

VEC is Deeply Committed to Our Community

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is deeply committed to our community. Some of the ways we do this may not be immediately apparent to others.

We support our community organizations. One of the more obvious ways we impact our community is through the VECustomers Shares program, made possible by customers who agree to round up their bills. VECustomers Shares has been able to provide community organizations more than \$5.9 million since 2001. Grants have been awarded to food pantries, emergency shelters, disaster relief agencies, senior centers, volunteer fire departments, booster clubs and so many more. Each edition of *Powerlines* lists the organizations receiving grants.

We are the voice for affordable electric rates. The VEC Board and I travel each year to speak with our elected officials about legislation that affects our members. We are also the voice representing our members with regard to Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) raising wholesale rates. TVA has raised the wholesale base rates by 2.5% every year for the last three years. They currently plan to continue raising rates every year for the next several years. The board of directors and I are very concerned about the financial burden this will place on our members. We have asked TVA repeatedly to reconsider this plan. We plan to continue requesting TVA modify their plan to raise electric rates every year. If we are unsuccessful in getting TVA to modify their financial plan, we may need our members help by contacting TVA to voice your concerns. We will keep you informed on this important issue.

We strengthen our youth. We send two junior high students to Nashville each year for the TECA Youth Leadership Summit and four juniors on the NRECA Washington Youth Tour. Both opportunities promote leadership to students in rural communities served by VEC. Students are given the opportunity to meet their senators and representatives. During the school year we attend many classrooms and fairs presenting safety demonstrations for students in K-12. We also fund the Lillard-Shadow scholarship which awards \$2,000 each to 4 graduating seniors.

We facilitate the TVA EnergyRight Solutions eScore™ and heat pump loan programs. These programs provide a way for our members to evaluate their home's energy efficiency and receive rebates for improvements. So far this year we have assisted 214 members with eScore™ audits and inspections. Through April of this year we facilitated 35 approved EnergyRight heat pump loans for members. The loans are spread out over a 10-year period and paid along with the utility bill. This loan empowers many rural members to create a more energy efficient home.

Whether we are working with members to upgrade their home's energy efficiency, presenting a grant check to a food bank, awarding a scholarship to a graduating senior, advocating for rates with TVA, or traveling to Washington we are working to demonstrate how much we care about the communities we serve.

Right-of-Way Spraying Helps Reduce Outages

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) 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.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

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, Decatur and Georgetown service districts should contact Steve Scott at 423-334-7034. Organic growers in the Byrdstown, Crossville, and Jamestown service district should contact Brad Rhea at 931-248-1884.

Byrdstown Service Area

Highway 111 from Beason Road to state line, Red Hill Road, Old Kentucky Road, Greenbriar Road, Owl Hollow, Gunnels Road, Harlan Lee Road, Nick Road, Parker Road, Lick Creek Road, Old Static Road, Northlick Creek Road.

Cleveland Service Area

Eads Bluff Road, Van Davis Road, Lower River Road, Hopewell, No Pone Road, Mt Zion, Rabbit Valley, Harrison Pike, White Oak Valley Road, Sugar Creek, Gum Springs, Francisco Road, Eureka Road, Candies Creek Ridge Road, Moore Road, Freewill Road, Frontage Road, Old Georgetown Road, Mouse Creek Road, Hooper Gap Road, Georgetown Road, Georgetown Drive, Cobblestone Creek Road, White Oak Road, Knobb Hill Road, Denton Hollow Road, Blackburn Hollow Road, Rabbit Valley Road, Bigsby Creek Road, Old Freewill Road, Elkmont Road, Rollins Ridge Road, Harrison Pike, Old Harrison Circle, Medlin Road, Pleasant Grove Road, Harris Creek Road, Pleasant Grove Trail

Crossville Service Area

Cumberland Mountain Retreat, Lantana Road, Newton Road, Flynn's Cove Road, Midway Road, City Lake Road, Glory Loop, Florida Ave, Lantana Fire Tower Road, Dunbar Road, from Lantana Road to Rabbit Hollow, Wingham Road, Hillendale, Mountain View Lane, Ted Davis Road, Cherokee Trail, Oswego, Natchez Trace, Tansi Area, Shadberry Drive, Oak Hill Drive, War Eagle, Nicholson Drive, Wichita Drive, Cherokee Trail, Seminole, Chickasaw, Pueblo Drive, West Ravenscroft Road, North Star, Wigwam, Moonlight, Coal Bank Road, Flat Rock, Corolla Road, Highway 70 South between Flat Rock Road, and Grandview Drive, Old Bon Air Road, Camp Belle Air, Low Gap Road, Highway 70 South between Flat Rock Road and Browntown Road, Old Ridge Road, Glade Creek, Never Fail, Main St Area in Pleasant Hill, Browntown, Frazier, Rodgers Road, East Ravenscroft, Eastland Road, Red Road, Love Joy, Todd Town, Clifty Hill Top Drive, Cook Road, Industrial Blvd, Goodwin Cir, Vaughn St, Old Jamestown Highway, Hillcrest Drive, Louise Street, Plateau Road, Carey Drive, Pugh Cemetery Road, Wild Boar Lane, Jonia Lane, Drowning Creek Road, Baier Road, Tom Welch Road, Trails End, Dykes Road, Caryonah Road, McClanahan Dr, Plateau Fire Tower Road, Stanley Hood Road, Linder Loop, Custer Road.

