

Monthly Co-op Progress Report - February 2020



VEC Contact/Call Center



"Volunteer Energy, how may I help you?" asks Lisa, VEC call center representative. Lisa is one of nine different customer service representatives that answer the phone at the contact/call center. Contact/call center representatives are the voice of VEC in many cases and the first contact of new members with questions.

Contact/call center

representatives answer the phones for all VEC service centers across the 17 counties in our service area. Representatives train and maintain a varied skill set to assist members. Vice President of Operations, Melvin Holmes says, "I am very proud to get to work with such a dedicated and talented group of people." He went on to say, "I hope with every call, members are getting the service they demand."

The VEC mission is to provide our customers with reliable, safe, and efficient services in a courteous and timely manner at a competitive cost. Contact/call center representatives take this mission and their responsibilities seriously. They want to help. If a representative does not have an answer, they will contact other resources at VEC until they resolve your concern.

Often representatives speak with members monthly as they take bill payments. While never meeting face to face, representatives often connect personally with members. Kristy, who also worked in the dispatch control center, remembers when a customer called to make a payment and asked, "Didn't you used to work the night shift?"

Kristy responded, "Yes, but not in over ten years." Getting to know our members is one of the benefits of being a contact/

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call center representative. Another advantage is staying busy. In 2019, representatives answered approximately 14,000 calls per month.

The Call Center is open for extended business hours: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. - noon. Each representative can take payments, review billing questions, create service repair orders, answer outage questions, and discuss bill payment options.



The faces of the Contact/Call Center from left to right: Susan, Kim, Lisa, Sheila, Shannon, Tammy, and Libby. (Not pictured - Joyce and Kristy)

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.



Your Change Changes Lives

Last week I paid for an item with cash, and my bill came to \$7.98. I handed the cashier \$8.00. When she tried to give me the .02 change, I waved it off to the take a penny, leave a penny dish by the register. Sharing the two cents with the next consumer was an easy choice. In the same way that donating my change was a natural choice, VEC members can easily give their change to the VECustomers Share program.

VECcustomers Share is a program that rounds up your electric bill to the nearest dollar. Combining your contribution with other members' we can provide grants to deserving community organizations. The average amount a customer gives over 12 months is \$5.50. Over the last 19 years, our members' change has added up. Since October 2001, VECcustomers Share has given out \$6,967,908.00 in grants. Board members distribute funds into 11 different service districts: Bledsoe/Rhea, Fentress/Morgan/Scott, Meigs, Roane/Loudon, White/Putnam/Overton, Bradley, Hamilton, Pickett, Cumberland, McMinn, and Polk.

Representing each district is a volunteer board member who attends the monthly grant meeting. The 2020 board members are Bill Blackwell - Polk, Norma Barnham-McMinn, Dana Burgner - Bradley, Lynn Crawford-Hamilton, Rodney Fowler - Roane/Loudon, Gary Gilmore - Rhea/Bledsoe, Mark Justice - Fentress/Morgan/Scott, Jerry Mayo - Cumberland County West, Holly Neal - Cumberland County East, Sharon Parrott - White/Putnam/Overton, Barbara Rector - Pickett, and Joyce Woods - Meigs.

We often say your change changes lives. It is especially true after events like the 2016 tornados in McMinn and Polk counties. VECcustomers Share board members unanimously voted to donate the entire month's grant funding to the impacted counties. I invite you to join with over 80% of our membership and use your change to make a difference.

If you would like to round up your bill, please call your local service center. Grant applications are available at VEC.org/community-programs. You can also pick up an application from your local service center.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

"Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference."

Kathy Calvin

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2018-2019 VECustomers Share Board of Directors

Back row left to right: Rody Blevins - VEC President and CEO, Bill Blackwell - Polk, Holly Neal - Cumberland East, Dana Burgner - Bradley, Norma Barnham - McMinn, Sharon Parrot - White, Putnam & Overton, Lynn Crawford - Hamilton, David Murphy - VEC Vice President of Marketing and Economic Development.

Front row left to right: Barbara Rector - Pickett, Joyce Woods - Meigs, Jerry Mayo - Cumberland West, Rodney Fowler - Roane & Loudon, Gary Gilmore - Rhea & Bledsoe. (Not pictured Mark Justice - Fentress, Morgan & Scott)

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Organizations receiving grants in March

Fentress Hope Foundation	\$1,800	Polk County Youth Baseball	\$500
Pickett County High School Baseball	\$1,000	Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau	\$500
Reader's Choice Club	\$900	CCHS Lady Jets Soccer Booster Club	\$500
5 Loaves Food Pantry	\$900	Friends of the Pickett State Park	\$400
Midway High Bass Club	\$900	Veterans Service Office	\$400
Chattanooga Central High School	\$800	Meigs County Baseball Boosters	\$350
Clearwater Volunteer Fire Department	\$800	STARTS (Supports the ARTS)	\$350
Spring City Middle PBS Team	\$800	Midway Quarterback Club	\$300
TWU Dental Hygiene Club	\$750	Midway Youth Cheerleading	\$300
Relay for Life of Meigs County	\$750	Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$300
Rhea County Community Center	\$750	Cleveland/Bradley Retired Teachers	\$300
Junior Panthers Football League	\$750	McMinn Junior Livestock	\$250
Homestead Community Food Pantry	\$750	Distinguished Young Women of Rhea	\$250
CC TAD Center	\$750	Cleveland/Bradley Community Foundation	\$200
Meigs High School HOSA	\$700	Ocoee Chapter National Society DAR	\$200
Maple Grove Community Seniors	\$500	New Hope Pregnancy Care Center	\$200
Central High School Ruriteen Club	\$500	Bradley County Master Gardeners	\$200
Polk County High School Drama Club	\$500	Bradley County Veterans Honor Guard	\$200
Junior Achievement of Ocoee Region	\$500	Polk County Softball Club	\$150
PCHS Baseball Booster Club	\$500	Chilhowee Middle Agricultural Club	\$150



VECustomers Shares Board Member Sharon Parrot presents James McCracken of the Monterey Mission Center a grant check.

VECustomers Shares is a grant program funded through the rounding up of member's bills to the nearest dollar.

In return for the rounded up change from our members, we contribute to organizations across our 17 county service area. In March, VECustomers Share Grants totaled \$21,600. Organized in 2001, qualifying organizations have received over 6.9 million.

Monterey Mission Center is one of the organizations that received a grant. Established at the end of 2017, MMC gives away food twice a month at Hope and Christ Fellowship. Approximately 250 families receive food at each distribution. In 2018 -2019, they distributed food to 8,404 families. This food reached 12,326 individuals.

MMC is entirely volunteer-based. In the words of MMC Director James McCracken, "We reach over 500 families each month from the donations and grants we receive. Without our volunteers, the money could not go that far." Sharon Parrot is the VECustomers Share board member for Monterey.



MMC volunteers Brooke and Kim take a photo break from sorting food into boxes.

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Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Remember to test them once a month!

Safety starts with you.

MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

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. 2 – Bradley
- District No.6 – Bledsoe and Rhea
- District No. 8 – Cumberland County West

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 25, 2020, 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 1, 2020.

Sammy Norton
Secretary-Treasurer