

Safety First: Improper Generator Installation Risks Injury or Death



Several severe storms experienced in Tennessee last year, as well as concerns about loss of power due to snow or ice, have caused many Volunteer Energy Cooperative customers to consider buying a standby generator as insurance against long-term power outages. A generator will help avoid any loss or inconvenience resulting from an extensive power outage but,

unless safely installed, a generator can cause serious injury or death to power line workers or the general public.

To properly install a standby generator large enough to power a whole house, a double-throw disconnect is needed to insulate your new temporary power source from the main power lines feeding your home. Improper installation also risks damage to the generator when electrical service is restored.

When you use electricity from Volunteer Energy's lines, the transformer at your location steps the voltage down from 7,200 to the 120 and 240 volts used in your home. When you run a generator without a double-throw switch installed on your system, you may feed 120-volt current back into the transformer. The transformer then steps the voltage up to 7,200, potentially giving a lethal shock to anyone who contacts a damaged power line that may be lying on the ground.

"...unless safely installed, a generator can cause serious injury or death to power lines workers or the general public."

A double-throw switch must be sized according to the rating of your service entrance equipment. Automatic switches are part of a control panel when standby generation is automatic. Otherwise, manually operated switches are used.

To ensure proper installation of a standby generator and compliance with electrical codes, please contact a qualified, licensed electrician. If you install a standby generator, please notify your local Volunteer Energy Cooperative Service Center so VEC personnel can apply proper safety measures when working on your lines.

VEC Contract Crews Inspecting Poles

Power Pole Maintenance Company will be the contractor again this year for our pole inspection program. They will have 2 or 3 crews consisting of 5 to 6 men working in each crew. They will have pickup trucks with VEC Contractor signs and possibly ATV four wheelers.

These inspections allow VEC to identify poles that may need replacement and to identify problems before they result in power outages.

Since 2003 VEC has employed an aggressive pole inspection program in an effort to spot deteriorating poles and older equipment. The cooperative is working toward a goal of inspecting 100% of the poles every 15 years.

Current inspections began in April 2019 and are being conducted in the following order:

1. Lantana 344 (1400 poles) – Tansi bottom circuit – Dunbar Rd from Lantana sub down to Big Horn Dr (and roads off of Dunbar)
2. Sugar Grove 334 (2400 poles) – Keith Valley Rd, Spring Place Rd

It is not necessary for customers to be home during the inspections and power will not be affected.



The Status of VEC Broadband

I remember years ago when AOL dialup was the internet connection of choice. Each time I would log in, there was a sound of melodic digital gibberish that would let me know I was connecting to the world-wide web. It would always precede that famous exclamation, "You've got mail", notifying me that I was both online and already behind on responding to some message.

Today, I can connect and download an entire HD movie in less time than it used to take to make a connection and hear "You've got mail" blaring across my speakers. But I'm one of the fortunate few who live in an area with access to high speed internet. Sadly, many rural Americans are living in a digital dark age, and the divide that exists between us continues to grow increasingly worse.

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is acutely aware of this problem, and it is for that reason I and your board of directors chose to initiate a broadband pilot in late 2017. First, we started with a small feasibility study, supplying access to about 120 homes in the Hopewell community of Bradley County. In 2018, we decided to expand the pilot to include another 525 homes in the No Pone community of Bradley County. And this year, we will be expanding the service again to include an additional 730 homes in the Birchwood community of Hamilton and Meigs Counties.

Many of you probably wonder how we choose the areas that will receive service. The initial pilot area was a strategic decision. We needed two areas situated closely together, one with no internet and another with various internet options. Having these two areas was necessary to define the service take rate, which could impact future financing opportunities. Since the pilot began however, we have also created a crowd-fiber site, www.vec-twinlakes.com. We are now using this site to gauge interest in the service, and to help determine which areas will see future expansion.

The other factor that determines who will gain access is the funding of each build-out. The cost of fiber to the home exceeds \$22,000 per mile of line. Because of its high cost, the cooperative actively seeks federal and state funding to offset the initial expense. So far, VEC has been awarded a \$1 million matching grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) which will be used to bring the fiber to Birchwood. Construction will begin there in the next few months. Additionally, we were also awarded a \$1.3 million matching grant by the State of Tennessee that will bring fiber to the Spring Creek community of McMinn County. Construction will begin there by the end of 2019.

At VEC, we realize having access to broadband internet is no longer a commodity, but rather a necessity. Because of this, we are committed to bring you the internet connectivity and speeds you need. While our plans are ambitious, we are constrained by cost and time. So while you wait, we ask for your patience. VEC is determined to lead the way in bringing broadband to rural America, starting with you, our members.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

The VECustomers Share program funded \$28,100 in community service grants in March. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, over \$6.6 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 Mark Justice presented a grant check this past March to Leslie Moody, Theater Arts Instructor at Alvin C York Institute. This grant will be used to fund two plays; Aladdin and Beauty and the Beast.

