

VECcustomers Share Board Welcomes Three New Members

Three new representatives have been appointed to the all-volunteer VECcustomers Share Board that oversees VECcustomers Share donations. Board members are appointed to serve three-year terms and are eligible to serve two consecutive terms.

Recently the term expired for VECcustomers Share Board members Erbin Baumgardner representing McMinn county, Pauline Sherrer representing Cumberland county and Barry Narramore representing Roane and Loudon counties.



Holly Neal was appointed to represent Cumberland county. Neal lives in Crossville, TN with her husband Randy, and is serving in her 18th year as the Executive Director of the Cumberland County United Fund. She is active in her community, serving as a Stephen Minister and on the Servant Ministry Committee at Fairfield Glade United Methodist Church. She weekly volunteers in a 4th-grade class at Homestead Elementary School, serves on the Cumberland County Horizon Initiative Steering Committee and on the County Resource Committee. She is the mother of 2 daughters and grandmother of Lily, Tyler, and Claudia.



Rodney Fowler was appointed to represent Roane and Loudon counties. Fowler enlisted in the US Air Force in 1962 and served for five years as an aircraft weapons mechanic. He also enlisted into the Pennsylvania State Police Department in 1971, where he served for twenty-five years. Starting as a patrolman, promoted to a criminal investigator, and moved into the fire marshal unit.

After retirement from the State Police, Rodney Fowler became a Certified Forensic Fire Investigator and conducted fire investigations for various Insurance Companies for over twenty years. He retired in 2017.



Norma Barham was appointed to represent McMinn County. Barham retired after careers in UT Extension and McMinn County Schools. She is married to Rick Barham and has 2 children and 4 grandchildren.

The VECcustomers Share board members serve on a volunteer basis and receive no compensation for their service. Each month they review grant applications and allocate funds that have been made available by members who choose to have their electric bills rounded up to the next whole dollar. The money is then allocated each month by the board to be donated to community-service organizations. Since the program began in 2001, over \$6.8 million has been awarded to local community organizations in VEC's 17-county service area.

2019 VECcustomers Share Board of Directors: (Front row, L-R) Barbara Rector, Chairman Joyce Woods, Jerry Mayo, Rodney Fowler, and Co-Chairman Gary Gilmore.



(Back row, L-R) VEC CEO and President Rody Blevins, Bill Blackwell, Holly Neal, Dana Burgner, Norma Barham, Sharon Parrott, Secretary Lynn Crawford and VEC Vice-President of Marketing and Economic Development David Murphy.

VEC Statement of Non-Discrimination

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, disability, or age. Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

VEC is an equal opportunity provider.



As we look to finish up 2019 at Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC), I'm pleased to report to you that your Electric Cooperative is in good shape from both a financial and operational standpoint. As an electric system, VEC has never been in a better position. We continue the maintenance of our electric system through the replacement of aging poles, by investing in new substations, updating system protection equipment, clearing system right of ways, and strengthening our distribution and transmission infrastructure. Once again, VEC has invested a record amount in these efforts to improve service to our member-consumers. System resilience and reliability are always two of our primary concerns.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

The less positive and most outstanding issue facing VEC continues to be the cost of our wholesale power supply. While the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) passed on having another annual rate increase in 2019, TVA remains one of the highest cost wholesale suppliers in the southeastern United States. VEC continued trying to engage TVA on this vital issue for our members, but we have made little progress. In 2019, TVA imposed a Grid Access Charge on the cooperative, and they began pushing for all local power companies to sign a 20-year power supply contract. The Grid Access Charge is a tool used by TVA to guarantee revenue regardless of electrical usage, and the contract is a method to ensure local power companies like VEC could never leave TVA for a different and more affordable power supply option. Instead of signing the 20-year contract, VEC has elected to research the possibility of purchasing power from a more affordable provider. This will be one of our main focuses in the year 2020.

