offer our customers – our website at www.vec.org.

The website is a convenient resource that is there for you whenever you need it. It contains a wealth of information about VEC, about energy efficiency and energy conservation, and a number of tools to help you save money and save energy. If you've never visited the website, I encourage you to take a few moments to do so. It could be a terrific investment of a little time that could pay off in big savings.

The home energy calculators on our website use real climate data and real rate data that will show you a very accurate picture of how much money you can expect to save when you purchase energy efficient appliances, when you seal up air leaks, and when you make other improvements or lifestyle modifications.

Not many businesses will go the lengths that VEC does to help customers spend less money on their products. But that is one of the big differences between simply being a customer and being a part-owner of your own electric cooperative.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative





The Ice Bear units that were recently installed at VEC's Jamestown and Monterey offices look very similar to a traditional central air conditioning unit – but they operate very differently.

VEC Helping to Test Tomorrow's Technologies Today

In the spring of 2009 Volunteer Energy Cooperative, TVA, and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) joined forces to see if new technologies can help put TVA's soaring peak summer demand on ice.

A cooling support system called an Ice Bear was installed to serve VEC's corporate office in Decatur. The Ice Bear produces ice during the nighttime when the demand for electricity is low and then uses fans to blow air over that ice during the day when the demand for electricity is high. The air conditioning compressor rarely has to run during the day, significantly reducing the system's need for electricity.

VEC's Special Projects Coordinator Scott Woodlee says this one unit probably won't have a significant impact on shifting peak summer loads yet, but the data provided could help determine whether the units could be economically beneficial to customers.

After nearly three years of accumulating the data, the results have been positive enough for VEC to install two more Ice Bear units at offices in Jamestown and Monterey.

"We're looking down the road. This is a long-term look into the future," Woodlee said. "We want to see if this could be valuable technology for our customers and others."

In the Tennessee Valley the demand for electricity reaches its highest during the hottest summer days. On these days the demand for electricity is so high TVA typically has to purchase power on the open market. That's very expensive. TVA could choose to build enough generation capacity to meet the peak demands. However, that peak demand is only needed a few days a year, so TVA would essentially be building expensive generation capacity that would sit idle for the vast majority of the year.

"We hope to find out just what kind of return on their investment our customers can expect if they employ this type of technology," Woodlee said. "That's going to make a big difference in whether we can expect to see this technology make a significant impact on our peak demand."

ICE BEAR!

VEC Offers Free In-Home Energy Evaluations

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.

If you are ready to spend \$150 or more on money-saving improvements to your home, VEC and TVA are ready to help with rebates and free in-home energy evaluations to help customers choose the improvements that will get them the biggest possible return on their investment.

A trained energy efficiency evaluator will come your home and recommend steps you can take to save money on your energy bills.

If you spend at least \$150 on recommended improvements, VEC and TVA will rebate up to 50% of the cost of qualifying improvements. But if you choose not to make any of the recommended improvements, you are under no obligations whatsoever.

Paige Finnell coordinates the program for VEC.

"One of the first things I did when I started working with this program was to schedule my own evaluation," Finnell said. "It's a very easy process and the inspectors are great to work with. They aren't trying to sell any products. Their only goal is to help you save energy and be more comfortable in your home. The inspectors will give your home a thorough examination and they will help you with your questions and concerns."

For complete details or to schedule your free In-Home Energy Evaluation, contact Paige Finnell at 423-334-7053 (you can phone your local VEC Customer Service Center and when prompted to enter an extension, enter 7053) or by email at pfinnell@vec.org. More information is also available at www.vec.org.



Paige Finnell (left) and contract inspector John Proffitt look for opportunities to save energy and money during Finnell's In-Home Energy Evaluation.

What's in it for You?

1. A free in-home evaluation
2. Cash incentives to customers who make improvements based on the evaluation within 90 days: up to 50% of the cost of improvements with a maximum of \$500 (some limits apply)
3. A follow-up inspection

How to Qualify

1. Must agree to an in-home evaluation completed by a VEC-approved/TVA certified evaluator
2. Can be a manufactured or stick-built home. Must have had permanent VEC electric service for a minimum of one year - Homeowners and owners of rental properties are eligible
3. Must read and sign an agreement to participate in the program
4. Must use VEC approved, TVA qualified contractors (some work can be completed by the homeowner with pre-approval from VEC.)

Heat Pump Can Be Cornerstone of Energy Efficient Home

In a typical home heating and cooling accounts for about 50% of the total amount of energy used. Today's high-efficiency heat pumps provide economical, year-round comfort and financing one through VEC and TVA's EnergyRight Solutions® program is affordable and simple.

Under the EnergyRight Solutions® program customers enjoy 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, some customers report that their savings on energy costs more than offset their heat pump payment.

Kristy Kelly coordinates the heat pump financing program at VEC.

"Purchasing a new heat pump can be a big expense for many homeowners," Kelly said. "We try to make our financing program very accessible so as many people as possible can start saving money on their heating and cooling costs right away."

Kelly said VEC doesn't sell or install heat pumps – VEC finances the heat pump much in the same way a bank might finance the purchase of a new car.

"Customers select a contractor they are comfortable with from the QCN (Quality Contractor Network) list and the contractor sells, installs, and services the heat pump. We pay the contractor and then add the payments to our customers' VEC electric bill," she said.

The heat pump loans are set up for a 10-year payoff, but customers who wish to pay the loan off sooner than that can do so without penalty.

Kelly added that the application process is fast.

"We can take a heat pump loan application over the phone in about five minutes," Kelly said. "And we typically can receive results of the bank credit check within three or four hours."

A good credit score and a good VEC pay history are required.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this program, you can contact Kristy Kelly at 423-334-7055 (or you can call your local VEC Customer Service Center and enter extension 7055 when prompted) or by email at kkelly@vec.org.

Additional information, forms, and a list of contractors who participate in the program are available at www.vec.org. Just click on the "Lower Your Energy Costs" link on the VEC homepage.



VEC's Kristy Kelly helps customers who want to participate in VEC's heat pump loan program.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective February 1, 2012

2.163¢

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

