



Bringing Power to the Members

SINCE 1935



2022-2023 Annual Report

EMPOWERING MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES, AND COMMUNITIES.



YOU ARE THE CO-OP!



FREDDY TIPTON
Jamestown, TN

"I've had an awesome experience with everything I've ever had to do with VEC. If you need anything, if you have a power outage, it doesn't matter...they're there and they're on the double and they do a good job."

"We moved here four years ago, and [VEC] has been the best service we've ever received."



JOHN AND DENISE HARDING
Decatur, TN



CYNTHIA LOWE
Cleveland, TN

"I've never had a problem with [VEC]. Our power does not go off much at all, and when it does go off, they're pretty fast about getting out there."

"The service is always great...the employees are always very friendly...they always say 'thank you,' and if you're in the drive-through, they give you a sucker for your kids. Everything is great."



ERICA SHIPWASH
Crossville, TN

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VEC linemen in the 1930s.

OUR MISSION

Our mission at Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is to provide our members with reliable, safe, and efficient services in a courteous and timely manner at a competitive cost.

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Open and Voluntary Membership

VEC is a voluntary organization open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

Democratic Member Control

VEC is a democratic organization controlled by its members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative and who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. A member-elected board of directors sets the policy and procedures that govern the cooperative.

Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to and democratically control the capital of the cooperative.



In 1935, the co-op was founded to bring electricity to rural Tennessee.

Autonomy and Independence

VEC is an autonomous, self-help organization controlled by its members. If VEC enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative's autonomy.

Education, Training, and Information

VEC provides education, training, and information to members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

VEC serves its members most effectively by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

Concern for Community

While focusing on members' needs, VEC works for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



AUBIE SMITH

Chairman - Hamilton



WILLIAM CAMPBELL

Vice Chairman - Fentress,
Morgan, and Scott



SAMMY NORTON

Secretary/Treasurer - Meigs



TIM HANDLER

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer -
Roane and Loudon



KENNETH CAREY

Cumberland West



LARRY STORIE

Pickett



JERRY HENLEY

Rhea and Bledsoe



PHILIP SMITH

Cumberland East



DAVID MILEN

Polk



JOHN BUCHANAN

Bradley



MIKE FRAZIER

McMinn



KEITH PHILLIPS

Putnam, White, and
Overton

POWERING PROGRESS TOGETHER

By Dion Cooper

Dear Members and Friends of Volunteer Energy Cooperative,

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year and chart the course ahead, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. I am proud of the dedication and effort VEC employees put forth to serve you, our members. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you as President and CEO and to have the privilege to lead such an outstanding organization.



*Dion Cooper
President and CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative*

In the dynamic landscape of the energy sector, 2023 has been a year of challenges, resilience, and growth for VEC. As your cooperative, we have always remained true to our core values of the Seven Cooperative Principles: Open and Voluntary Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community. These values have guided us through the challenges and opportunities that have come our way. I encourage you to read more about these principles in this annual report.

Empowering Communities

Our commitment to empowering the communities we serve has never wavered. In partnership with Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative, we continue our efforts to bring broadband internet service to our members, ensuring that no one is left behind. We understand how important broadband is to local initiatives, education, and economic development projects that strengthen the fabric of our communities.

With over 2,100 members connected to broadband services and projects currently active in Bradley, Hamilton, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, and Roane counties, we continue to work on

grant funded projects that will offer broadband services to over 10,000 passings. Our goal is to make sure every VEC member has access to broadband and we will continue to pursue grants and opportunities that make that goal a reality.

While we wish these services were available to you today, we do ask for your patience as supply chain issues and manpower will continue to be a challenge for any broadband project. Grant programs and grant awards are also part of the delay, as much of this is tied to federal funding. Tennessee was awarded over \$800M in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) that was funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Tennessee Broadband Office is working through the process of making those funds available for bids. VEC will be actively pursuing those funds to help bring broadband to more of our members.

Member-Centric Approach

VEC's strength lies in our members, who are not customers but an integral part of our cooperative family. We continue to listen to your feedback, respond to your needs, and provide innovative solutions to make your lives easier. From convenient online services, to personalized energy-saving tips, we are dedicated to delivering an exceptional member experience. I encourage you to visit our website, where you can login to your account, report and check outage status, signup for broadband service, and much more. Don't forget to download the SmartHub app on your favorite device for account management at your fingertips. Using SmartHub, members can view their usage and billing, manage payments, notify customer service of account and service issues, and receive special messaging from VEC.

