

An Ounce of Prevention...

Our first freeze last fall in Decatur, TN was on Oct. 30. That was a little later than normal. Statistically, we typically experience our first freeze sometime around Oct. 19.

That's right. We will likely have our first freeze of the winter in the next six to eight weeks.

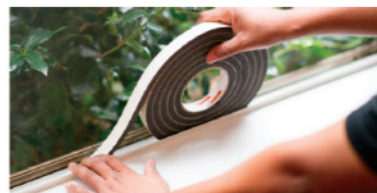
It may seem odd to think about winter already, but this is actually a great time to start preparing for the cooler weather that is definitely headed our way. If you invest a little time and effort now, you can save energy and money later.

I asked Paige Finnell, one of our residential efficiency experts, to see if she would share a few suggestions to prepare your home for winter. These were her top five tips:

Replace your air filters – This is not just a tip for winter. You should replace your air filters monthly, but most homeowners do not. A dirty filter means that your heating and cooling unit has to work harder to move air, which could have a big impact on comfort and cost.



Seal air leaks – Gaps or openings around windows and doors allow your heated or cooled air to leak outside. It may sound simple, but these leaks could cost you hundreds of dollars each year in wasted energy.



You can have a

big impact on your bill by grabbing a couple tubes of caulk, cans of spray foam and packs of weather-stripping.

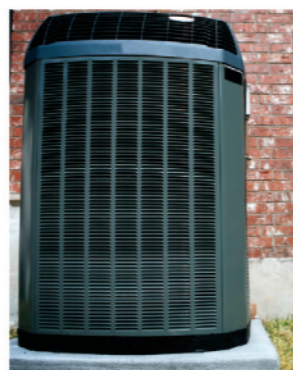


Update your thermostat – The thermostat is the brain for your heating system. Consider installing a programmable thermostat that will automatically adjust the temperature in your home based on your schedule.

Use your windows – Curtains, drapes and

mini blinds are actually great sources of insulation. Close your window coverings at night to keep the warm air inside. You can also open them during the day to allow the sun to naturally warm your home.

Service your heating and cooling unit – We usually don't think about our heating system until it stops working. Before the cold of winter sets in, it may be a good idea to have your unit cleaned and serviced by



a professional. This can help you avoid costly and inconvenient breakdowns, extend the life of your system and help it run more efficiently.

The team here at Volunteer Energy Coop (VEC) is also preparing for winter. In our part of the world, cold weather can bring the threat of ice and falling trees. In 2018, we will spend more than \$5 million in Right of Way preventative services to trim and remove trees that posed a danger to power lines. This work can go a long way to minimize power outages in the event of ice storms or other bad weather.

Regardless of what the weather may bring this winter, Benjamin Franklin said it best – "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."



Prescription Drug Take Back Day is Oct. 27

Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Prescription Drug Take Back Day is Oct. 27. This initiative addresses vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription addiction in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.



DEA launched its prescription drug take back program when both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration advised the public that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—posed potential safety and health hazards.

"Today we are facing the worst drug crisis in American history, with one American dying of a drug overdose every nine minutes," said Attorney General Jeff Sessions. "...DEA's National Drug Take Back Days are important opportunities for people to turn in unwanted and potentially addictive drugs with no questions asked."

There are 187 drop-off sites in Tennessee. To locate a specific location go to <http://tdeconline.tn.gov/rxtakeback/>. In the Volunteer Energy 17 county service area, you can go to any county sheriff's department or police department to make a drop-off. Bradley, Polk, McMinn, and Monroe counties can contact ATS - The Bridge for more locations atsthebridge.org.

Observing National Co-op Month in October

We are joining 30,000 cooperatives nationwide in October to celebrate National Co-op Month. This national celebration recognizes the many ways cooperatives are committed to strengthening the local communities they serve. "Co-ops Commit" is the theme for this year's celebration, spotlighting the countless ways cooperatives meet the needs of their members and communities.

Our cooperative delivers electricity to 116,700 plus member-owners in our 17 county service area. Delivering safe, reliable, affordable power is our top priority, but we are also invested in our communities because we are locally owned and operated. Revenue generated by VEC goes back to Main Street, not Wall Street.

Rural America is served by a network of about 1,000 electric cooperatives, most of which were formed in the 1930s and 40s to bring electricity to farms and rural communities that large, investor-owned power companies had no interest in serving because of the higher costs involved in serving low-population and low-density areas. VEC was formed in 1935 to bring power to an area which at that time was bypassed by the existing power companies.

In addition to providing the vital power co-op members depend on, we show our commitment by economic development and job creation, youth leadership opportunities, free safety education and charitable giving. We work together with the members we serve in our communities on local chambers, fire departments, and many other organizations to strengthen our communities that our co-op is committed fully too.

One of the ways we celebrate National Co-op Month will be through hosting our annual meeting Oct. 6th, where we give away flu shots, door prizes, free

entertainment and much more. We are also hosting food drives at several local service centers. Since our service area is so vast we are donating the food to the area where our service center is located on October 18. October is a good time to remember that we are different from a for-profit business. We are member owned and that ownership spurs us to a deep commitment to the communities we serve.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative



Volunteer Energy Cooperative 82nd Annual Meeting



The VECustomers Share program funded \$28,000 in community service grants in August. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, more than \$6.2 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 Gary Gilmore presents a grant check to the Rhea County Give-A-Kid-A-Chance Back-to-School Event Committee. The committee includes Helen Brakebill, Gail Benton, Jan Frechette and Vicki Carr.