Organizations receiving grants in April

Smoky Mountain Christian Camp	\$2,000	Jr. Achievement of the Ocoee Region	\$500
Friends of Monterey Branch Library	\$1,510	Crossville Rotary Club	\$500
Alvin C. York Institute JROTC	\$1,500	Standing Stone Historical Society	\$490
Bledsoe County Community Food Bank	\$1,500	Hillsvievw Vol Fire Department	\$450
Midway Elementary Stem Club	\$1,370	E.K. Baker Elementary School PTO	\$450
SPCA of Bradley County	\$1,000	Women at the Well	\$350
10th Judicial District Recovery Court	\$1,000	Chattanooga Pony Club	\$300
Polk County High School Drama Club		Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$250
Boosters	\$1,000	Rhea Central Elementary Music Department	\$250
Cumberland County Young Marines	\$1,000	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$250
Hamilton County STARS	\$1,000	Midway Junior Livestock	\$250
Polk County Education Foundation	\$1,000	Keep McMinn Beautiful	\$250
Friends of the Art Circle Library	\$1,000	Roane County Leadership	\$250
Decatur UMC - Camp in the Community	\$700	Now Faith	\$250
Ten Mile Community Food Pantry/		Christian Academy of the Cumberlands	\$250
Lakeside Baptist	\$700	Christian Counseling Center	
Meigs County High School Girls Volleyball	\$600	of Cumberland County	\$250
Muscular Dystrophy Association	\$600	American Heritage Girls TN 4008	\$250
Fentress County Fair Grounds	\$500	Better Living Center	\$250
Cumberland County Community Band	\$500	Great Smoky Mountain Council	\$250
Central High School Ruriteen Club	\$500	Distinguished Young Women of Rhea	
Mount Carmel Baptist Church Youth Group	\$500	County Program	\$250
B.A.S.I.C. of TN Inc.	\$500	Fentress County Historical Society	\$250
Bledsoe County Honor Guard	\$500	Delta Kappa Gamma, Alpha Chapter	\$200
Health Occupations Students of America		Roane Choral Society	\$200
Meigs County	\$500	Midway High School FFA	\$180

Eight Going to Washington

The Washington Youth Tour, sponsored by Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, provides young leaders with an opportunity to explore Washington, D.C., learn about how government affects cooperatives and develop their leadership skills. Students are selected for the trip by writing a short story titled “Electric Cooperatives – Connecting Communities” that explains how co-ops are connecting their communities with power, information and opportunities.

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 CEO and President. “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. Each year VEC alternates which schools in our service area participate. This year’s participating schools were: Alvin C. York Institute, Clarkrange High School, Cumberland County High School, Midway High School, Monterey High School, Rhea County High School and Stone Memorial High School.

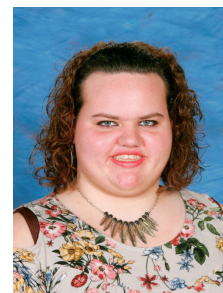
Contact Julie Jones at jjones@vec.org to learn more about the Washington Youth Tour.



Allyson Gentry



Jadelynn Fox



Mackenzie Shaver



Ashley Burke



Katelyn Carpenter



Matthew Harvey



Kathryn Lamb



Lillan Bacon

Monthly Co-op Progress Report - Jan. 2019

162 Power Poles Replaced	127.66 Miles ROW Trimmed	9,266 Pole Line Miles	119,967 AMI Meters Read	17,269 Contact Center Calls	55,835 Automated Calls Rec.
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Notice of Election

In compliance with the bylaws of Volunteer Energy Cooperative, Article IV, Directors; Section 4.05, Notice of Directors to be Elected, I hereby give written notice that the following Directors’ terms will expire this year:

District No. 10 – White, Putnum, and Overton
District No.11 – Fentress, Morgan, and Scott
District No. 12 – Pickett

As set forth in Article IV, Section 4.06, he shall file with the Secretary of the Cooperative or with a duly appointed representative a written petition nominating such person as a candidate and signed by the candidate and not less than twenty - five (25)other members in good standing whose premises served by the Cooperative are located in the directorate district of the candidate.

Qualifying petitions and other information about the elections can be obtained on or after May 24, 2018, by contacting David Murphy, Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development, P.O. Box 277, Decatur, TN 37322, or by calling 423-334-7050.

Qualifying petitions must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative or his designee at the VEC Corporate Office in Decatur, Tennessee by 5 p.m. EDT, June 3, 2019.

Sammy Norton
Secretary-Treasurer

Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting

Fuel Cost Adjustment

Effective **April 1, 2019**

1.82¢

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

*Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an
Equal Opportunity provider and employer.*

UPDATE YOUR PHONE NUMBER TODAY

Starting in March, when you update your phone number(s) you will become eligible for a prize drawing.

You can update your information by calling your service center, using SmartHub, or by logging into your account at vec.org. You can also use the form on the back of your bill.

