

## Every Degree Counts in Cutting Energy Costs

Winter is here and lowering your thermostat by one or two degrees can mean substantial savings on your heating bill. On average, each degree you raise or lower the thermostat from 70 degrees means you pay 3.1% more or less on your heating bill. For example, lowering your thermostat from 70 degrees to 68 degrees will save 6.2% on your heating bill. However, if you like to keep your home warmer in the winter; raising the thermostat to 76 degrees will increase your heating bill by 18.6%.

## Charter Member of VECustomers Share Board Passes Away

Billie Orville Sparkman, 79, of Cleveland, a charter member of the VECustomers Share Board of Directors, passed away October 29, 2012.

A member of First United Methodist Church in Cleveland, Sparkman was born on March 28, 1933 on a farm near Doyle, TN, he graduated from White County High School in Sparta where he played football. He then served in the United States Army and was stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco. After discharge from the Army in 1956, he completed his degree from Tennessee Technological University in 1958 where he lettered on the track team.

He became the first manager of Bradley Farmers Co-op in 1959. He served as the manager of the co-op until his retirement in 1994. In 2004, he received the James B. Walker Cooperative Spirit Award for his tireless efforts and devotion to the co-op system. He was respected by many in the business and farming communities.

After his retirement, he was appointed as one of the original board members for Volunteer Energy Cooperative's VECustomers Share program.

"Mr. Sparkman was a tireless supporter of cooperatives and of our VECustomers Share program," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "It was my privilege to work along with him to identify and meet the needs of the less fortunate in Bradley County.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife of almost 49 years, Mildred, and his sons Jimmy, and Jon. Mr. Sparkman will be deeply missed by all of us."

The family suggests that memorials may be made to: First United Methodist Church Building Fund, 3435 N. Ocoee St., Cleveland, TN 37312; the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society reference (www.lls.org) or the charity of choice.



Billie Orville Sparkman  
1933 - 2012

## 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.

## VEC Offers College Scholarships

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) wants to reward students who have used their time and talents to benefit their local communities. VEC's Lillard-Shadow scholarship program rewards academic and community service achievements by awarding four \$2,000 scholarships to students who will graduate from high schools in VEC's service area in the spring of 2013.

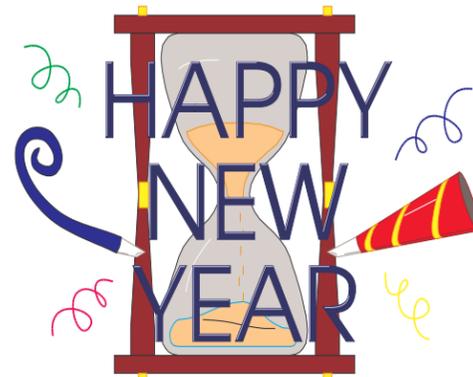
The scholarships honor J.W. Lillard and Willis A Shadow, two community leaders who spearheaded efforts to bring electric power to Decatur and Meigs County in the 1930s, forming the organization that would become Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Mr. Shadow and Mr. Lillard were instrumental in improving the lives and livelihoods of thousands of residents through electric power.

Four awards of \$500 per semester each (renewable for up to four semesters) will be presented to spring 2013 high school graduates whose parents or guardians are VEC electric customers. Applications will be judged by an independent panel based on each student's community service activities and citizenship - 40%; written communication skills - 20 %; financial need - 25%; and academic achievement - 15%.

Scholarship applications are available at any VEC Customer Service Center or from high school counselors in the VEC service area. Applications are also available online at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

**All application materials must be completed and delivered to VEC's Corporate Office in Decatur no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 8, 2013.**

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## 2012 Was a Year of Progress for VEC

Preventative maintenance and system upgrades took center stage at Volunteer Energy Cooperative during 2012. Compared to the devastation our communities and the VEC system suffered from severe weather in 2010 and 2011, this past year was relatively mild.

I am certain, however, that our aggressive right-of-way maintenance and pole inspection programs, as well as several major system-upgrade projects we undertook in 2012 helped to minimize the number and the duration of outages.

VEC maintains rights-of-way for about 9,000 miles of line. During the past year VEC trimmed more than 2,100 miles and used low-impact spray to control vegetation on 4,500 acres.

