

VEC Customers Share Reaches Out to Local Communities

VEC customer-owners who participate in the VECustomers Share program funded \$31,200 in community service grants in April. 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.



VECustomers Share Board Member Alton Lingerfelt (center) presents a grant check in the amount of \$1,000 to members of the Midway High School FFA. Accepting the check are (from left) Ryan Branson, Katie Johnson, Whitney Moore, and Elizabeth Poczobut.

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 April

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|-------|
| Pickett Cty JH Boys Basketball Boosters | \$2,000 | Agape Preschool, Monterey | \$500 |
| Maple Grove Women's Outreach, Harrison | \$1,100 | Polk County High School Golf Club | \$500 |
| Monterey High School Project Graduation | \$1,000 | St. Alphonsus Community Services, Crossville | \$500 |
| Meigs County High School Choir Boosters | \$1,000 | Cumberland Cty HS Track Booster Club | \$500 |
| Midway High School PTO | \$1,000 | North Cumberland Elementary School PTO | \$500 |
| South Roane County Volunteer Fire Dept | \$1,000 | MARA Medical Ministry, Crossville | \$500 |
| Rhea County Adult Literacy Council | \$950 | Monterey High School Girls Softball Boosters | \$500 |
| Women United in Community Service, Riceville | \$900 | Cleveland/Bradley County Public Library Summer Reading Program | \$450 |
| Birchwood Senior Neighbors | \$800 | Polk County Retired Teachers | \$450 |
| Sgt. Alvin C. York Patriotic Foundation, Pall Mall | \$750 | Chatanooga Fury 99 Softball Boosters, Harrison | \$300 |
| Meigs County Emergency Services Dive Team | \$700 | Bags of Love, Cleveland | \$300 |
| Bosum Buddies, Spring City | \$700 | American Youth Soccer Organization, Delano | \$250 |
| Riceville Elementary School Golf Boosters | \$600 | Polk County Alumni Association | \$250 |
| Rhea County 4-H | \$600 | Riceville Elementary School PTO | \$250 |
| Benton Lions Club | \$550 | Midway High School Spanish Club | \$250 |
| Hopewell Elementary School PTO, Cleveland | \$550 | Green Pond Lodge #703, Monterey | \$250 |
| Common Bond Christian Women's Job Corps, Cleveland | \$550 | Pickett County Elementary School 2nd Grade Language Arts and Reading Club | \$250 |
| Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison | \$550 | Polk County Education Foundation | \$250 |
| Senior Citizens of Cumberland County | \$500 | LBJ&C Headstart, Jamestown | \$250 |
| Homestead United Methodist Church Food Pantry, Crossville | \$500 | Pickett County Health Council | \$250 |
| Fair Park Senior Center, Crossville | \$500 | Byrdstown Headstart | \$250 |
| Handfuls of the Harvest, Jamestown | \$500 | Roane Choral Society | \$250 |
| Morgan Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns, Deer Lodge | \$500 | Polk Cty HS National Honor Society Club | \$250 |
| Wilson Elementary School 8th Grade Class Trip Boosters, Crawford | \$500 | Polk County High School Girls Soccer Club | \$250 |
| Partners of the Cherokee National Forest, Riceville | \$500 | Boys and Girls Club of the Cumberland Plateau, Jamestown | \$250 |
| Friends of the Library, Spring City | \$500 | Midway Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support Team | \$250 |
| Church of the Harvest Loaves and Fishes Pantry, Grimsley | \$500 | Meigs County Historical Society | \$250 |
| Riceville Youth Cheerleading | \$500 | Disabled American Veterans, Ocoee | \$200 |
| Bread of Life Rescue Mission, Crossville | \$500 | Meigs Cty HS Baseball Booster Club | \$200 |
| Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland Cty | \$500 | Dizzy Dean 7 & 8 Decatur Tigers Baseball | \$200 |
| Southeast Veterans Home Boogie at the Barn, Cleveland | \$500 | Meigs Cty HS Tennis Booster Club | \$200 |
| Crossville Housing Authority Residents Council | \$500 | Decatur Tigers | \$200 |
| | | Walker Valley HS Band Boosters, Cleveland | \$100 |
| | | Walker Valley HS Soccer Boosters, Cleveland | \$100 |
| | | Cumberland County 4-H All-Stars | \$100 |

VEC Vegetation Control Program Aims to Increase System Reliability Without Negative Environmental Impact

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is responsible for delivering quality power as safely and as inexpensive as possible. Trees and underbrush can present a major obstacle to meeting those responsibilities.