Resilience in Uncertain Times

The past year did not come without its challenges. We faced unprecedented weather events, supply chain disruptions, and evolving regulatory landscapes—regulatory landscapes that have constrained electric generating capacity across the U.S. We experienced the first ever rolling blackouts from TVA as Winter Storm Elliott moved through the valley in December of 2022. Through it all, our team demonstrated remarkable resilience. Their unwavering dedication and commitment ensured that our members received the best possible service, even during the most trying times.

Our country is in the midst of an energy transition—a transition that looks to eliminate the use of carbon based fuels. Proponents of this transition, also referred to as a renewable energy transition, insist the transition is necessary to limit climate change. While we *can* debate the validity of this reasoning and you *can* choose which arguments to support or dispute, you cannot debate the necessity of energy and in particular, electricity. The energy sector only makes up about 7% of the total U.S. economy, but that percentage is the first 7%; therefore, without the energy sector, most of the remaining 93% does not happen. Electricity is not a commodity; it is an essential service.

So, where do I stand on the issue? I stand for available, reliable, and affordable electricity. As President and CEO of VEC, my priority is for our members to have the essential service of electricity to power their homes, schools, hospitals, businesses, and industries that drive the local economies we serve. We support the growth of renewable energy and believe it will be a part of a diverse power generation portfolio that will be required to power our future. We also believe natural gas, nuclear, battery storage, and pumped storage will be part of the power generation formula required to meet our standard for available, reliable, and affordable electricity.

One of the most famous quotes in the energy business comes from Winston Churchill, who famously said energy security comes from “variety and variety alone.” In other words, don’t put all your eggs in one energy basket. To successfully navigate this energy transition will require an all the above approach. “Yes” to renewable and new generation technologies, “yes” to new nuclear power, but also “yes” to carbon-based generation—at least until adequate alternate generation is available.

A Vision for the Future

Living in Tennessee, we are blessed with many things, including a thriving economy and economic growth, but this also means VEC is experiencing membership growth. VEC’s membership growth translates to an increase in load on the electric system. With that in mind, we have kicked off a construction work plan (CWP) that will have a five-year component and a long-range twenty-year component.

Our team used engineering modeling software, based on Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of the VEC system, to evaluate the current loading of our

system as well as projected loading for a twenty-year period. The basis of the study took the existing electric system model, applied the load forecast for each year, and applied engineering criteria to the model. This allowed our engineers to see how the electric system will respond to load growth.

As expected, the model exposed deficiencies in the electric system. Don't be alarmed, that is part of the process. Engineers can then apply upgrades and additions to the system model that allow them to design a work plan that will meet the engineering criteria required for the system to operate in a reliable manner when load growth occurs. More clearly stated, it allows us to have the physical electric system prepared to operate reliably ahead of load increases. Building or upgrading electric plants can take significant time and resources; therefore, it is important that we execute the work plan on schedule and in a well-planned manner.

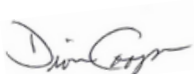
The modeling phase is now complete, and our team is working to finalize the order of projects needed to execute the plan. The CWP will be a living document that will be updated on an ongoing basis. Keep in mind, these are five and twenty-year plans, so you will hear about them a lot in the coming years. Though, the progress will seem slow, rest assured that our team will be busy working and executing the plan to make sure reliable power is available to existing and new members alike.

Looking ahead, VEC is firmly committed to fostering innovation, promoting sustainability, and strengthening the communities we serve. Our vision is to be a leading force in shaping the future of energy. We will continue to explore emerging technologies and advocate for policies that benefit our members, and when possible and practical, we will adapt to the evolving energy landscape.

As we close this chapter and embark on the journey of 2024, I want to express my gratitude to our members, employees, and partners for their continued trust and support. Together, we have accomplished remarkable feats, and together, we will continue to power progress for generations to come.

Thank you for being a part of the Volunteer Energy Cooperative family.

Sincerely,



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CO-OP MEMBER?

Beyond its economic structure, a co-op transcends transactions and creates a sense of belonging, unity, and empowerment. To be a co-op member is to embrace a uniqueness that extends far beyond the boundaries of a typical business arrangement.

At its core, a cooperative is a symphony where each member plays an integral role. The concept of being a co-op member is not limited to a mere financial investment; it's a commitment to shared values and a willingness to support and uplift one another. A co-op reminds us that our strengths multiply when we work together. As a co-op member, you become a thread in the tapestry of cooperation, contributing to a community that values collaboration over competition.

Being a co-op member means being part of a democratic process. Each voice matters, and decisions are made collectively, fostering a genuine sense of ownership. This is more than just having a say; it's having a stake in shaping the direction of the co-op.

