

What is Grid Resiliency?

The resiliency of the grid is one of the most popular concepts being talked about in the electric industry. This concept made headlines in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which caused extraordinary damage to Puerto Rico's electric grid resulting in the most extended sustained outage in U.S. history. Lack of resilience became the go-to



Crews work to energize the new West Fairfield Substations.

phrase to describe Puerto Rico's grid. Here in Tennessee what does grid resiliency mean for you?

Resiliency is many things – reliability in your electric service, our ability to restore your power efficiently, and being able to meet the demands of new technology. Ultimately, resilience is how we deliver on our promise to improve the quality of life for our consumer - members.

When it comes to having a resilient electric grid, it begins with a system that is designed and built to withstand high winds, powerful storms, cybersecurity threats and other disruptions that could result in outages. A resilient grid is also flexible and adaptable. The way our systems react to advancements in technology – from demand response investments to a state of the art SCADA system – all factor into the resilience of our grid.

Resiliency is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year task. Whether it's the power poles, transformers, power lines or substations on our grid, it takes proactive maintenance and investment to keep them running smoothly. With thousands of consumers without power for months, the lack of resiliency in Puerto Rico's power grid wasn't solely caused by hurricane damage; it was the result of years of neglect in taking care of their system and preparing for a worst-case scenario.

In a similar way to how we maintain our vehicles with regular oil changes, inspections and tire rotations, a grid must also be properly maintained. Throughout the year, we regularly conduct pole and line inspections. Our goal is to find a problem before it becomes one. For example, if we find a weak pole that has damage from termites, we replace that pole. Doing so ensures that pole is as strong – or as resilient – as it can be.

Living in Tennessee, we know that significant power outages can occur, especially as we enter spring and summer storm season. Whether we're at the mercy of a thunderstorm or a month of unending rain, we have confidence



Lightning strikes can cause power outages.

in the resiliency of our system to recover from the situation with as little disruption as possible.

In the dictionary, resilience is defined as "the ability to bounce back, recover quickly and go back into shape or position after being stretched." When it comes to providing our consumer-members with resilient service, this is what we work toward – day in and day out!

Quick Tips: Save Energy in the Laundry Room

The average family washes about 300 loads of laundry a year, spending about 68 cents per load, for a yearly expense of about \$204. Most laundry room expenses come from heating water for washing and heating air for drying. But these costs are not set in stone: Avoid getting taken to the cleaners - try these tips to save money and save energy.



- 1) Wash as many of your clothes in cold water as you can.
- 2) Wash and dry clothes only when you have a full load.
- 3) Dry your second load of clothes as quickly as possible after the first load to take advantage of the heat that is already in your dryer.
- 4) Front-loading machines typically use two-thirds less water than top-loaders, reducing water and water-heating costs.
- 5) If you have the option, choose the faster spin cycle on your washer. The faster your clothes spin in the washer, the less time they'll need in the dryer.
- 6) Remove lint from the filters after every load. Clothes will dry faster – using less energy.
- 7) Consider hanging clothes on a clothesline or stand-alone drying rack and let nature help save you money.
- 8) If possible, locate your dryer in a warm laundry room rather than in a cold basement. The warmer the air is coming into the dryer, the less energy your machine will use to heat it up.
- 9) If you are in the market for a new washer and/or dryer, make sure your new machines are Energy-Star certified.

Monthly Co-op Progress Report - Nov. 2018

118 Power Poles Replaced	86.69 Miles ROW Trimmed	9,266 Pole Line Miles	119,936 AMI Meters Read	15,287 Contact Center Calls	48,249 Automated Calls Rec.
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Keeping VEC's Grid Safe

Although the electrification of America is a relatively recent occurrence, today we have become reliant on electric power to perform even the smallest tasks. And we miss it when it's gone. We are reminded of how important electricity is to us when power is interrupted, even for a short period of time.

The electric utility industry is no stranger to being prepared in the event of a crisis. Threats to the power grid can come from a variety of sources. By far, the largest and most menacing threat to any power grid comes from weather. The good news is that the power industry as a whole is very familiar with protecting itself from the unseen and unpredictable dangers of Mother Nature, and mounting a Herculean effort of recovery when the inevitable happens.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative, along with other local power companies, has an Emergency Response Plan in place that details steps to be taken in various types of emergencies. This provides a step by step, systematic approach to both isolated and more widespread events. The plan is updated periodically as part of our normal business operations.

Our Dispatch Control Center was designed and built to withstand tornadic winds, in case a natural weather event occurs that disrupts the VEC power grid. Back up communications systems are in place to provide a means to connect with crews in the field if the fiber network or telephone system is damaged.

Cybersecurity is another area of concern for the electric industry. This topic has been discussed at industry conferences for several years. VEC has two main software platforms: one for our billing and accounting system and another for our substation system control and monitoring. While no system can guarantee absolute security, we have gone to great lengths to minimize the chance of our systems being compromised. We recently installed new firewall devices for our systems and are constantly upgrading our system software protection. Regular upgrades are performed that meet the newest requirements for security. Our substations are designed with manual override capabilities that can be utilized if needed.