We also maintain about 190,000 power poles. During the past year VEC crews inspected more than 10,000 poles and replaced more than 1,200 poles that were subpar.

In addition to maintaining power lines and power poles, we also completed several major improvements and upgrades to substations on our system during the year. VEC operates 33 substations where we receive electricity from TVA and convert it to levels that are suitable to distribute through our 17-county service area. In September we energized a new substation in Byrdstown in Pickett County and in October we energized a new substation in the Riceville area of McMinn County. Major renovations were also completed to our Spring City Substation in Rhea County.

Delivering reliable and safe electric service is only part of our mission at VEC we also are dedicated to providing the best possible customer service at the most affordable price possible. We also completed several projects during the year to provide service in a way that meets the needs of our customers.

During 2012 we introduced the new PayMyWay prepaid billing option to our customers and more than 400 VEC member-owners have opted to take advantage of this program. This prepaid billing was not designed with the majority of our customers in mind, but under certain circumstances it can be of real benefit to some of our customers.

We also completed upgrades at our Jamestown and Monterey customer service centers in an effort to make our service more efficient and more enjoyable for our member-owners.

VEC is not like other electric companies - we are owned and operated by our members. We've always felt that the more information our member-owners have about VEC, the more comfortable they will be with being a part owner of their electric company rather than just a customer. In keeping with that goal of providing our members with as much useful information as possible, we redesigned our bills. Our effort paid off with an award from the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) who named VEC members as some of the best informed utility customers in the nation.

Overall 2012 was a good year for VEC and our member-owners and we look forward to forging into 2013 with the same commitment to bringing safe and reliable electric service to our members at the most affordable price possible.

Here's wishing you and yours a Happy New Year!



Rody Blevins  
President/CEO  
Volunteer Energy  
Cooperative

## VECcustomers Share Neighbors Helping Neighbors



The VECcustomers Share program funded \$31,300 in community service grants in October. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$4.3 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](http://www.vec.org).



VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins (left) and VEC Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development Patty Hurley (right) present a grant check to Bobby and Peggy Collier of Operation R.E.A.C.H.

### Organizations receiving grants in October

Pickett County Rescue Squad	\$2,500	Crossville Housing Resident Council	\$500
Fentress County Food Bank	\$2,050	Martin Elementary School Beta Club, Crossville	\$500
Operation R.E.A.C.H., Kingston	\$2,000	Bradley Central High School JROTC	\$500
Rhea County Rescue Squad	\$2,000	Midway High School Spanish Club	\$500
E.K. Baker Elementary School PTO, Athens	\$1,500	Dorton FCE, Crossville	\$500
Lakeway Seniors Happy Group, Harrison	\$1,000	Meigs Middle School Fellowship of Christian Athletes	\$500
United Way of Bradley County		AMVETS Post 90, Decatur	\$500
Imagination Library	\$1,000	Meigs County FFA Alumni	\$500
Christmas on the Mountain, Crossville	\$1,000	Meigs County-Decatur Chamber of Commerce	\$500
Habitat for Humanity, Cleveland	\$1,000	Mt. Carmel Ladies of Action, Decatur	\$300
Sunshine Soup Kitchen, Crossville	\$1,000	Junior Achievement of the Ocoee Region, Cleveland	\$250
Peavine Care Center, Crossville	\$1,000	Eastern Regional Market Hog Show, Athens	\$250
Fair Park Senior Center, Crossville	\$1,000	New Beginnings Garden Club, Decatur	\$250
Polk County Food Bank	\$950	Meigs County Senior Citizens Center	\$250
Alvin C. York Institute JROTC, Jamestown	\$950	John Knox Center, Ten Mile	\$250
People Helping People, Benton	\$800	Polk County High School Volleyball Boosters	\$250
Tri-County Center, Athens	\$800	Crossroads of Tennessee, Cleveland	\$250
Heritage Quilt Guild, Athens	\$750	Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison	\$250
Funday, Benton	\$750	Girl Scout Troop 40449, Reliance	\$250
Candlelighters Support Group, Hamilton County	\$750	Midway High School Community Clothes Closet	\$250
Stone Elementary School Beta Club, Crossville	\$500	Meigs County Historical Society	\$200
Stone Elementary School Teen Living Club, Crossville	\$500		

## When Temperatures Go Down, Electric Bills Can Go Up

Use These Tips to Keep the Lid on Your Electric Bill This Winter



Keeping electric bills under control during a cold snap doesn't require a degree in rocket science. If you are willing to develop some good energy-saving habits this winter, you can save money, save energy and still remain comfortable.