The good news is your Cooperative, after eighty-four years in operation, continues to get better as we look forward to a new year and a new decade. We will continue to work on ways to improve our service and represent the interests of our member-consumers.

We wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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. You can also use the form on the back of your bill.



Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting
Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective **November 1, 2019**

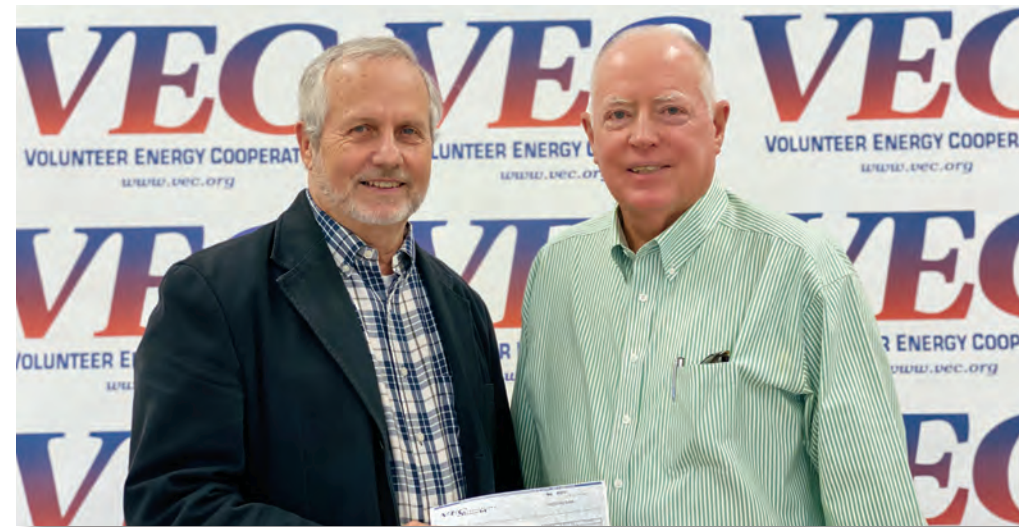
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For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



The VECustomers Share program funded \$27,800 in community service grants in October. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, over \$6.8 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.



VECcustomers Shares Board Member Lynn Crawford presents a check to Al Miller, Missions Pastor of Meadowview Baptist. The grant is for their weekend food program. The grant will provide food to at-risk children at local schools when school is out.

Organizations receiving grants in October

Hamilton Co. Stars	\$2,500	Bradley Central Softball Dugout Club	\$500
Pine Haven After School Reading Club	\$1,500	New Life Community Kitchen	\$500
Pickett County High School Football	\$1,500	Eagle Dugout Club	\$500
Spring City Friends of the Library	\$1,300	Boots N Roses Dance Club	\$500
Benton United Methodist Women's Sack Pack Ministry	\$1,000	Helping Hands Ministry	\$500
Byrdstown Angel Tree Project	\$1,000	School Wide Positive Behavior	\$500
Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$1,000	Cumberland County Rising Anti-Drug Coalition	\$500
Rogers Creek Student Council	\$1,000	GOAL Academy Pantry, Bradley County Schools	\$500
Monterey Junior High Girls Basketball	\$913	Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$400
Monterey High School Theatre Department	\$912	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$400
Mt. Carmel UMC Youth Group	\$800	Midway High Baseball Team	\$400
True Hope Helping Hands Ministry	\$750	Cumberland County High School Jets Wrestling	\$300
For the Children Quilting Ministry	\$750	Calhoun Volunteer Fire Dept	\$300
Meigs County High School Golf Boosters	\$700	Pleasant Hill Historical Society	\$250
Monterey High Boys Basketball	\$675	The Crossville Model Railroad Club	\$250
Midway Quarterback Club	\$650	Student Government Association - TCAT Crossville	\$250
Midway High Boys Basketball	\$650	Martin Junior Cross Country	\$250
Polk County Health Council	\$500	Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau	\$250
Clarkrange Fire Dept Unit 7	\$500	SLF No 1, LLC dba Wynd Ridge Health & Rehab Center	\$250
Boys & Girls Club of the Ocoee Region (ANDOR program)	\$500	Stone Memorial Recycling Program	\$200
Meigs County Historical Society	\$500	Character Counts Community Initiative - Rogers Creek School	\$200
Lift & Redemption Ministries, dba The Caring Place	\$500		

