

VECcustomers Share \$6 Million Milestone



Volunteer Energy Cooperative's VECcustomers Share program has now donated more than \$6 million in community service grants to local nonprofit organizations.

The program is operated by an independent board of directors who fund grants to support communities throughout VEC's 17-county customer service area. The funds are donated by VEC customers who have their electric bills to be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount each month – and the spare change goes to fund the grants.

"Each customer who participates donates an average of \$6 per year to the program. But those nickels, dimes, and quarters can add up fast," said VEC President/CEO Rody Blevins. "The program began in October 2001 and over these 16 years we are very pleased to have supported so many genuinely worthwhile causes that have made a big impact in our local communities."

Each month the program funds about \$30,000 in grants that are distributed across VEC's 17-county service area. The grants are typically distributed proportionately by county. But on rare occasions board members have voted to use an entire month's donations for a single cause. Board members opted to do that to assist with rebuilding efforts after tornadoes swept through McMinn and Polk counties in 2016.

But typically grants are smaller and have gone to fund a wide variety of community service efforts such as hunger relief, adult literacy, emergency response, historic preservation, the arts, recreation, education support, health care support, and a wide variety of other community support efforts.

VEC Statement of Nondiscrimination

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

VEC is an equal opportunity provider.

VECcustomers Share Board Welcomes Two New Members

Two new representatives have been appointed to the all-volunteer VECcustomers Share Board that oversees VECcustomers Share donations. Board members are appointed to serve three-year terms and are eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

Recently the term expired for VECcustomers Share Board members Bill Womac representing Polk County and Bobby Scott representing Hamilton County. Womac and Scott served on the VECcustomers Share Board for the past two terms.



Lynn Crawford has been appointed to represent the Hamilton County area. Crawford retired after 30 years as the Manager of Calibrations and Engineering Services at TVA Chattanooga, TN. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and Chattanooga State. Lynn also served for six years in the U.S. Coast Guard. He is married to Bettye Crawford and they have four children, seven grandchildren and a chocolate lab named Buddy.



Bill Blackwell has been appointed to represent the Polk County area. Blackwell retired from VEC after 32 years of service and now manages the Higgins Funeral Home in Benton, TN. Blackwell is a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church, is a Mason and enjoys wood working and gospel music.

The VECcustomers Share board members serve on a volunteer basis and receive no compensation for their service. Each month they review grant applications and allocate funds that have been made available by members who choose to have their electric bills rounded up to the next whole dollar. The money is then allocated by the board to be donated to community-service organizations. Since the program began in 2001, over \$6.1 million has been awarded to local community organizations in VEC's 17-county service area.

2016 - 2017 FAST FACTS

Customer Service and Outage Calls

Calls Answered by CSR: 167,813
Calls Answered by IVR: 626,242
Control Center Hours: 11,468

System Maintenance

Poles Inspected: 167,813
Acres of Brush Sprayed: 626,242
Miles of Line Trimmed: 11,468
Tree Trimmers & Sprayers: 138

Service Reliability
99.9% Average



POWERLINES

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Newsletter

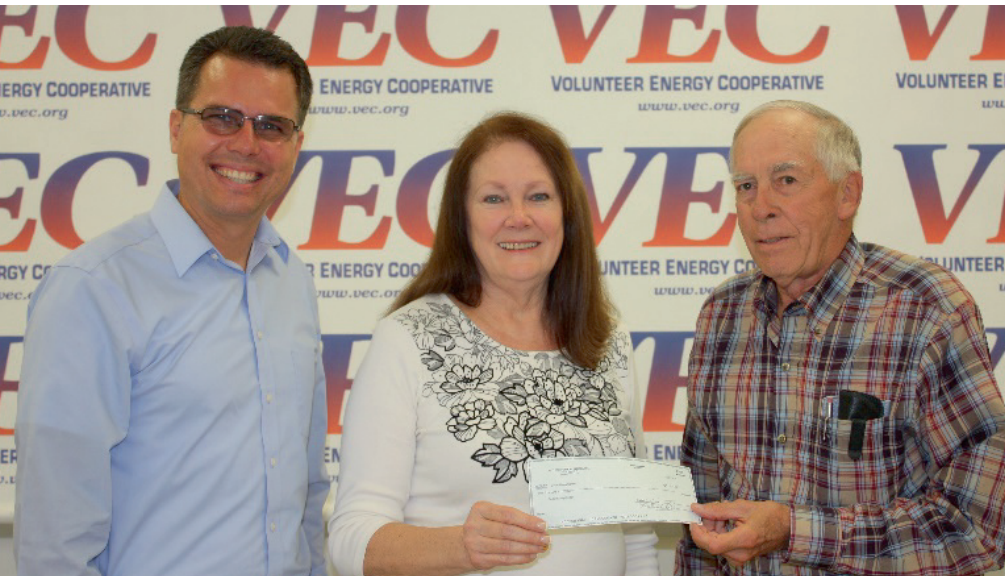
DEC
2017

VEC Annual Meeting 2017





The VECustomers Share program funded \$26,200 in community service grants in October. 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 presents a grant check to Nancy Sanford, Director of Better Living Center and Pastor David Wendt. This grant will be used to help purchase food for their Feed America Program.