If you heat your home with a new, energy-efficient heat pump - congratulations. You're already halfway there. If you use another type of heating system or one that is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a new energy-saving heat pump. Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) can help with TVA's *energy right*® heat pump financing program. Phone Kristy Kelly at 423-334-7055 for more information or go to [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

You can also take advantage of VEC's free In-Home Energy Evaluation program. We'll send an energy-efficiency expert to your home and make recommendations about how you can save money on your electric bill. If you choose to make any of the recommended improvements, you can earn rebates of up to \$500 on the work you have done. Call Paige Finnell at 423-334-7053 for more information or visit our website at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

Another great way to battle electric bills that spike in extremely cold or extremely hot weather is to sign up for VEC's Levelized Billing option. Levelized Billing means no big swings in your electric bill. It takes the guesswork out of your household budget. Contact your local VEC Customer Service Center for more information or apply online at [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org).

**Here are some tips on how to keep from wasting energy and money this winter:**

- If you haven't replaced your heating system's air filter in the last month, do it now. A dirty filter will reduce air flow which makes your system work harder. Also, cover the filter slot with a piece of wide tape to keep air from getting in around filter edges without passing through the filter.
- Be sure your ducts are delivering all the warm air they can. If you can see the duct seams where the metal comes together, seal these joints with shiny foil tape or duct mastic (also called duct sealant).
- You can also take off the duct registers in your rooms (usually all you need to do is back out two screws) and check the connection between the duct and the drywall. You may see a gap. This gap allows heated air to escape into the walls. Fill this gap with duct mastic. Also, with the register off, check for any other gaps that would allow heated air to flow behind walls. If there is a gap or a hole, seal it up.
- If you have any ducts that run into the attic or through a cold basement or crawlspace, be sure the ducts are well insulated. If the insulation is missing or falling off, most home improvement stores sell insulation for ducts. Try to insulate to at least an R-6. Be sure to seal any leaks in the ducts first, then wrap the duct in insulation. If you have flex-duct (shiny metal flexible duct tubes), be sure there are no rips or tears and the ducts are as straight as possible.
- You can also prevent heat loss by sealing air leaks around window and door frames with caulk or weather stripping.
- Keep shades and curtains open during the day so the sun can help make your home warmer. Close them in the evening to keep the heat in.
- Use ceiling fans to circulate the warmer air found near the ceiling throughout your home.
- Consider installing glass doors in front of your fireplace to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney. Always keep the fireplace damper closed when the fireplace is not in use.
- Be sure to turn off bathroom and kitchen vent fans when their work is done.
- Remove window air conditioning units in the winter. If this can't be done, enclose the unit with an air conditioner cover to prevent drafts.

## Crossville Inc., Receives Energy Efficiency Incentives through the TVA/VEC *energy right*® Solutions for Business Program

Crossville Inc. recently received energy efficiency incentives of more than \$305,000 from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC). The incentives are based on lighting and light sensor equipment installed at Plants 1, 2 and 4 and the CDC warehouse. The incentives are offered through TVA's *energy right*® Solutions for Business program.

John Smith president and CEO of Crossville Inc., said that the incentives were useful to install energy efficiency improvements, but the greatest benefit will be realized as the monthly energy usage is reduced.

In order to take advantage of the incentives, Crossville Inc.'s, buildings first underwent an evaluation to determine the most cost-effective means to conserve energy. Incentives were based on the estimated savings that will be realized during the peak times of load for TVA after the improvements were installed.

Bobby Randolph, VEC's Crossville service area manager, said that this program is a win-win for everyone involved.

"As TVA examines their rate structure, costs for consumers are likely to rise in relationship to usage at peak demand times," he said, "Customers who install energy efficiency projects like these help to hold down costs for all VEC customers."



Bobby Randolph, VEC's Crossville service area manager, (left) congratulates President and CEO John Smith (center) and Brian McDonald, engineering director, on the energy-efficient improvements they have made at Crossville, Inc.

### Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

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

**2.919¢**

For the most current FCA information, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org)

