

VEC Annual Meeting Set for October 7

As summer turns to fall, many of us get caught up in the hectic, back-to-school rush and return to our more normal routines. But before your calendar gets too full, please make it a point to mark Saturday, October 7 on your calendar. That's the date for this year's Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) Annual Meeting.

VEC's Annual Meeting is an excellent opportunity to learn more about your cooperative and about the differences between being a member of an electric cooperative and being a customer of a different type of electric company.

Registration, free flu shots, and your choice of a pancake or a continental breakfast begin immediately after the doors open at 8 a.m. EST. Morning entertainment will precede the business meeting which convenes at 10 a.m. The featured entertainer Mandy Barnett will take the stage about 10:45 a.m.

In between the entertainment you can stroll through numerous displays about VEC's products and services, energy efficiency, and how to save money on your electric bill. There will also be plenty of great door prizes and every family will receive a free gift.

There will also be face painting and safety demonstrations designed for the young and the young-at-heart.

Don't miss out on the fun, the food, the entertainment, the prizes and giveaways, along with the chance to learn about your electric cooperative on October 7th at Meigs County Middle School in Decatur. Directions and a pre-registration form are included in this issue of *Powerlines*.

'See you there.



The shallow root base is shown clearly on this toppled tree that brought down a KV line and power was out for approximately 4,000 members.

Increase in Outages Linked to Tree Health

Over a three month period Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) has seen a drastic increase in outages due to trees and tree limbs falling. From March to June 2016 there were only 211 power outages linked to trees across our 17 county service area. This year there were 935 outages during the same three months as a result of trees and/or limbs falling. What has changed over the last 12 months?

While we have had a surplus of rain falling this year, last year east Tennessee experienced a drought of historic proportions. The natural heavy foliage of eastern Tennessee combined with an extended lack of rain, created a competition for water resources that left many large trees in a weakened stressed condition. When those weakened trees meet with a spring of unusually strong storms, they will fall.

VEC spends approximately 6 million of its overall budget just to maintain our right-of-ways (ROW). Even with ROW crews working year-round to eliminate danger trees, contract crews spraying heavily wooded areas before they become hazards, and servicemen responding to calls regarding trees in our 40 foot ROW; when a drought weakened tree becomes stressed by storm winds, it will fall and bring down power lines.

Steve Scott VEC Right of Way Superintendent and Arborist stated, "This year's storms have been extremely hard on the trees in our service areas. We normally have storms that are predominantly southern-wind storms. In the spring of 2017, the majority of our storms have had winds from the north. This is not typical, and on the trees already weakened from last year's drought it has been catastrophic."

VEC is not the only organization dealing with this problem. A recent Associated Press article stated that officials in Chattanooga, Tennessee, say the number of large trees falling...has risen significantly following last summer's drought and weather fluctuation in the last few years.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

A Letter to Our Members

Dear Cooperative Member:
The 81st Annual Meeting of the members of Volunteer Energy Cooperative will be held at Meigs County Middle School. The business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. Eastern Time, on Saturday, October 7, 2017.
The following action is to be taken: To consider reports of officers and to transact all business which may come before a regular Annual Meeting.

Sammy Norton
Secretary-Treasurer

VEC Annual Meeting is Easy to Find

GPS Address: Meigs Middle School, 564 N. Main Street, Decatur, TN 37322

Meigs County Middle School is centrally located in the Volunteer Energy Cooperative service region in Decatur, Tennessee. Once you get to Highway 58 in Decatur turn east on Z Street (across from Piggly Wiggly), left on Main Street, and right into the Meigs Middle School parking lot. Or you can just follow the signs – there will be plenty of signs pointing you in the right direction once you arrive in the Decatur area.

To Decatur from:

Kingston: Follow Highway 58 heading south into Decatur. Turn left on Z Street, left on Main Street, and right into Meigs Middle School.

Crossville: Take Highway 127 South out of Crossville. Follow Highway 27/68 over Watts Bar Dam. Make a right turn onto Highway 58, go nine miles, turn left on Z Street, left on Main Street, and right into Meigs Middle School.

Cleveland: Take Highway 60 to the intersection with Highway 58. Turn right onto Highway 58 and follow to Decatur. Turn right on Z Street, left on Main Street, and right into Meigs Middle School.