To manage right-of-way vegetation, VEC has two primary options; mechanical and herbicides. While mowing and cutting at first may appear to be the least expensive way to control vegetation, when all expenses are added (equipment, fuel, labor, etc.) it is cost prohibitive.

With low-volume backpack herbicide applications, we use very low volumes of diluted herbicide solutions, in directed sprays on targeted vegetation, while increasing the number of acres of right-of-way treated annually with herbicides. This method works on most terrains and is highly selective to target brush and small tree species within our 40 foot easement. The goal of this treatment is to reduce the woody competition with the least amount of disturbance to the existing vegetation.

To employ this application, VEC selects the areas to be sprayed and what herbicides are to be used. We only use herbicides that are EPA approved and have been tested and deemed harmless to humans and animals. VEC then contracts its herbicide spraying with a State of Tennessee licensed contractor. The long term goal is to reduce the woody stem competition under power lines and establish natural grasses.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is concerned about you and your community and we believe that our vegetation management program will provide you with reliable electrical service while resulting in a safe, environmentally sound treatment.

For more information on VEC's vegetation control program, contact Right-of-Way Superintendent Steve Scott at 423-334-1020 ext. 7034.



Kimberly George (front second from left) and Joel Rogers (front, right) from the Southeast Tennessee Salvation Army made a special presentation to the VECustomers Share Board last month recognizing the board's donation toward tornado relief efforts in March. Pictured are (from left) VECustomers Share board members Alton Lingerfelt - Roane County, George, Pete Williams - Rhea County, Doug Ford - McMinn County, Jim Taylor - Fentress County, Gloria Schouggins - Meigs County, Jim Purcell - Cumberland County West, Joyce Callahan - Putnam County, Galen Rector - Pickett County, Holly Neal - Cumberland County East, Bill Womac - Polk County, Harold Reno - Bradley County, and Rogers. (Not available for photo) Bobby Scott - Hamilton County.

The Numbers Don't Lie Great Service is Easier and More Affordable When We Have Your Correct Phone Number



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is committed to providing the best possible service to our customer-owners at the lowest possible prices. Taking advantage of the proven technologies that are available to us is a big part of striking that balance between containing costs and providing excellent customer service.

One example of technology that helps us control costs while providing excellent service is our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system. Research has shown that across the electric utility industry, every telephone call that a customer service representative takes costs between \$4 and \$7 on average. And when you consider that VEC serves more than 110,000 customer-owners, it's easy to see how quickly those costs can add up and result in higher electric bills.

Our IVR system allows us to reduce those costs and pass the savings along to our customer-owners.

In 2004 we performed major upgrades to our IVR and since then we've made several more improvements at the request of our customer-owners in order to make the system easier to use and more versatile in meeting the wide variety of needs our customers may have.

There is one thing we need our customer-owners to do that will help our IVR serve them more efficiently and in a more user-friendly way. **We need your correct phone number.**

Having your correct phone number means you can report outages and receive outage updates with very little trouble. It also makes taking advantage of all the other IVR features quick and easy.

This issue of *Powerlines* contains an article detailing many of the features and many of the ways we've streamlined the system over the past several years and there is also a coupon that you can use to claim a free gift from VEC just for providing us with your correct phone number.

I'd like to encourage you to use that coupon and make sure VEC has your correct phone number. You get better service and a free gift.

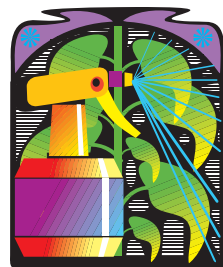
Summer Spraying Program Prevents Outages

In this issue of *Powerlines* we have also included an article about our summer vegetation spraying schedule and a rundown of the areas where we will be spraying between now and September. Controlling vegetation in the rights-of-way around power poles is a major component of our efforts to prevent outages before they occur.

In the article you will see how we go to great lengths to ensure our spraying program meets our goal of improving system reliability without creating any negative environmental side effects.



