

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.

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

Billy Zachary Rd, Moodyville Rd, Pendergrass Rd, Amonnett Rd, Faix Rd, South Fork Rd, Begley Branch Rd, Koger Mtn Rd, York Hwy, Buck Mtn Rd, Caney Creek Rd, Red Hill Rd, Double Top, Dry Creek Rd, Reed Cemetery Rd, Hinds Chapel Rd, Woody Rd, Election Rd, Osco Williams Rd, Bond Cemetery Rd, Winningham Rd, Robbinstown Rd, Burntmill Ford Rd, Cedar Grove Rd, Gib Moles Rd, Rich Cemetery Rd, Downtown Byrdstown area, Clark Mtn Rd

Cleveland Service Area

Trewhitt Rd, Zion Hill Rd, Keith Valley Rd, Valley View Rd, Lee Ridge Rd, Hunt Rd, Todd Rd, Hawkins Hollow Rd, Mt. Bethel Rd, Strawhill Rd, Strawhill Church Rd, Humbard Rd, Stone Reagan Rd, Austin Lane, Reagan Rd, Kincaid Rd, Hughes Lake Rd, Hawkins, Rd, Union, Rd Gap Springs Rd, Sugar Creek Rd, Harris, Rd, Easley Ford Rd, Spring Place Rd, Bucks Pocket Rd, Samples Chapel Rd, Goode Rd, Carter Rd, Hunt Rd, Armstrong Rd, Red Hill Valley Rd, Johnson Rd, Mitchell Rd, Dalton Pike, Flint Springs Rd, Helmhurst Rd

Crossville Service Area

Hwy 127 from Elmore Rd to Fentress County line, Livingston Rd, Maryetta St, Community Complex, Larissa St, Sheree St, Walker Hill Cir, Northside Dr, Hwy 70 North from Elmore Rd to Pomona Rd, Ivey Rd, Eureka Dr, Creston Rd, George Smith Rd, Parson Ridge Rd, Ray Hodgins Rd, Farris Rd, Crossroads Dr, Interstate Dr, Braddock St, Ramey Rd, Bradrock St, Woodlawn Rd, Wyatt Ct, Tabor Dr, Sweeney Dr, Stout Dr, Cline Rd, Rye Woody Rd, Tabor Loop, Lawson Rd, Lon Barnwell Rd, McCampbell Rd, Sunset Ridge Dr, Summerwind Dr, Sundown Ln, Parker Ford Rd, Bill Barnwell Rd, Scott Creek Rd, Blue Spruce Dr, Edwards Rd, Fredonia Rd, Virgil Smith Rd, Joe Tabor Rd, Big Sky Ranch, Shoemake Rd, Creston Rd, West Creston Rd, Cartertown Rd, Ponderosa Ln, Holly Acres Ed Houston Rd, Bowman Loop, Ryan Rd, Bilbrey Ln, L Henry Rd, Hubert Conley Rd, Bill Brown Rd, Whittenburg Rd, Legion Rd, Potato Farm Rd, Button Rd, Al Goss Rd, Genesis Rd from Potato Farm Rd to Morgan County line, Roy Taylor Rd, Muddy Branch Rd, Wilson Rd, Bilbrey Rd, Plateau Rd from Hwy 127 to Carey Dr, Keyes Rd, Clear Creek Rd, Conley Rd, Old Elmore Rd, Barringer Rd, Diamond Padgett Rd, Bear Creek Rd, N Lowe Rd, Colby Cir, Buck Ln, Smith Rd, Todd Rd, Harville Rd, Mary Carr Rd, Hwy 70 East from Franklin Limestone to Dorton Access Rd, School Rd, Cox Rd, Junior Cox Rd, Sky Rd, Jade Dr, Deep Draw Rd from Hwy 70 East to Huckleberry Ln, Open Range Rd, Sunny Acres Dr, Long Dr, Backwoods Way, Byrds Creek Cove, S Detour Rd, Dallas Smith Rd, Highland Ln, from Hwy 70 East to Shadow Ln

Decatur Service Area

Ten Mile, Hwy 58 North, Reed Rd, Old Ten Mile Rd, Pickle Rd, Maple Grove Rd, River Rd, Branham Hollow Rd, Keylon Hollow Rd, Gordon Hollow Rd, Irwinton Drive, Woody Hill, Mans Hollow Rd, Raby Hollow Rd, Rockwood Ferry Rd, Grigsby Hollow Rd, Manor Rd, Woody Lane, Lake Harbor Rd, De Armond, Rd Old Hood Landing, Marney Cove Rd, Walnut Grove Rd, Anglers Cove Rd, Smalley Lane, Highland Reserve Rd, Chamberland Cove Rd, Laural Bluff Rd, Hwy 72, Midway, Ponders Gap Rd, Dogtown Rd, Salem Valley Rd, High Ridge Rd, Paint Rock Rd, Tennessee Chapel Rd, Gage Rd, Myrtle Ward Rd, Cedar Grove Rd, Pattie Gap Rd, Dry Fork Valley Rd, Hughes Hollow Rd, Williams Rd, Pleasant Hill Rd