As a co-op member, you're not a customer or a shareholder; you're a driving force behind a business that places people before profits. The success of the co-op is your success, and its challenges are your challenges. This intimate connection to the co-op's journey empowers members to take charge, assume leadership roles, and contribute to the community's growth.

Co-op membership brings a sense of connection. You're not dealing with faceless corporations; you're engaging with fellow humans who share your aspirations and dreams. The interactions between co-op members foster genuine relationships, built on trust and the mutual understanding that we're all in this together. From shared celebrations of success to collective problem-solving during rough patches, co-op members become pillars of support for one another.

To be a co-op member is to step into a world where your actions matter, where your voice is heard, and where your dreams are intertwined with the dreams of others. It's a celebration of the human spirit's capacity to create meaningful change through togetherness, a celebration of the collective **"Bringing Power to the Members"** that lights up both the electricity brought by the co-op and the empowerment each member possesses.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP



Youth leadership in a cooperative means young people stepping up to shape the cooperative's future, while staying true to its core values. They learn about how cooperatives work and improve their skills, following the cooperative principle of Education, Training, and Information. These young leaders also contribute to their communities, taking action to address local needs and issues, which aligns with the cooperative principle of Concern for Community. By doing this, they bring fresh ideas and energy, making sure the cooperative grows in a way that benefits everyone.

WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

The Washington Youth Tour, sponsored by Volunteer Energy Cooperative and the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, provides young leaders an opportunity to explore Washington, D.C. Students were able to tour former presidents' homes, visit numerous memorials and monuments, and network with students from other electric cooperatives.

VEC typically sends eight high school juniors and two employees on the tour. The students are selected based on a short story written on the theme that is selected each year. This year's Washington Youth Tour winners were Kallie Hixson (Polk County High School), Isabella Ervin (Chattanooga Central High School), Austin Ashley (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute), Alyssa Enzwiler (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute), Zachary McCloud (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute), Rylee Pyle (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute), Baylee Ray (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute) and Marlee Winningham (Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute).



KALLIE HIXSON



ISABELLA ERVIN



AUSTIN ASHLEY



ALYSSA ENZWILER



ZACHARY MC CLOUD



RYLEE PYLE



BAYLEE RAY



MARLEE WINNINGHAM

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



YLS students pose in Tennessee's State Capitol Building in Nashville.

The Youth Leadership Summit is a partnership between the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and Volunteer Energy Cooperative to promote leadership within our state. Delegates to the annual event receive a hands-on look at state government, learn networking and leadership skills, and develop a better understanding of electric cooperatives.

Two delegates from a high school in our service area are chosen by their guidance counselors and principal to participate. This year, the delegates were Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute's Austin Ashley and Caitlin Crabtree.



Austin Ashley and Caitlin Crabtree attend the 2023 Youth Leadership Summit

4-H ELECTRIC CAMP



VEC Employees, Ty Ratcliff (left) and Kristy Kelly (right), lead students at the 2023 4-H Electric Camp.

4-H Electric Camp is a joint venture of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its member cooperatives, along with the University of Tennessee Extension, the Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association and its municipal power systems, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

At 4-H Electric Camp, students explore the world of energy, electricity, and the basic sciences. This year, students were also able to tour the latest release of electric vehicles.



4-H Electric Camp delegates are educated on the many functions of an electric vehicle.

LILLARD-SHADOW SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship program began in 2003 to honor Willis A. Shadow and J. W. Lillard, founders of the Meigs County Power Association, which would ultimately become Volunteer Energy Cooperative. Four \$2,000 scholarships are awarded to high school seniors each year by VEC using an independent panel of judges.



LINSEY TOMPKINS

Linsey Tompkins is the daughter of Brian and Lora Tompkins. Linsey graduated from Alvin C. York Agricultural Institute with a 4.2 GPA and was ranked second in a class of 106 students. She has served on the Fentress County Junior Fair Board and has volunteered with Operation Christmas Child, the Rotary Pageant, a children's shopping spree for needy children, and the Children's Center strawberry fundraiser. Linsey is described as having a strong work ethic and is commended for her high level of maturity. She is currently studying English at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, TN.



JORJA ANDERSON

Jorja Anderson is the daughter of Brett and Katina Elmore. Jorja graduated from Cumberland County High School with a 4.0 GPA and was ranked second in a class of 216 students. She has volunteered in the Special Olympics, in Upwards Basketball, at Acute Care Clinic, and at Martin Elementary School. Jorja is described by her Chemistry teacher as a "joy to have in the classroom" and as a "dedicated student-athlete." She is currently studying Health Science at Johnson University in Knoxville, TN.