Right-of-Way Spraying Helps Reduce Outages



Volunteer Energy Cooperative's right-of-way (ROW) spraying program is scheduled to get under way in mid-June and run through September, according to Steve Scott, VEC's vegetation control specialist.

Scott said the spraying is necessary to help prevent extended power outages caused by falling trees and to assist with quick power restorations by improving access for service crews.

"We spray when growth is most active," Scott said, "We only use EPA-approved herbicides that are rated the safest and we use them in low concentrations."

Scott said the herbicides work on woody growth without affecting flowers and grass. The herbicides VEC will be using have been tested and deemed harmless to humans and animals. Copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets for each herbicide are available at VEC customer service centers.

Scott said the technique used is selective, low volume and low concentration, backpack spraying to prevent drift.

Organic growers with questions in the Cleveland and Decatur service districts should contact Scott at 423-334-7034. Organic growers in the Crossville service district should contact Tommy Walker at 931-839-2217 ext. 7411 and organic growers in the Jamestown service district should contact Butch Smith at 931-864-3685 ext. 7651.

2012 R.O.W. Summer Spraying Schedule

Benton Service Area

Benton Pike, Highway 64 West, Lebanon Road, Chestuee Road, Osment Road, Horton Road, York Road, Rymer Road, Chilcutt Road, Kinser Road, Hancock Road, Waterlevel Highway, Gatlin Road, and Old Johnson Road.

Byrdstown Service Area

Buck Mountain, Cedar Grove Road, Clark Mountain, Double Top, Dry Creek, Faix, Koger Mountain, Moodyville, Red Hill, Robbinstown, South Fork Road, and Woody Road.

Crossville Service Area

Bowman Loop, Dyke Crossroads, Clear Creek, Fredonia, Lawson Road, Plateau Road, Tabor Loop, Potato Farm Road, Creston Road, Rinnie, Old Elmore Road, Genesis Road, Todd Road, Potter Road, Pevine Firetower Road, Fox Creek, Crab Orchard, Chestnut Hill Road, Sportsman Club Road, Highland Lane, Deep Draw Road, Open Range, Cox Valley, Bat Town Road, Haley Grove Road, Black Mountain Road, Grassy Cove, Alloway Road, Durham Loop, Dogwood Road, Kemmer Road, Hwy. 68, Meridian Road, Old Grassy Cove Road, Pugh Road, Shorty Barnes Road, Old Tollett Road, Fred Ford Road, Woody, Mayland Road, Bud Tanner Road, Randolph Road, Ernest Neal Road, Carter Town, Pomona Road, Claysville Road, Dykes Road, Bell Road, West Creston Road, Howard Springs, and Stanley Hood Road.

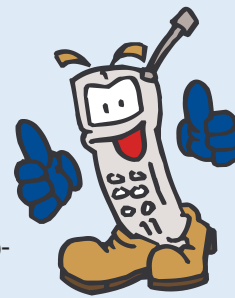
Decatur Service Area

Town of Decatur, Highway 30 East, No Pone Valley Road, Legg Hollow, Riceville Decatur Road, Rogers Creek, Short Creek, Harmon Road, Highway 58, Fire Tower Road, Highway 30 East, Five Point, Hunter Bend, DeArmond Road, Concord Road, Calico Road, Green Pond, Goodfield Road, Ford Road, Cottonport Road, Sanford, Lamontville Road, Highway 11 Calhoun, Bethel Springs, and Hillsview County Road 2 through County Road 181.

Georgetown Service Area

Eastview, Blythe Ferry Road, Highway 58, Gunstocker, Birchwood, Bunker Hill, Horner Hollow, Johnson Road, Birchwood Pike, Sam Smith Road, Pierce Road, Parker Loop, Highway 60, Eldridge Road, Grasshopper, Dolly Pond, Gamble Road, Thatch Road, Cooley Road, Igou Ferry, Bramlett Road, Ooltewah Georgetown Road, Sims Road, Harrison Bay, Snowhill, Shirley Pond, Ramsey Town Road, Mahan Gap, Short Tail Springs Road, Smith Road, Meadowview Road, Runyon Road, Wolftever, and North Ooltewah.