Organizations receiving grants in August

Junior Beta Club - Glenn L. Martin Elementary School	\$1,600	Polk County High School Golf Boosters	\$700
Fentress County Historical Society	\$1,500	People Helping People	\$696.80
B.A.S.I.C. of TN Inc.	\$1,300	Maple Grove Community Seniors	\$600
Burks Elementary - 3rd & 4th Grade P.E. Program	\$1,250	Rhea County High School Chorus Program	\$500
Hospice of Cumberland County Inc.	\$1,250	Meigs County Volleyball Team	\$500
Homestead Elementary Basketball	\$1,150	Meigs South Elementary PTO	\$500
Pickett County High School Math Club	\$1,103.20	Midway Youth Development Organization	\$500
Grace & Mercy Ministries	\$1,100	Meigs County Retired Teachers	\$500
Karis Dental Clinic	\$1,000	Midway Girls STEM Club	\$500
Polk County Lady Wildcats Soccer Boosters	\$1,000	Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$500
Good Faith Clinic	\$1,000	Midway Quarterback Club	\$500
Fentress County Health Department	\$1,000	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$500
Walker Valley Volleyball Boosters	\$750	Friends of Collegedale Public Library	\$400
Spring City Chamber of Commerce	\$750	McMinn County Living Heritage Museum	\$400
Walker Valley High School Ladies Soccer Team	\$750	Meigs High Cheer Boosters	\$400
Monterey High School Volleyball	\$750	Meigs Slammers Basketball	\$300
Junior Cross Country Team - Glenn L. Martin Elementary School	\$750	Meigs South 3rd Grade Science Department	\$300
First Baptist Church of Spring City Food Pantry	\$750	Monterey Dinner Theater	\$250
		Monterey Civitan Club	\$250
		Kids on the Rise	\$250
		Cherokee Area Council,	
		Boys Scouts of America	\$200

The Fine Art of Getting the Lights On

Mother Nature can often be unpredictable, and when she gets angry, you may find yourself without power. Storms, floods, tornadoes, snow and ice pose major threats to all kinds of infrastructure, including our electric distribution system.

Electric co-ops like Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) serve more than 71 percent of the state's landmass, including some of the most remote areas in Tennessee. During a widespread outage, we must use our time and resources wisely to minimize the impact on our members.

When the lights go out, we start by assessing the damage. Our goal is to restore service to the greatest number of members in the shortest amount of time possible. This is how we do it.

Our crews first inspect substations. Damage to TVA supply lines or substations could affect thousands of members, so these areas are our first priority.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a substation, main distribution lines are checked next. These are the lines you're most likely familiar with. Distribution lines carry power to large groups of members in VEC's service area.

Smaller "single-phase" lines are examined next. These lines supply individual subdivisions and roads. Damage here could impact anywhere from dozens of members to entire neighborhoods.

Finally, we repair service lines that connect individual homes. Keep in mind that we cannot repair anything attached to your home. If you have damage to your weather head or meter base, this will need to be repaired by an electrician before our crews can reconnect your service.

In recent years, technology has significantly improved the restoration process. VEC has implemented a SCADA system that allows our dispatchers to see in real time what is happening at the substations from a centralized location reducing the diagnostic time. We also have an app that our customers can report an outage on and receive information regarding their outage restoration time.

Our team at VEC is passionate about keeping the lights on. Over the last year our average member has had service 99.7 percent of the time, and we are improving that statistic each year. However, we know that extended outages are inconvenient for your family, and you can be confident that when the lights go out our crews do as well – assessing the damage, developing a plan and getting the power back on as quickly as possible.



Tips to Slay the Energy Vampire in Your Home



The little vampires who ring your doorbell on Halloween night aren't the only ones you should be afraid of. Electricity vampires are all over your house—all year long.

Electrical vampires are appliances and electronics that continue to pull electricity, even when they are turned off.

According to the US Department of Energy, vampires account for up to 5 percent of the energy in your house. To save you from a witch hunt, Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) offers a list of the most likely vampires in your house:

1. Computers, modems, routers, printers and other related equipment.
2. Your flat-screen TV. The larger it is, the more energy it uses, even when turned off.
3. Home theater equipment, including surround-sound devices.
4. Your cable or satellite TV box.
5. Anything with a digital time display, like your microwave oven or DVD player.

If an electrical device has a continuous display, like a digital clock, if it charges batteries, like your mobile phone charger, or if it has a remote control, like your TV—it's a vampire.

The best way to stop these vampires is to unplug them when you're not using them. You may also consider purchasing power strips so you have to pull just one plug to stop a group of electronics from using vampire electricity.

Correction from the August Edition of Powerlines

In the article *Restoring History with Your Change*, the birth year of Alvin C. York was listed as 1863 but was actually 1887.

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
 Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
 Effective September 1, 2018
1.807¢
 For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org
 Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.