Organizations receiving grants in October

Fentress County Food Bank	\$2,000	Character Counts Community Initiative	\$648
Panther Page Turners	\$1,750	Family Resource Agency, Inc.	\$500
Cumberland County Rescue Squad	\$1,646	Cherokee Removal Memorial Park	\$500
Happy Hearts Seniors	\$1,250	Salem Baptist Church-Indigent Food	
Benton Elementary Junior Beta Club	\$1,250	Basket Pantry	\$500
5th/6th Homestead Elementary-US Space		Gamble Road Wildgame Dinner	\$500
& Rocket Center Field Trip	\$1,154	Meigs County Historical Society	\$500
Meigs North & South Guidance Department	\$1,140	Columbia Hill Baptist Church Youth Group	\$500
American Legion Post 68	\$1,000	Midway Youth Development Organization	\$500
Meigs County Quest for Success	\$1,000	Midway High School Band Boosters	\$500
Stone Memorial High School		Fair Park Senior Center	\$500
Health Committee	\$900	Knights of Columbus (KOC) Holy Family	
Calhoun Cheerleaders	\$852	Council #6099	\$400
CCCB (Cumberland County Community Band)	\$800	YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga	\$400
Midway Middle School Support and		Special Spaces Chattanooga	\$250
Outreach Committee	\$800	American Legion Ladies Auxiliary Unit 81	\$250
Fentress County Fair Association	\$750	Monterey Jr. High Boys Basketball	\$250
Valleyview Storehouse Food Ministry	\$750	Spring City Middle School (SCMS) 7th Grade	
Bradley County Scottish Rite Shoe Fund	\$750	Pigeon Forge Parent Boosters Club	\$110
5th Grade Enrichment Trip-Space Camp	\$700	Greenwood School Education Foundation	\$100
Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$700	Mt. Zion Historical Church Committee	\$100

At the Close of the Year

As I write this article we have just finished our Annual Meeting. Meeting and speaking face to face with members from all over our service area reminds me and our board of why we work so hard to keep rates low and power as reliable as possible.

Keeping the rates low is an ongoing battle with the continued increases received from Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). We have expressed our dissatisfaction with their 10 year increase plan and will continue to fight for our members. In addition to fighting against increases from TVA, we have also created a Peak Load Reduction pilot which helps reduce the amount of power used during the very expensive peak load periods. We will continue to look for other ways to reduce costs and keep rates low.

We also are as determined to increase system reliability. We have upgraded multiple substations this year and have broken ground on a new substation at Fairfield Glade in Crossville, TN. Each upgrade is focused on improving and protecting our resources. The quicker we can identify problems, the faster the resolution. We will never be able to completely protect our system from nature (lightening, squirrels, birds and trees), but we continue to install preventative and protective devices. We have also increased efforts with our Right-of-Way program as tree related outages increased this past year.

All in all we will continue to work hard, keeping our rates low and our power reliable. We will do this together as a cooperative community.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

TVA Raises Rates for the Fifth Year
with plans to continue for five more years

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) strives each year to keep costs down to a minimum for our members. Residential electricity rates are a part of life that we all pay. We all use electricity, some more than others, and we budget specific amounts from our income to pay for this necessity. When the price increases, VEC and our residential customers, must adjust our budgets. For some of our members on fixed incomes, this means taking money out of other areas to pay for electricity. On October 1st, electric rates were raised once again by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). This will make the fifth year in a row and half way to a 10-year rate increase plan proposed by TVA.

The rate increase will make VEC's residential customer's electric rates increase 1.6%. This will not be felt during the milder months of the fall, but once the cold winter months hit the increase will be painful. This increase is something Rody Blevins, VEC's President and CEO, fought against. More than 20 times over the last year he spoke with TVA and other Local Power Companies about the continued rate increase and how it will affect our residential customers.

In addition to speaking against the rate increase to TVA, VEC is considering a change to the layout of the bill format to help our member's understand the TVA rate increase. With a change in the bill format we will be able to show our members the cost per kWh that goes to TVA and the portion VEC uses to maintain the local electric system.

This increase is only the halfway point of TVA's 10-year rate increase plan. If VEC and our statewide association are unsuccessful achieving a better resolution with TVA on continued rate increases, we will look to you our membership to help us get a message to TVA.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

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

2.02¢

For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org
Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.