KYNDRA RANDOLPH

Kyndra Randolph is the daughter of Billy and Jennifer Randolph. Kyndra graduated from Meigs County High School with a 4.0 GPA and was ranked second in a class of 112 students. She has volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club, at Meigs South Elementary School, in Vacation Bible School at her church, in LeadUp's Trunk or Treat program, and as a Youth League basketball coach. Kyndra is described as being committed, supportive, and hard-working. She is studying Secondary Education at Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens, TN.



HANNAH JAMES

Hannah James is the daughter of Nicole Johnson. Hannah graduated from Polk County High School with a 4.0 GPA and was ranked fourth in a class of 91 students. She has volunteered at the Life Care Center, in Little League Cheerleading, for Polk County Baseball, and at Cheer Camp. Hannah's cheerleading coach describes her as being talented, intelligent, and dedicated. She is studying Accounting at Lee University in Cleveland, TN.

VEC CUSTOMERS SHARE



In October 2001, Volunteer Energy Cooperative launched VEC Customers Share—a grant program available for organizations that benefit their community. Members of Volunteer Energy Cooperative fund the grant by voluntarily rounding their electric bills up to the next whole dollar.

Although each VEC member only contributes an average of \$6 per year (and never more than \$11.88 annually), thousands of dollars are distributed each month to community groups as a result of the generosity. Scout troops, youth sports, senior citizen groups, PTAs, and civic groups are examples of the types of organizations that benefit from VEC Customers Share funds.

The VEC Customers Share fund is a separate, independent fund from VEC. The fund is designated solely for grant awards. No VEC Customers Share funds are used in the operations or maintenance of electrical infrastructure, and none of the funds are used to pay electric bills.

VEC Customers Share applications are reviewed by an independent board of volunteers from VEC service areas. Neither members of the VEC board of directors nor employees of VEC serve on this board. The VEC Customers Share board volunteers meet once a month to consider grant funding. Since the inception of the program, over \$7.7 million dollars have been awarded.

BROADBAND UPDATE

Volunteer Energy Cooperative's Broadband Progress Update

In today's digitally interconnected world, access to high-speed broadband internet is more crucial than ever before. Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC), your trusted energy provider, has been on a relentless mission to bridge the digital divide and bring reliable broadband services to our communities. As we continue to make strides towards our goal, we're excited to update our members on our progress and the exciting developments on the horizon.

Pioneering Progress: A Timeline of Achievement

VEC embarked on its broadband journey back in 2017, starting with a pilot project in Bradley County, specifically the Camelot Subdivision and Rabbit Valley Road. Since then, we've achieved several significant milestones, thanks to strategic partnerships and grants:

2018: Hamilton County – Birchwood In 2018, we secured a \$1 million matching grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for our Birchwood project in Hamilton County. This project is now fully installed and operational, bringing high-speed internet to the Birchwood community.

2019: McMinn County – Spring Creek Continuing our expansion, we received a \$1.3 million grant from the Broadband Accessibility Program in 2019 for our Spring Creek project in McMinn County. Like Birchwood, this project is also completed and serving the Spring Creek area.

Broadband internet is installed in McMinn County in 2019.



BROADBAND UPDATE

2020: South Meigs and State Emergency Broadband Fund Grants The year 2020 saw VEC securing a \$3.7 million grant from the USDA for the South Meigs project. Approximately half of this project is now completed, and we're on track to finish it before the end of 2023.

Additionally, we received three grants totaling over \$7 million from the State Emergency Broadband Fund, benefitting Hamilton, Roane, and Cumberland counties. All three projects are fully installed and operational, further strengthening our commitment to providing broadband access to underserved areas.

2021: Meigs County – Cottonport In 2021, VEC received a \$647,000 grant from the Broadband Accessibility Program for our Cottonport project in Meigs County. This project has been successfully completed, expanding broadband access to the Cottonport community.

2022: American Rescue Plan Grants Last year, we secured four American Rescue Plan grants totaling over \$15 million for projects in Bradley and Polk counties. Progress is well underway, with one Bradley project more than two-thirds complete and the second Bradley project just initiated.



Additionally, one of the Polk projects has also begun, and we anticipate completing all four projects by the end of 2024.

2022: Local Support In 2022, both the Bradley County Commission and the Hamilton County Commission showed their support for VEC's broadband mission. Bradley County committed \$2 million, a 50% match, for a project in McDonald, while Hamilton County provided \$615,000, a 50% match, for a project on Birchwood Pike. These projects are currently in the design phase.

