



V. Davis Dunn

Davis Dunn, Charter VECustomers Share Board Member, Passed Away

V. Davis Dunn, 84, a charter member of the VECustomers Share Board of Directors, passed away in 2012. A resident of Old Fort, he was a graduate of Polk County High School and retired from Bowater Corporation after 35 years of service. He was a member of Sumach Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where he served as an elder and was treasurer for 35 years. He was also a 50 year member of the Conasauga Lodge

#396 F & AM.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Betty Standridge Dunn of Old Fort; daughter, Deborah Dunn Swafford and husband, Morris; and grandchildren, Joey Swafford and Keith Swafford.

"Davis was a tireless supporter of the community and a tremendous advocate of our VECustomers Share program," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "His leadership and steadfast support will be missed by all of us at VEC."

The family suggests that memorials be made to Sumach Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 2089 Sumach Church Rd., Chatsworth, GA 30705.

Long-Time Polk County Board Member Passes Away

Marvin Stinnett, who served on the Volunteer Energy Cooperative Board of Directors for 23 years, passed away Friday, December 14.

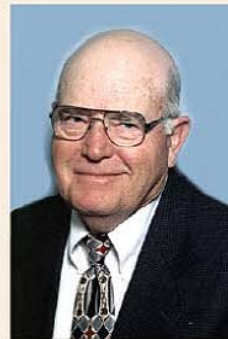
Stinnett, of Old Fort, represented Polk County on the VEC Board from 1987 to 2010. He was the retired former owner of Stinnett Pallet and served as a Gideon for 40 years. He was also a 30-year member and past president of Old Fort Community Club and a member of the Benton Lions Club.

The oldest of seven children, he went to work at an early age to help support the family. Mr. Stinnett was a hard working carpenter for many years and built several homes and commercial buildings in the area. He attended Blue Ridge Temple Baptist Church where he served as a deacon and a trustee.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Evelyn Liner Stinnett; son, Mike (Kim) Stinnett; daughter Ann (Ronnie) German both of Old Fort. "Papaw" was a loving grandfather to Drew German, Hollie German, Laura (Eddie) German Swallows, and Marshall and Mathew Stinnett. He was loved like a grandfather by Rosy and Wilson Harpe. Other survivors include sisters Leota (Billy) Rice and Lucille (Rev. W.L.) Shipman; brothers Paul Stinnett and Jerry (Clara) Stinnett, all of Cleveland; Billy (Drucilla) Stinnett and A.J. (Shirlyn) Stinnett both of Benton; as well as several nieces and nephews.

"Marvin Stinnett's dedication and leadership will be sorely missed," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "And not just at VEC – he will be missed throughout the community he served. Our thoughts and prayers are with Evelyn, Mike, and Ann."

The family requests that in lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the Gideons, PO Box 151, Ocoee, TN 37361.



Marvin Stinnett

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.

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.

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.

VEC Pre-paid Billing Option Gaining Popularity



VEC launched an innovative new billing option almost one year ago called PayMyWay and the pre-paid billing option is now the favored way to pay for almost 500 VEC member-owners.

The PayMyWay billing option is a prepaid electric service option that helps member-owners avoid security deposits, credit checks, late fees, and reconnection fees. Customers can schedule payments that meet the needs of their household budgets.

Once customers establish a PayMyWay account with a credit balance, his or her home's energy use is recorded and charged daily to the account. The credit balance is reduced by the amount charged until either the balance is exhausted or additional payments are made to the account.

PayMyWay customers schedule payments that are convenient for them. Payments may be made with cash, credit cards, or checks via phone, at the VEC website, or in person at any VEC Customer Service Center. Once an initial credit balance has been established, customers can make minimum payments of \$40 at any time.

PayMyWay participants do not receive monthly statements. They can view their account balance information 24 hours a day through the VEC website (www.vec.org), by calling their local office, or by visiting any VEC Customer Service Center. When a customer's PayMyWay balance is low, they receive a courtesy notification via an automated phone call and email. If the account is disconnected, the cost to reconnect service is \$40 or an amount necessary to re-establish a credit balance on the account.

"The program is not for everyone," said VEC Vice-President of Marketing and Economic Development Patty Hurley. "But many VEC member-owners are finding that it fits their needs and VEC is happy to offer them this billing option."



Take Control of your Electricity Use and Costs



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

If you feel helpless when it comes to how much you spend on electricity each month, you're not alone.