VEC Telephone System Has Advanced Over Time



Volunteer Energy Cooperative is continually looking for ways to improve our service. And since VEC is a not-for-profit, customer-owned cooperative, we are also continually looking for ways to provide that top-notch service at the most affordable prices possible for our customers.

VEC's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system is one of the ways to strive to meet the needs of our customers in a cost-efficient manner.

In 2003 VEC responded to customer's requests to make the IVR system more user-friendly. The system's menus and options were simplified and explained in more detail. Since that time VEC has continued to respond to customer requests by updating options and further simplifying the menu. But while VEC has continually worked to make the system easier to use, VEC has also expanded the system to provide customers with a way to take care of even more business quickly and conveniently.

In 2004 the IVR system was overhauled in order to help customers report outages and to allow VEC to respond to those outages quicker and more efficiently. During a major outage event, VEC receives a very high volume of phone calls. The IVR system allows VEC customer-owners to report their outage without lengthy hold times. The outage is reported much more quickly and that allows VEC to dispatch crews much more quickly as well.

In 2007 the system was upgraded to allow customers the convenience of paying their electric bill over the phone quickly as well. The system allows customer-owners to make full or partial payments by check, credit card, or debit card with an additional fee. Customers can also access and update account information including account balances. Customer service options include transferring, starting, stopping, or re-starting service.

In November of 2010 VEC added a feature to the IVR system allows customer-owners to request a return phone call (to their primary number on the account or to any other phone number they desire) when VEC crews have restored their outage.

This feature is useful in several situations. For example if customers have been forced to leave home for the duration of the outage, they can request a call to let them know they can return home. It can also alert customers to any battery back-up or food spoilage issues that may arise.

The key to have all these features easily accessible is to make sure VEC has your correct phone number on file.

Breezing through the menu options and conducting all sorts of business quickly and conveniently is a snap when VEC has your phone number.

For a limited time, VEC will even offer customer-owners a free gift for providing their correct phone number. You can use the coupon in this edition of *Powerlines* and mail it in with your payment, or you can stop by your local VEC Customer Service Center. And yes... you can update your phone number over the telephone, too.

Do We Have Your Number?



The key to allowing the IVR system to operate as efficiently as possible is having your correct phone number on file with VEC.

Please fill out this form and mail it in with your bill payment or drop it off at your local VEC Customer Service Center **and you'll receive a free gift from VEC.**

Name: _____

VEC Account Number: _____

Address: _____

Home/Main Contact Number:
(Please include your Area Code) _____

Mobile Number: _____

Business Number: _____

For Office Use Only: _____

VEC Protects Personal Information

Policy Regarding Privacy of Customer Information

Volunteer Energy Cooperative values you as an owner and as a customer and understands how important it is to protect the personal information that you have entrusted to us. We, therefore, treat such personal information in accordance with applicable law and the provisions of this policy.

Information We May Collect

We only collect information that is needed to serve you and administer your cooperative's business. We may collect nonpublic personal information about you from the following sources:

- Information we receive from you on applications or other forms;
- Information about your business transactions with us or others; and
- Information we receive from a consumer reporting agency

Protection of Your Information

We are committed to upholding our pledge to maintain security of our customers' personal and accounting information. To ensure such information is used only in the manner we have described in this notice, we restrict to your personal and account information to those employees who need to know that information to provide products or services to you. We maintain physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards to maintain the confidentiality of the information we collect and to guard against its unauthorized access.

Information We May Disclose

All of the information that we collect, as described above, may be disclosed when necessary to assist us in servicing your accounts to third parties as designated by you, in response to subpoenas or other court orders, and to credit bureau or similar information reporting agency. We do not disclose any nonpublic personal information about our customers to anyone, except as permitted by law.

We may disclose the information that we collect, as described above, to companies that perform marketing services on our behalf. This information may be shared with our affiliates so they can market their services. However, *Volunteer Energy Cooperative does not share personal customer information with unaffiliated third parties for any reason.*

If you decide to terminate your relationship with us, we will continue to adhere to the privacy policies and practices described in this notice.

For more information or questions you may have regarding this policy can be directed to the Office of the President/CEO, Volunteer Energy Cooperative, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322 or to your local VEC service center.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective May 1, 2012
2.561¢
For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org