2019 Annual Meeting

The 2019 Annual Meeting was a success. More than 800 co-op members attended and enjoyed a day of music, free food, giveaways, and participating in the Co-op business meeting. CEO and President Rody Blevins detailed the past year as well as the milestones completed. He also outlined challenges in the infrastructure in east Cleveland as well as the relationship with TVA over residential rates. "The current magnitude of the TVA base rate has produced challenges for us all," stated Blevins. "When viewed in conjunction with the new rate structure and its impact on low usage consumers, VEC has found itself in a position where we must now weigh the burden being placed on our members against the cooperative's commitment to TVA as our power supplier."

Before and after the business meeting, The Mayberry Deputy - David Browning entertained Co-op members by handing out tickets (autographed photos) for misdemeanors such as standing in line, holding the door open, and forgetting to smile. His homespun stories and hysterical door prizes presentation had the crowd rolling in laughter. His main presentation was both heartfelt and hysterical. Many attendees said this was their favorite meeting ever.

In addition to the main entertainment, members were able to watch a demonstration of power safety and the danger of downed powerlines. Many co-op members enjoyed the continental or pancake breakfast. Educational tables lined the hallways providing information on energy savings, community services, the 2020 Census, and youth programs. Members received a golf umbrella as a gift, as well as free flu shots administered by Dr. Shane Roberts' office.



Electronic Gift Guide

By Abby Berry



This holiday season, give the gift of tech! If you're searching for the latest gadgets and electronics to gift but don't know where to start, we've got you covered.

Here's a list of ideas for your tech-savvy friends and family members, and with a range of prices and interests, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Gifts for those on the go: We all have that one friend who never stays in one place, so they'll appreciate gifts that keep them charged and entertained while on the go.

A portable charger (or power bank) can keep their smart phones and tablets juiced, and the good news is this gift won't drain your wallet. You can purchase portable chargers online or at local retailers for as low as \$20. Typically, these compact devices can fully charge an iPhone three times before running out of steam.

A Bluetooth speaker is another great gift to keep those on the go entertained. Whether they're listening to their favorite tunes or watching the latest flick, Bluetooth speakers can clarify and amplify volume to satisfy any media enthusiast. Prices range depending on features, but you can purchase a quality Bluetooth speaker online or at local retailers for as low as \$30.

Gifts for the chef: Every foodie knows that temperature matters when mastering the perfect cut of meat. A Bluetooth-connected thermometer can help your chef ensure a delicious (and safe-to-eat) meal. Just download the associated app and keep an eye on the grill right from your smart phone or tablet. Prices vary from \$30 to \$200, but you can purchase these handy gadgets online or at any big box store, like Wal-Mart or Target.

A digital kitchen scale is a must for any culinary pro. No more guessing—the easy-to-read digital screen ensures the exact weight or amount required for that perfect dish. Prices vary depending on the weight the scale can handle, but you can find a 13-pound max weight scale for about \$20 on Amazon.com.

Gifts for the pet owner: Let's face it—pet owners would be lost without their fur babies. Luckily, pet tracking products continue to advance, so pet owners can always keep a watchful eye on their furry friends. Most trackers simply attach to your pet's collar. Prices vary depending on the tracker's capabilities, but some features include water resistance, health monitoring and exceptional battery life. You can purchase pet trackers online or at your local pet store. With so many electronics available today, you're sure to find the perfect gift for your tech-savvy loved ones. Happy shopping!

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.