No system is guaranteed to be failsafe, but VEC has a number of strong safeguards in place to ensure a constant supply of power is available to our member-owners.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

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In January, the VECustomers Share program funded \$28,900 in community service grants. Over \$6.5 million has been awarded since the inception of the program in October 2001. 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.



VEC President and CEO Rody Blevins presented a grant check to Dana Mashburn, director of the Calhoun UMC Food Pantry. The grant will be used to purchase food for families in McMinn County that are food insecure.

Organizations receiving grants in January

Hull York Chapter 5 Disabled		Five Point Baptist Youth	\$800
American Veterans	\$2,500	Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Branch 294	\$800
Rogers Creek Student Council	\$1,800	Spring City Chamber of Commerce	\$750
Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,375	Polk County Ramp Festival	\$750
Manna House Ministries	\$1,375	Spirit Horse @ Blackfox Equestrian Center	\$750
Hamilton County Stars	\$1,350	Luminary Frostbite Volunteer	
Monterey Lions Club Inc.	\$1,250	Fire Department	\$750
Rhea County Health Council-RAM Clinic	\$1,250	Panther Page Turners	\$550
Midway FFA and Greenhouse Committee	\$1,168	Flint Springs Ruritan Club	\$550
Midway Softball Club	\$1,050	Cleveland Amateur Radio Club Inc	\$500
PCHS Girls Soccer Booster Club	\$1,000	North Lee Elementary PTO	\$500
Meigs High School National Honor Society	\$1,000	Gamble Road Wildgame Dinner	\$500
KASA-Burks Elementary	\$1,000	CASA of Bradley & Polk Co	\$450
Plateau Women's Chorus	\$1,000	Ms. Amanda Beaty's 11th Grade Math Club	\$407
Polk County Youth Football	\$1,000	Midway High School (MHS) Drama Club	\$300
Lake Tansi Security Police Department	\$1,000	Monterey Baseball Boosters	\$200
God's Helping Hands	\$900	Roane County Lady Knights	\$200
Meigs County High School Baseball Boosters	\$825	Roane County Knights Lacrosse	\$200

Paying by Automotic Draft

How much easier would your life be if you opened your next electric bill and seeing that it has already been marked "PAID"?

It happens every month to customers who have signed up for VEC's Automatic Draft payment plan using their checking account, or their Visa or MasterCard credit or debit card. These customers don't have to worry about checks, stamps, or extra trips to the VEC Customer Service Center. If they are on vacation or traveling for any reason, they don't have to worry about whether or not their electric bill has been paid on time.

Sounds easy, doesn't it?

If you're interested in taking the stress and hassle out of paying your electric bill, signing up for VEC's Automatic Draft is quick and easy.

Customers with accounts in good standing are eligible. Each month you will continue to receive your bill, but it will be marked "Paid By Bank Draft" or "Paid by Credit Card Draft." When you see one of these messages you can rest assured that your bill will be taken care of automatically.

The amount due will be drafted approximately two days before the actual due date.

Checking Account Draft

To have your electric bill automatically drafted from your checking account you'll need to fill out and sign a Draft Authorization Card and supply VEC with a voided check. You can do this at your local VEC office, or you can call to have the form sent to you so you can return the form and voided check by mail. You can also download the form from the VEC website at www.vec.org, fill it out and sign it and mail it back to VEC along with your voided check.

Credit or Debit Card Draft

VEC accepts Visa or MasterCard credit and debit cards for the Automatic Draft program. To have your bill automatically drafted from your credit or debit card, you'll also need to fill out a Draft Authorization Card and VEC will need to get a copy of the front of your card. You can accomplish this by going into your local VEC Customer Service Center or you can phone to have the authorization card mailed to you. You can also download the authorization card at www.vec.org. If you have the form mailed or download it from the website, you'll need to fill it out, sign it, and mail a photocopy of the front of your card back to VEC.

The mailing address to use is:

Volunteer Energy Cooperative
Attention: Accounting Department
P.O. Box 277
Decatur, TN 37322

The Fine Print

Electronic deductions will continue automatically from the time you sign up until you request that the deductions discontinue, you discontinue your electricity account, your credit/debit card expires, or your checking account changes.

Due to federal "Red Flag" rules to prevent identity theft VEC can no longer sign up new automatic draft customers over the telephone. However, customers who can answer security questions can change the details of their draft payment plan or add new accounts to the automatic draft payment plan over the telephone.

Upon the expiration of the credit/debit card, customers will need to re-submit a Draft Authorization Card and photocopy of the front of their new credit/debit card. VEC will make every effort to notify customers whose credit/debit cards are about to expire.

Customers who discontinue their Automatic Draft Payments for any length of time must re-submit the Draft Authorization Card and voided check or credit/debit card photocopy to re-enroll in the program.



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Despite all of our efforts it is impossible for us to say our systems cannot be compromised. We will continue to take this issue seriously and look for opportunities to improve our systems to minimize our risk and ensure that a constant and consistent supply of power is available to our member-owners.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective February 1, 2019

2.069¢

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