



## By the Community, For the Community

October is National Co-op Month

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how VEC was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. VEC's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or this month's annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

We hope you will think of VEC as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built *by the community, for the community.*

## Halloween Safety Tips



### WALK SAFELY

- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.



### TRICK OR TREAT WITH AN ADULT

- Children under the age of 12 should not be alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be without supervision, they should stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.



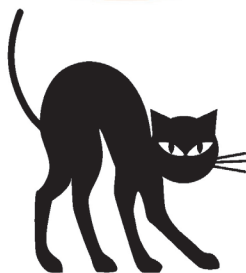
### KEEP COSTUMES CREATIVE AND SAFE

- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.



### DRIVE EXTRA SAFELY ON HALLOWEEN

- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert to kids during those hours.



## Monthly Co-op Progress Report - June 2019

88 Power Poles Replaced	135.14 Miles ROW Trimmed	9,266 Pole Line Miles	119,159 AMI Meters Read	13,818 Contact Center Calls	55,490 Automated Calls Rec.
-------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

## Focusing In on VEC Future

As CEO, the day to day operations of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) requires much of my attention. While the daily operations are important, we must also focus on VEC's future, which may be of even greater importance. Over the past several years, you have heard me talk about our Vision 2020 plan. Vision 2020 is the concerted effort we have put into upgrading our entire electric system infrastructure. Completed upgrades include replacing or rebuilding all of our electric substations, enhancing electric grid components and controls, reconfiguring our computer network and website, and upgrades to our communication and fiber systems. As 2019 ends, the Vision 2020 plan will be wrapping up. Once finished, VEC will have one of the most advanced digital platforms of any electric company operating in the United States.

As our Vision 2020 Plan continues to wind down, we continue to address other critical issues for VEC. Of primary concern are the rising costs of wholesale power from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Over the past six years, TVA has increased base wholesale power rates by 2.5% each year. While the rate increases have helped TVA lower their total debt by over \$4 billion, the increases have also grown the rates to a point where TVA is now among the highest cost option for power suppliers in the Southeast. This brings VEC to a place where critical decisions on the future direction of the cooperative need to be made.

In April of this year, TVA's former CEO Bill Johnson left TVA to go to work in California. Mr. Johnson was one of the primary catalysts for the constant TVA rate increases. Upon his departure, TVA hired a new CEO, Jeff Lyash. Mr. Lyash has spent a considerable amount of time talking to the leadership of the power companies serving the Tennessee Valley including VEC. One of the chief messages I have communicated to Mr. Lyash is the urgent need for rate relief from the annual TVA increases. The good news is, the message has been heard. TVA is proposing a new financial plan that directs the path TVA will follow over the next decade. This plan includes **No Rate Increases this October.** It also proposes no rate increases for the next ten years.

While the promise of having no rate increases from TVA for the next ten years is a



Rody Blevins  
President/CEO  
Volunteer Energy  
Cooperative

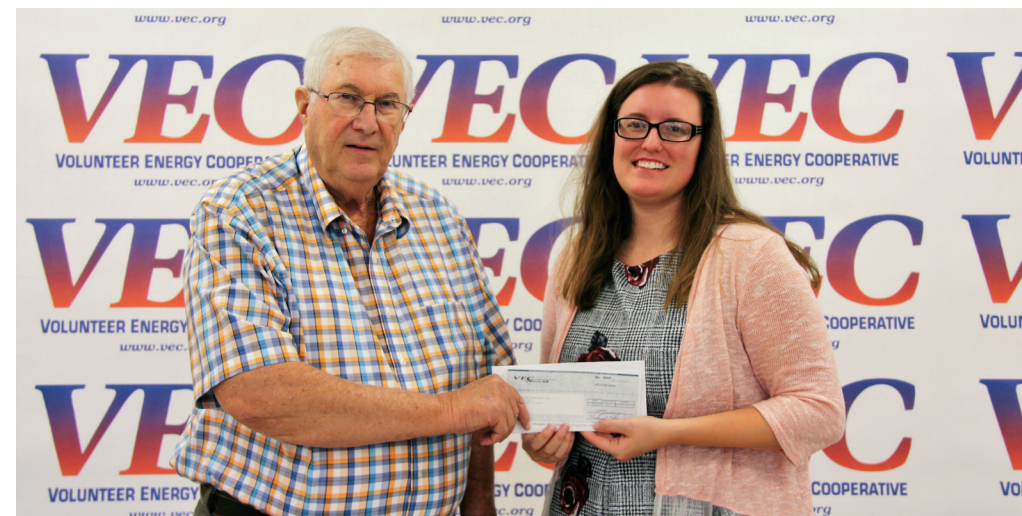


(continued on page 4)



## Your Change Changes Things

The VECustomers Share program funded \$31,000 in community service grants in August. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, over \$6.7 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](http://www.vec.org).