BROADBAND UPDATE

Looking Ahead: Future Grants and Expansion Plans

We have plans to apply for a \$20 million Last Mile grant and Middle Mile grant exclusive to Polk County. Additionally, we'll be seeking numerous other grants from the state, totaling over \$814 million. These grants will help us continue our mission to expand broadband access in our communities.

The Numbers Speak Volumes To date, VEC has received an impressive \$31,862,372 in grants, demonstrating our commitment to securing resources for our broadband projects. We've also contributed \$15,836,545 in matching funds, showcasing our dedication to bridging the digital divide.

Broadband by the Mile When all ongoing projects are complete, VEC will have installed 1,048 miles of fiber, reaching a staggering 10,336 VEC accounts. This achievement signifies a significant step towards universal broadband access in our region.

In conclusion, Volunteer Energy Cooperative is making strides toward our goal of providing reliable broadband services to all our members and communities. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and commitment as we work together to break down barriers and connect our region to the digital future. Stay tuned for more updates as we move forward on this transformative journey. Together, we're building a brighter and more connected tomorrow.



VEC is awarded the 2020 Reconnect Grant.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Balance sheet as of June 30, 2023.

Assets

Electric plant in service	\$568,061,480
Less depreciation	\$293,344,367
Total	\$274,717,113

Other property and investments	\$15,307,966
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Current and Accrued Assets

Cash and temporary cash	
Investments	\$47,386,905
Accounts receivable	\$16,801,992
Materials and supplies	\$14,027,279
Prepayments	\$890,366
Other current assets	\$1,801,904
Total	\$80,908,447

Deferred Debits

Receivables-conservation	\$4,207,998
Other deferred debits	\$-0-
Total	\$4,207,998

Total assets	\$375,141,524
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Capital and Liabilities

Capital

Membership certificates	\$488,735
Earnings reinvested in system assets	\$314,195,604
Total	\$314,684,339

Long Term Debt	\$6,916,411
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Other Noncurrent Liabilities	\$18,741,085
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Current and Accrued Liabilities

Other notes payable	-0-
Accounts payable	\$18,934,842
Customer deposits	\$7,690,590
Taxes and Interest	\$1,154,215
Other current liabilities	\$1,198,439
Total	\$28,978,086

Deferred Credits	\$5,821,603
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Total Capital and Liabilities	\$375,141,524
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Volunteer Energy Cooperative Statements of Income and Earnings Reinvested in System Assets Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023.

Operating Revenue

Sale of Electric Energy	
Residential	\$173,495,850
Commercial	\$28,150,291
Industrial	\$77,880,582
Street and Other Lighting	\$4,594,647

Total sale of electric energy	\$284,121,370
Other revenue	\$7,420,800
Total operating revenue	\$291,542,170

Operating Expenses

Cost of Power Purchased	
From TVA	\$227,775,395
Distribution and Transmission Expense	\$20,680,950
Customer Accounts Expense	\$4,965,773
Customer Service, Sales, and Information Expense	\$1,160,705
Administrative and General Expense	\$8,289,262
Depreciation	\$19,868,714
Taxes	\$3,052,083
Interest Expense	\$321,320
Total Operating Expense and Interest	\$286,114,202

Operating Income	\$5,427,968
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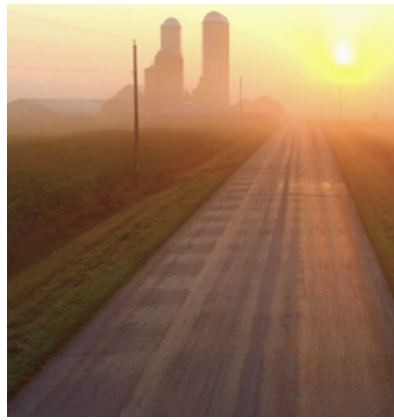
Other Income	\$6,510,756
Non-Operating Expense	\$753,692

Net Income	\$11,185,032
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Earnings Reinvested in System Assets

Beginning of Fiscal Year	\$299,458,010
End of Fiscal Year	\$314,195,604

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, audiotope, 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 :

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax: (202) 690-7442 Email: program.intake@usda.gov.
VEC is an equal opportunity provider.





Bringing Power to the Members
SINCE 1935

“We're not just in the business of distributing electricity; we're in the business of bringing power to the members—both electric power and the power that comes with being part of a cooperative community that cares about your needs and values your input.”

— Dion Cooper, VEC President and CEO



**Powering rural
Tennessee since 1935.**

RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL

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423-476-6571

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