Decatur Service Area

Armstrong Ferry Road, Big Springs, Lower River Road, Cottonport Road, Holly Glen, Highway 58 South, Roberts Road, Cottonport Ridge Road, Plank Road, No Pone Valley Road, Lamontville Road, Shiloh Road, Sneed Road, Highway 30 East, Elder Hollow Road, Liggett Road, Burkett Chapel Road, Ridge Road, Cameron Road, Redmond Road, Mt. Carmel Road, Agency Creek Road, Polymer Drive, Breeden Road, Cymer Road, Centerpoint Road, Pisgah Academy Road, Ward Road, Highway 58 North, Guinn Narrows Road, River Road, Woods Hollow Road, Old Highway 30, Highway 30, County Road 100, County Road 50, County Road 181, Harmon Hollow, Big Sewee Road, Lankford Ridge Road, Herd Road, Morrison Road, Eaves Ferry Road, Town of Decatur, Five Point, DeArmond Road, Hunter Bend Road, Calico Road, Lower Concord Road, Green Pond Road, Ford Road, Goodfield Road, Rabbit Ranch Road, No Pone Valley Road, Brickle Ridge Road, Legg Hollow Road, County Road 83, County Road 92, County Road 87, County Road 49, County Road 51, Short Creek Area

Georgetown Service Area

Greenwood Road, Wolftever, Snowhill Road, Inlet Point Drive, Kittrell Lane, Roy Lane, McDaniel Lane, Royal Harbor Circle, Short Tail Springs Road, Bell Mill Road, Highway 58 South, Dogwood Drive, Shirley Pond Road, Ramseytown Road, Ramsey Road, Harrison Bay Road, Brenda Drive, Harrison Heights Drive, Ramsey Forge Road, Compassion Lane, Harrison Hills Lane, Ooltewah Georgetown Road, McKenzie Lane, Biggs Road, Providence Road, Green Gap Road, Mahan Gap Road, Long Savannah Road, Blanch Road, Harriet Lane, Rancho Drive, Proffit Road, Mountain View Road, Leamon Road, McDaniel Road, Bramlett Road, Kevin Lane, Forest Pond Drive, Patricia Circle, Brenda Drive, Morning Glory Drive, Hidden Branches Road

Jamestown Service Area

South York Highway from Jamestown to Wright Frogge Farm Road, Taylor Place Road, Ray Brown Road, Tinch Town, Owens Road, Model Farm Road, Gatewood Ford Road, Roanoke Road, Glenobey Road, Frank Tinch Road, Hoodtown Road, Stoker Coal Road, Stephens Road, Alf Threet Road

Local Young Leaders Learn About Government During Co-op Event in Nashville

Polk County High School students Ashley Demerritt and Trevor Cheatham were in Nashville March 13-15 for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's annual Youth Leadership Summit. The juniors were chosen and sponsored by Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC).

On Tuesday, March 14, Sen. Jim Tracy greeted delegates attending the three-day leadership and government workshop. Tracy welcomed the young leaders to the Senate Chamber of the Tennessee State Capitol where Alan Whittington, assistant chief clerk of the Senate, explained the process required to pass legislation. Students had the opportunity to debate and vote on a mock bill.

Reps. Mike Bell and John Lee Clemmons joined Sen. Tracy for a town hall meeting with attendees. The three discussed the legislative process and answered questions posed by summit attendees. Delegates then had the opportunity to listen in on debate in House and Senate meetings in Legislative Plaza.

In addition to a hands-on look at state government, delegates attending the event learned team-building and problem-solving skills and developed a better understanding of their local electric cooperatives.

Delegates to the Youth Leadership Summit are encouraged to be leaders and use their talents to improve rural Tennessee. "Local electric co-ops, school officials and guidance counselors chose these deserving students to attend the summit based on their interests in government and strong leadership abilities," says Todd Blocker, Vice President of Member Relations for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and Director of the Youth Leadership Summit. "They will be the next generation of leaders in rural Tennessee, and we want to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities they will face."

"These students will soon be our community leaders — and electric cooperative member-owners," says Rody Blevins, VEC President and CEO. "We want them to share our passion for rural South East Tennessee, so it is an honor for Volunteer Energy Cooperative to help prepare them for the opportunities that are ahead. The future of our rural communities depends on a new generation of strong leaders like these."



Polk County High School Students Trevor Cheatham (left) and Ashley Demerritt (center) met with Senator Mike Bell while participating in a mock town hall meeting at the Capitol.



The VECustomers Share program funded \$29,500 in community service grants in April. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$5.9 million in grants has been awarded. The deadline for grant applications is the last working 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.