VECustomers Shares Board Member Jerry Mayo presented a grant check to Sarah Bates the Executive Director of Creative Compassion, Inc.

### Organizations receiving grants in August

Good Neighbors Theatre	\$2,550	Quilts of Valor Foundation	\$750
Spring City Middle School (SCMS)		Avalon Center: Domestic Violence	
Science Boosters	\$1,750	& Sexual Assault Program	\$750
Hamilton County STARS	\$1,600	Monterey Food Bank	\$750
Fentress County Fair Association	\$1,500	Toys for Children	\$750
Calhoun Elementary Jr. Beta Club	\$1,500	Meigs County Military Veterans Honor Guard	\$700
Martin Junior Beta Club	\$1,250	Cumberland County Rescue Squad	\$625
MARA Medical Ministry	\$1,250	Polk County Coordinated School Health	\$500
Jones Chapel UMC Food Pantry	\$1,200	Harrison-Ooltewah Education Foundation	\$500
Fentress County Health Department	\$1,000	Benton Elementary School Jr. Beta Club	\$500
Meigs County High School Girls Volleyball	\$1,000	Chilhowee Middle School Girls Soccer	\$500
Bradley Central Football Club	\$1,000	Chilhowee Middle School Boys Soccer	\$500
South Roane Volunteer Fire Department (Station 1)	\$1,000	Polk County High School Golf Boosters	\$500
South Roane Volunteer Fire Department (Station 2)	\$1,000	Midway Quarterback Club	\$500
Monterey Jr. High Cheerleading	\$1,000	Charleston Elementary STEAM Academy PTO	\$500
Hospice of Cumberland County Inc.	\$875	Lee University Leonard Center	\$500
Meigs Senior Center	\$800	Delta Kappa Gamma, Alpha Chapter	\$400
Rhea County High School Eagle Anglers	\$750	Candies Creek Academy	\$250
		Mended Hearts Chapter 127	\$250
		Unity Center	\$250

## Tips to Slay the Energy Vampires 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.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Cookware Tip:** Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



(continued from page 1)

positive move in the right direction, VEC believes these actions are not enough. There are significant changes going on in the wholesale power markets outside the Tennessee Valley, in addition electric cooperatives across the country are generating some of their own power from low cost renewable options. These new options for power generation could result in significant cost savings to our members. As we focus on the future, VEC is studying options for future power supply for our members. This process will take time. I want you to know that VEC is working in your interest to keep electric rates low. As we continue doing so, I will update you with our progress. One way or another, we are committed to providing reliable low cost power to our members.

## South Bradley Conversion Update

In June's Powerlines, we presented a strategy to increase long term reliability and capacity for our customers and will remove the danger of power loss if the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) East Cleveland Substation power transformer fails.

VEC linemen and contract crews have worked successfully on the South Bradley Substation. They completed the additional circuit on Tunnel Hill. They upsized the line on Lebanon Valley Church Road, converted Candies Creek Road, Rakestraw Road, Old Johnson Road, and part of Tunnel Hill from 7,200 volts to a capacity of 14,400 volts. They also were able to remove 3 step-downs at the intersection of Candies Creek Road and Tunnel Hill.

The next step in this process will be to convert the remaining portions of Tunnel Hill, portions of Old Alabama Road and part of Leadmine Valley Road. Blue Springs Road and Blue Springs Church Road are also scheduled in the next upgrade. Each step of the project has one objective, moving the load from the TVA East Cleveland substation and securing reliable service to our customers.

Providing our customers with reliable, safe and efficient electric service is our mission and we are investing in long term reliability.

## Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting

**Fuel Cost Adjustment**

Effective **September 1, 2019**

**1.629¢**

**For the most current FCA information, visit [www.vec.org](http://www.vec.org)**

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

## UPDATE YOUR PHONE NUMBER TODAY

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](http://vec.org). You can also use the form on the back of your bill.