Georgetown Service Area

Eastview, Blythe Ferry Rd, Hwy 58, Gunstocker, Birchwood, Bunker Hill, Horner Hollow, Johnson Rd, Birchwood Pike, Sam Smith Rd, Pierce Rd, Parker Loop, Hwy 60 Eldridge Rd, Grasshopper, Dolly Pond, Gamble Rd, Thatch Rd, Cooley Rd, Igou Ferry, Ooltewah Georgetown Rd, Sims Rd, Harrison Bay, Shahan Rd, Smith Rd, Meadowview Rd, Runyon Rd, Fisher Hollow, Brittsville Rd, Sugar Creek Rd, Old Hwy 58, Francisco Rd, Bettis Rd, Dolly Pond Rd, Cranfield Rd, Gunstocker Creek Rd, Sanders Rd, Eastview, Harrison Bay, Igou Ferry Rd, Sims Rd, Sims Harris Rd, Cooley Rd, Thatch Rd, Dogwood Drive, Henry Rd, Snowhill Rd, Ayers Lane, Melanie Lane

Washington Youth Tour

Each year, four high school juniors from Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) Service areas have an incredible chance to spend a week in our nation's capital getting a front-row view of government, leadership and public policy.

The Washington Youth Tour, sponsored by VEC and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, provides young leaders with an opportunity to explore Washington, D.C., learn about government and cooperatives and develop their leadership skills. Students are selected for the trip by writing a short story titled "Electric Cooperatives – Going Beyond the Wires" that explains how co-ops provide communities with much more than electric power.

Youth Tour delegates also have the opportunity to win a share of \$16,000 in scholarships from VEC and Tennessee's electric cooperatives.

"The youth tour is an incredible opportunity for these students to actually experience history up-close and personal," says Julie Jones, VEC communications and public relations coordinator. "Delegates experience a whirlwind of a week, visiting museums, monuments and other landmarks."

President Lyndon Johnson inspired the 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 for the Washington Youth Tour.

"Our commitment to community is what sets cooperatives apart from other businesses," said Rody Blevins, VEC President and CEO. "The Washington Youth Tour is one way we show the youth of our service area that their co-op is more than their electricity provider. We genuinely care about the prosperity of our communities, and that includes providing special opportunities for these exceptional students and preparing them for future success."

The Washington Youth Tour Creative Writing and Scholarship Competition is open to high school juniors living in VEC service areas. Each year the schools participating in the essay contest rotate. Although all essays submitted for the 2018 contest were amazing, the overall winner for VEC was Madelon Dill from Walker Valley High School. In addition to Madelon, Eric Bentley from Clarkrange, Erica Massaro from McMinn Central, and Brandon Newell from Rhea County won for their respective schools and will also be attending the youth tour.

In 2019 we will be taking juniors from Alvin C. York Institute, Monterey High School, Midway High School and Bradley Central High School. Contact Julie Jones at 423-334-7052 or jjones@vec.org to learn more about the Washington Youth Tour short story contest and trip.



Madelon Dill



Brandon Newell



Erica Massaro



A Culture of Safety

I was at a meeting recently where the manager of a co-op from another state shared the story of a young lineman who came in contact with an energized line while restoring power following a storm. The young man's injuries were significant, and he passed away a few days later. It was a tragic story and vivid reminder of the dangers of our industry.

"Electric lineworker" is routinely named one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in America. In this line of work, even small mistakes can be deadly.

Safety is a serious subject at our co-op. New hires undergo extensive training, and all of our lineworkers participate in monthly safety meetings. Crew leaders have tailgate discussions to review the risks and dangers of each and every job. Our crews learn quickly to watch out for one another – everyone on the job site is encouraged to speak up about potentially dangerous situations.

We are building a culture of safety.

This means that safety is, or should be, a part of our DNA. It is a characteristic feature and a shared attitude that influences every member of our team. We monitor and track near-misses of accidents to understand them, share "lessons learned" and improve in the future.

We encourage our crews to be "everyday safe" – always vigilant, aware of your surroundings and mindful of your co-workers.

Our culture of safety also extends to our community. Volunteer Energy Cooperative conducts electrical safety demonstrations at schools and other events, and we host first responder training to help police, fire, and EMS be prepared for situations that they may encounter. Creating a culture of safety includes annual safety training and CPR certification. Whether a customer service representative, executive assistant, or vice president each team member participates in safety training and certification.

Each year our industry celebrates May as National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and killed each year because of electrical fires, accidents, and electrocution in their own homes.

There are simple things you can do to keep yourself and your community safe around electricity. Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. When working with heavy equipment, ladders or even kites, be aware of powerlines and keep your distance. Call us to report downed power lines, unlocked substations or padmount transformers, low-hanging power lines or anything else that looks amiss.

Contact your local office or visit vec.org for additional electrical safety tips. If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event, please contact Julie Jones, 423-334-7052 or jjones@vec.org.



*Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative*

The VECustomers Share program funded \$28,200 in community service grants in March. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$6.3 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 Barbara Rector presents a grant check to the Byrdstown Senior Center Director Emily Sells. This grant allows the senior center to purchase padded chairs for the seniors which replaced the metal folding chairs.

Organizations receiving grants in March

Meigs High Spanish Club	\$1,536	Double Springs Baptist Church Sundowners Club	\$500
Bondcroft Baptist Church Food Pantry	\$1,000	Jamestown Rotary Club	\$500
Polk County High School Baseball		Walker Valley DECA	\$500
Booster Club	\$1,000	Candies Creek Academy-Coronam House	\$500
Midway Softball Club	\$1,000	Hales Chapel Community Center	\$500
Student Government Association	\$1,000	The Refuge	\$500
Pickett County Cattlemen's Association	\$1,000	American Red Cross of Southeast	
Monterey Community Youth Group	\$1,000	Tennessee - Bradley County	\$500
Senior Citizens of Cumberland County	\$1,000	American Red Cross of Southeast	
Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Department	\$900	Tennessee - Polk County	\$500
Tennessee Valley Theatre	\$850	Brown Middle School PTO	\$500
Eagle Dugout Club	\$850	Cumberland County Imagination Library	\$500
MARA Medical Ministry	\$800	Quilts of Valor Foundation - Crossville	
Spring City Middle Basketball Team	\$800	QOV Quilters	\$500
Midway Youth Development Organization	\$750	McMinn Jr. Livestock Association	\$500
Ooltewah High School Band Boosters	\$750	Panther Page Turners	\$500
Polk County 3u3 Elite Soccer League	\$750	Read to be Ready Summer Camp	\$364
Christ's Legacy Academy Block Part Committee	\$700	Fentress County Bull Dogs	\$350
The Art Guild at Fairfield Glade	\$700	The Central Digest-Central High School	\$350
Valley Christian Academy Parent Teacher		YMCA Camp Ocoee	\$250
Fellowship	\$700	Allardt Volunteer Fire Department	\$250
Jamestown Goodworks Food		Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$250
& Provision Ministry	\$600	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$200
Meigs Senior Center	\$600	Midway Quarterback Club	\$200
Family Cornerstones Inc.	\$500	PRIDE Lacrosse-Lions	\$100
Fentress County Friends of the Library	\$500	Camp Living Stones	\$100

Reliability Through Preventative Maintenance

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) strives to provide reliable service. In 2017 our reliability was 99.902 percent. To achieve this number, VEC has an aggressive preventative maintenance program. Preventative maintenance is maintenance that is performed on working equipment to lessen the likelihood of failure and includes procedures that promote a long and trouble-free life for the equipment. At VEC our Preventative Maintenance Program (PMP) incorporates four specific areas; reclosers, underground equipment, voltage regulators and right of way (ROW).

Reclosers are used to minimize long-term outages, and every circuit on our system has them. From November 2016 through March 2018, we replaced a total of 484 with 95 inspected visually. Also, an ongoing coordination study with engineering is ensuring the proper device is in place for every circuit. By inspecting, replacing and repairing reclosers, VEC should further reduce outage durations and improve power reliability to our members.

The underground maintenance program is one of the newest preventative maintenance efforts. The program inspects, identifies, and corrects issues of aging equipment from prior underground power installations. Since October 2017, we have examined more than 800 underground services. The information we are collecting is also recorded and saved by our mapping software. This PMP will extend the life of existing equipment and reduce overall operating costs.



The voltage regulator maintenance program includes the repair or replacement of equipment which helps maintain voltage levels and addresses fluctuation in power load. This PMP will allow a leveling of each feeder's voltage profile which often results in significant energy savings in our voltage reduction program.

Voltage regulators play a substantial role in our system due to the long distances our lines span across rural areas. In 2017 we replaced 16 voltage regulators and are active in maintaining them across the entire system.

Our most extensive preventative maintenance program is the ROW program. We have two certified arborists on staff who coordinate with contractors to maintain 9,000+ miles of overhead primary lines and 124 miles of 161 and 69 kV lines. This program currently cycles through areas on a 6-year schedule. Due to the number of outages linked to vegetation rising during the 5-6 year span, we will shorten this cycle to five years. In 2017 there were 1,549 miles trimmed and cleared and 4,000 plus acres sprayed. With eastern Tennessee at an estimated 50 percent tree canopy, the importance of ROW clearing is vital. ROW preventative maintenance improves reliability and safety for our members and lineworkers.

In addition to the four main focal points of our preventative maintenance program, we have an aggressive pole inspection program. Since 2003 we have inspected 147,978 poles with 5,782 rejected and

replaced. Both contractors and VEC employees work on changing poles, and we are averaging 125 poles replaced per month including all the pole changing requirements.

VEC's preventative maintenance program decreases downtime and significant repairs. It increases the life expectancy of our equipment and reduces overtime cost. Improved reliability, cost savings, expense reductions and improved safety conditions all result from an aggressive PMP.

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, 2018

2.082¢

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