Athens: Take Highway 30 to Decatur. At the intersection with Highway 58, turn right. Turn right on Z Street, left on Main Street, and right into Meigs Middle School.

Why Stand In Line If You Don't Have To?

Fill out the registration form below and you can avoid standing in the registration line at VEC's Annual Meeting. Complete the form below, bring it with you on October 7th, and you can breeze right past the registration lines. Just hand this form in at the special express registration table and head for the displays, breakfast, flu shots, or entertainment.

VEC Annual Meeting Registration/Door Prize Form

This will be your official registration form for the Annual Meeting door prizes.

Please write your **name** and **account number** in the spaces provided below. Your **account number** can be found on your VEC billing statement.

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Bring this registration form with you on October 7th. You must be present to win prizes.



Mandy Barnett to Headline the VEC Annual Meeting on October 7

Mandy Barnett is a world-class vocalist whose style is deeply rooted in the classic country and pop crooning of the all-time great singers. The Crossville native first garnered national attention as a teenager, earning rave reviews for her portrayal of Patsy Cline in the musical *Always...Patsy Cline* at Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium, and appearing in this title role on the original cast album.

Barnett has since built on that stage success considerably, carving out a recording career with multiple critically acclaimed albums and showcasing her one-of-a-kind vocal talent on stages across the country and around the globe – from international music festivals to the Grand Ole Opry.

Barnett has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and PBS's *Sessions at West 54th*, along with being featured on a host of movie and TV series soundtracks. The *Chicago Tribune* has called Barnett "a torch singer in the grandest sense of the word," while *USA Today* named Barnett one of the "finest classic country and torch singers" to come out of Nashville.

Barnett premiered her "Nashville Songbook" symphony show with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra in 2016. The Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Barnett join forces for the "Nashville Songbook" concert in January 2018.



Volunteer Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting Schedule of Events

All Times EASTERN

8:00 - 9:30 am –

Registration, Pancake, and Continental Breakfast, Displays, Morning Entertainment - Kinslee Melhorn

8:00 - 9:00 am – Flu Shots

9:45 am – Door Prizes

10:00 am – Membership Meeting

10:45 am – Main Entertainment - Mandy Barnett

11:30 am – Door Prizes



The VECustomers Share program funded \$30,000 in community service grants in July. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$6.1 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 member Erbin Baumgardner presented a grant check to Tanya Murphy the Executive Director of Grace and Mercy Ministries in Athens, Tn.

Organizations receiving grants in July

Byrdstown Masonic Lodge #496	\$2,000	Monterey Food Bank	\$500
Pleasant Hill Elementary School		Walker Valley Volleyball Boosters	\$500
Band Booster	\$2,000	Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$500
Little Crab Lodge #614	\$1,500	Midway Quarterback Club	\$500
Anchor Point Foundation	\$1,500	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$500
Kiwanis Club of Spring City	\$1,500	McMinn County Senior Citizens Inc.	\$500
Midway High Boys' & Girls' Basketball Team	\$1,250	Friends of the Art Circle Public Library	\$500
Good Faith Clinic	\$1,150	Crossville Lions Club Charities Inc.	\$500
Fentress County Fair Association	\$1,000	Better Living Center	\$500
God's Helping Hands	\$1,000	BASIC of TN Inc.	\$500
Monterey Volunteer Fire Department	\$1,000	Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$450
Spring City Youth Athletic Association	\$1,000	Meigs High School Tennis Boosters	\$400
West Polk County Baptist Association	\$900	National Fire Safety Council Inc.	\$400
Polk County High School Soccer Booster Club	\$900	Downtown Summer Nights	\$400
Cumberland Adult Reading Council	\$900	Meigs High Golf Boosters	\$400
Hwy. 58 Volunteer Fire Dept.	\$750	Meigs County Lions Club	\$400
Crossville QOV (Quilts of Valor)		McMinn County Living Heritage Museum	\$350
Quilters #927	\$650	Camp Belle Aire Association Inc.	\$300
Toys For Children	\$500	Paint Polk Pink	\$250
Meigs County Ministries	\$500	Homestead Bulldogs Basketball Boosters	\$250
Midway Youth Development Organization	\$500	Fairfield Glade Bass Club	\$200
Ocoee Theatre Guild	\$500	Wilson Athletic Booster Club	\$200