A recent study conducted by Knoxville-based Shelton Group showed 25% of electricity consumers blame their home's inefficiency for their rising electricity costs. About 18% blamed their electric company and only 12% cited their own demand for electricity as the cause.

In the survey about 80% of respondents said they believe they are using the same amount or less electricity than in the past. But nationwide, and in VEC's service area, electricity consumption has increased.

If you are like one of these survey respondents who feel like there is nothing you can do to reduce your electricity consumption and the amount of your monthly electric bill, I have good news for you - you **CAN** take charge of your electricity costs. And VEC will help you.

Most companies spend a lot of money on advertising in an effort to entice you into buying more of their product. But VEC offers free and low-cost programs to help you buy less electricity. I'd like to encourage you to take advantage of one or more of these programs and take control of your electricity costs.

One of these programs is our free In-Home Energy Evaluation program. Under the program we will send an energy-efficiency expert to your home to conduct an inspection and make suggestions on how you can improve your home's energy efficiency. If you choose to follow any of the recommendations, you can earn rebates of up to 50% of what you spend to make those improvements.

Another option VEC offers that some of our member-owners are finding helpful is our PayMyWay billing option. It is a prepaid option that allows consumers to choose when and how much they pay. PayMyWay wasn't designed with every member-owner in mind, but for some it can be a valuable tool to manage their consumption and their family budget.

During most times of the year, your heating and cooling costs are the largest chunk of your energy costs. If old, inefficient heating and cooling equipment is driving up your energy costs, we can help with low-cost financing for a new, energy-efficient heat pump. The payments are conveniently included on your electric bill and the amount you save on your electric use will help offset the cost of the heat pump.

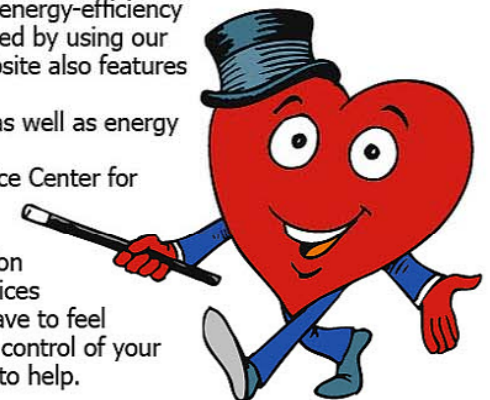
Some customers have even reported that the savings completely offset the additional heat pump loan payment. But that isn't going to happen in every case. That brings me to another problematic attitude among many reflected in the survey.

Many electricity consumers have unrealistic expectations about how much electricity they will save after making energy-efficiency improvements. When asked how much they would have to save in order to justify spending \$4,000 on energy-efficiency improvements, the average response was \$139 per month. That's a reduction of about 85% of the average reported utility bill and goes well beyond a realistic expectation.

You can get a very accurate picture of how energy-efficiency improvements will translate into real dollars saved by using our free energy calculator at www.vec.org. Our website also features a wealth of information about the energy-saving programs VEC offers, as well as energy saving tips.

You can also call your local VEC Customer Service Center for more information.

Whether you use our online or in-person resources, I encourage you to get the information you need to match one of our programs or services with your individual circumstances. You don't have to feel victimized by your electricity bill – you can take control of your electricity use and your costs. And we are here to help.



VEC Customers Share Neighbors Helping Neighbors



The VEC Customers Share program funded \$31,300 in community service grants in November. 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.



VEC Customers Share Board Member Holly Neal, center, presents a grant check to, from left, Madge Susong, Mary Kelly, Neal, Pat Murphy, Helen Armstrong, and Jim Armstrong of the Tennessee Shooting Stars. The Shooting Stars won 70+ basketball national championships in 2009 and 2011.