VECustomers Share board members Pauline Sherrer (L) and Jerry Mayo (R) presented a grant check to Jessica Rollins of Homestead Elementary. This grant will assist underprivileged students with the cost of attending Tremont Institute in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Organizations receiving grants in April

Spring City Lions Club	\$2,500	Wilson Elementary Outdoor Club	\$500
Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland	\$1,850	CASA of Bradley and Polk Counties	\$500
Calhoun Alumni Association	\$1,700	Midway High School Drama Club	\$400
Clarkrange Volunteer Fire Department	\$1,300	Toys for Children	\$400
Midway Baseball Boosters	\$1,250	Cumberland County FFA	\$350
Pickett County High School Girls Softball	\$1,250	PTO Rogers Creek Elementary School	\$300
Maple Grove Community Senior Adults	\$1,250	Putnam County Adult Literacy Council	\$300
Healthy School Team of Pickett K-8	\$1,250	The Bay View Arabian Team	\$300
Mountain Valley Blue Star Mothers	\$1,000	S.W.A.T. AAU Basketball	\$250
Chilhowee Middle School Baseball	\$950	Bradley Cleveland Public Education Foundation	\$250
Benton Lions Club	\$950	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$250
Snow Hill Recreation League INC	\$950	Meigs County Heat 10 U	\$200
Meigs High Spanish Club	\$900	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$200
New Life Community Kitchen	\$750	Midway Middle School Football Boosters	\$200
Blythe Bower Elementary School PTO	\$750	Meigs Fury Softball (Girl 8yr and up)	\$200
Fleet Reserve Association - Branch 294	\$750	Meigs County Crush Baseball (6yr and up)	\$200
SMHS Softball Boosters	\$750	Agape Preschool	\$200
Clarkrange High School Girls Softball Team	\$700	Pride Lacrosse Lions	\$200
Art Circle Public Library Foundation	\$600	Mountain First Responders	\$200
Monterey Baseball Boosters	\$500	Veterans Museum of White County	\$200
Keep McMinn Beautiful	\$500	Muscular Dystrophy Association	\$200
FCA - Upper Cumberland Area	\$500	Christmas on the Mountain	\$200
Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$500	Polk County Alumni Association	\$100

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Hosts 'Electricity College'

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) hosted about 150 sixth graders from Meigs County Middle School on March 23 for "Electricity College." The students attended several "classes" including; the cooperative business model, electricity generation and distribution, the math of an electric company billing, communications and outage response, electrical equipment, and safety.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Greg Hutsell instructs students about safety when exiting a vehicle with a downed powerline.

Students were also escorted to their classes by VEC volunteers who shared their own educational and career paths.

"We wanted to develop something that complimented their classroom instruction on electric circuits and math, and also give them a good overview of the business of electricity distribution," said VEC Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development David Murphy. "But we also wanted to make sure it was something that was going to be fun for the students."

Murphy said the feedback from students, teachers, and VEC volunteers seemed to indicate that the event was successful on all counts.

Students were split into morning and afternoon sessions. After an introduction, an overview of electricity generation and distribution, and a brief history of VEC, students were separated into three groups. Each group rotated to three different stations where VEC volunteers taught about safety and right-of-way maintenance; a lineman's tools of the trade; and outage management systems and call center operations. At each station students received answers for their "final exam" that they turned in to earn their diplomas.

"The students were really excited about visiting VEC," said Meigs County Middle School sixth grade science teacher Misty Meadows. "And when we got back to school they couldn't stop talking about it."

The event was also a big hit with the VEC volunteers who participated.

"I think we all enjoyed the energy and the enthusiasm of the students. It was contagious," said Julie Jones of VEC's Marketing and Economic Development Department.



VEC Lineman Travis Kowanetz taught students about safety equipment that linemen use during the course of a typical day.

Utility Pole or Sign Post?

With thousands of volts of electricity above and unforgiving ground below, linemen have plenty of safety concerns to consider when they start climbing a utility pole. Illegally posted signs and flyers make their lives that much more difficult.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) asks that you stop to consider the potential hazards and refrain from posting signs and/or flyers on utility poles. It's not necessarily the signs themselves that are the real problem – it's the tacks, nails or staples that are used to affix the signs.

These small objects, used to keep the signs in place, are often left behind after the sign is gone. These objects become threats to the safety of VEC linemen. Linemen have to climb poles for maintenance or other operations and often wear climbing gaffs with spikes that penetrate the poles, allowing them to climb. Staples, tacks, nails and other similar items can block the spike from penetrating the pole, causing the climber to slip, potentially fall, and cause serious injury. The rubber gloves and other protective clothing linemen wear can be punctured by these objects, rendering them useless. In some instances hands, arms, and/or legs can be cut or punctured. We have had some serious injuries at VEC due to these objects. Across the nation there have even been lineman fatalities that are directly attributable to signs and flyers.

Not only are these signs a distraction and a safety concern, they are also illegal. State law (TCA 2-19-144) prohibits anyone from placing signs on utility poles unless they have been legally authorized to do so. Please stop and consider the safety of our linemen before you place an illegal sign on our utility poles.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective May 1, 2017

2.181¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