VEC Students Spend Week in Nation's Capital

Students from Cumberland, Hamilton, McMinn and Meigs counties spent a week in our nation's capital this summer as delegates of the 2017 Washington Youth Tour. Christa Simmons of Stone Memorial High School, Emma Fisher of Ooltewah High School, Brooklyn Hurst and Hannah Hall of McMinn High School, and Abigail Jones of Meigs County High School joined nearly 140 other students from across Tennessee on the weeklong trip that began on Friday, June 9.

The annual event, sponsored by Volunteer Energy Cooperative and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, provides young leaders with an opportunity to explore the nation's capital, learn about government and cooperatives and develop their leadership skills. Students were selected for the trip by writing short stories titled "Electric Cooperatives – Going Beyond the Wires" that explain how co-ops provide communities with much more than electric power.

"The Youth Tour is an incredible opportunity for these students to experience history up-close and personal," says David Murphy, Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development. "Delegates experience a whirlwind of a week, visiting museums, monuments and other landmarks."

"We take great pride in recognizing the best and brightest from across the state," said Todd Blocker, Vice President of Member Relations for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and tour director. "By recognizing their accomplishments through programs like the Washington Youth Tour, we show these leaders of tomorrow that their hometown electric co-op is more than a utility provider; these students are active members of their community and fully invested in its prosperity."



While in Washington, D.C., Tennessee's Youth Tour delegates saw the White House and memorials to past presidents Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt as well as monuments honoring the sacrifices of veterans of World War II and the Vietnam and Korean Wars. During visits to the museums of the Smithsonian Institution, the touring Tennesseans saw and experienced natural, historical and artistic treasures. Other fun stops included historic homes of former presidents — George Washington's Mount Vernon and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello — as well as Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, opening night for The Sound of Music at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and a boat cruise down the Potomac River. Among other Youth Tour highlights was a solemn and sobering visit to Arlington National Cemetery where one of our students, Emma Fisher, with three other students laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

The group was welcomed to the U.S. Capitol by Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker and members of the Tennessee congressional delegation who posed for photos and answered questions.

While in D.C., winners were announced in the statewide competition for the Robert McCarty Memorial Scholarships. Destinee Gilchrist from Tennessee Valley Electric Cooperative was awarded the \$3,000 first-place scholarship for writing the top-judged short story of the more than 10,000 papers submitted across the state. Taya Lewis from Caney Fork Electric Cooperative earned second-place honors and a \$2,000 scholarship, and Hope Newell from Gibson Electric Membership Corporation, third place, received a \$1,000 scholarship.

McCarty was an employee of Volunteer Energy Cooperative and longtime chaperone



(L to R) Christa Simmons, Brooklyn Hurst, Emma Fischer, Hannah Hall and Abigail Jones on Capitol Hill.

on the annual Youth Tour. McCarty lost a battle with cancer in 2015, and sponsoring cooperatives renamed the scholarships in honor of his love for young people.

Candace Hargrave of Franklin County, a recent graduate of Huntland High School, was awarded a \$10,000 Cooperative Youth Ambassador Scholarship. Hargrave was a 2016 delegate for Duck River Electric Membership Corporation on the Washington Youth Tour. In the year following the tour, delegates who remain engaged with their sponsoring cooperatives and complete certain community service requirements are eligible for the scholarship.

"It's more than just a talking point," said David Callis, CEO of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. "Electric co-ops genuinely

care about the prosperity of the communities we serve. The Washington Youth Tour is a small but important way for us to show these exceptional students that rural Tennessee matters. We want them to be passionate about their communities and prepared to lead when those opportunities come along."

President Lyndon Johnson inspired the Washington Youth Tour in 1957 when he encouraged electric cooperatives to send youngsters to the nation's capital. In the years since, more than 6,000 young Tennesseans have been delegates on the Washington Youth Tour.

VEC Surplus Auction

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2017

starting at 10:00 am eastern.

Auction Preview Friday, September 22 from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Details available at your local VEC office,

on the VEC Facebook page and website, or by calling 423-334-7031.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

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

2.160¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.