Organizations receiving grants in November

Fentress County Children's Center	\$2,000	Catch Ministry, Cleveland	\$650
Pine Grove Fire District Association, Spring City	\$1,500	Mayland Senior Citizens Club, Crossville	\$600
Midway Youth League	\$1,500	The Caring Place, Cleveland	\$600
Tennessee Kidney Foundation of Cumberland & Putnam counties	\$1,300	Birchwood Senior Neighbors	\$600
Benton Lions' Club	\$1,250	Heirforce Youth Ministries of Jamestown	\$500
Byrdstown Senior Center	\$1,250	First Church of the Nazarene, Jamestown	\$500
West Polk Empty Stocking Fund	\$1,250	Hiwassee Longbeards, Riceville	\$500
Meigs County High School Tennis Club	\$1,100	Help-Portrait Crossville	\$500
Mrs. Stephanie Norris 2nd Grade Reading/ Language Arts Club, Byrdstown	\$1,032	Friends of the Library, Spring City	\$500
Tennessee Shooting Stars, Crossville	\$1,000	Chattanooga Area Food Bank	\$500
Midway Quarterback Club	\$1,000	Mt. Carmel Ladies of Action, Decatur	\$468
Cherokee Removal Park-Blythe Ferry, Birchwood	\$1,000	Bradley/Polk Foster Adoptive Care Association	\$450
Homestead UMC Food Bank, Crossville	\$1,000	Toys for Santa, Ten Mile	\$400
McMinn County Foster Care Association	\$1,000	Meigs County Senior Citizens Center	\$400
Wilson Elementary School 8th Grade Club, Crawford	\$1,000	VFW Post 6277, Monterey	\$400
Claxton Community Volunteer Emergency Services, Athens	\$1,000	Fentress County Public Library	\$250
Boy Scout Troop 18, Cookeville	\$800	Brown Middle School PTO, Harrison	\$250
Providence Baptist Food Pantry, Ooltewah	\$750	Hales Chapel Community Center, Crossville	\$250
First Baptist Church Team Kids Fall Fest, Spring City	\$750	Polk County High School Volleyball Club	\$250
Creston Pentecostal Youth Group-Christmas Shoes for Kids, Crossville	\$650	Cleveland/Bradley Chamber Foundation	\$200
		Shenandoah Baptist Academy Basketball Booster Club, Cleveland	\$200
		Tennessee Rural Education Association, Cleveland	\$200
		BGL Foundation-Creating Christmas Memories, Cleveland	\$200
		McDonald/Black Fox Ruritans	\$200

Don't Let Your Fireplace Burn Your Budget

Your fireplace may be great to warm up by on a cold winter night, but be careful that it doesn't burn a hole in your wallet. Whether you use it or not, your fireplace can be a pipeline of energy waste.

When in use, your fireplace may actually have a reverse effect on your home heating. Older fireplaces are generally quite inefficient and only heat the immediate area. The convection of the fire can also suck conditioned air out of the rest of your home and cause your furnace to work harder.

When a fire is not burning there is usually only a thin metal damper to keep warm air from flowing out the chimney. The damper is 100-year-old technology and does little to insulate your home.

Fortunately there are steps you can take to keep from getting burned by your fireplace:

- **Install a top-sealing damper.** These dampers are installed on the top of your chimney and act as a storm door, keeping conditioned air in regardless of the season.
- **If your fireplace is never used, consider sealing it** with insulation or an insulating inflatable damper. Be sure to remove all insulation if you plan on using the fireplace again.
- **Consider installing a fireplace heater.** These units draw fresh air from the room, circulate it through a heating chamber and blow it back into the room. They are a sealed system, so no smoke ever enters the room. Fireplace heaters will dramatically increase the efficiency of your fireplace.
- **Install glass fireplace doors.** This improvement will help the efficiency, safety and aesthetics of your fireplace. Glass doors allow for better sealing of the fireplace so less air is lost to convection and to simple drafts. The doors will also protect children from flames, and can prevent embers from escaping into the room. Consider installing doors in conjunction with a fireplace heater for maximum efficiency.

There are a wide variety of products on the market to help improve the efficiency of your fireplace or simply seal off an unused chimney. Shop around or ask an expert to determine what is best to keep your energy dollars from going up in smoke.

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

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective January 1, 2013

2.677¢

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

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) or telephones (except in an emergency); do not take a bath or shower; keep batteries on hand for flashlights and radios in case of a power outage; and use surge protectors on electronic devices and appliances.
- **Space Heaters:** Space heaters are meant to supply supplemental heat. Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. away from any combustible materials such as bedding, clothing, draperies, furniture, and rugs. Don't use in rooms where children are unsupervised and remember to turn off and unplug when not in use.
- **Halogen Floor Lamps:** Halogen floor lamps operate at much higher temperatures than a standard incandescent light bulb. Never place a halogen floor lamp where it could come in contact with draperies, clothing, or other combustible materials. Be sure to turn the lamp off whenever you leave the room for an extended period of time and never use torchiere lamps in children's bedrooms or playrooms.