

Now is the Time to Prepare for Lower Winter Electric Bills

Sometimes we all have pretty short memories. But now is the time to remember how cold last winter was and how high our electric bills were. Now is the time to take steps to keep those winter electricity bills as low as possible. Below are helpful tips from the U.S. Department of Energy. For more information, you can go to <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver> or visit www.vec.org.

Take Advantage of Heat from the Sun

- Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to heat your home naturally, and close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.
- Cover drafty windows.
 - Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months.
 - Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes, or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.

Adjust the Temperature

- When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature.
- Electric heat pumps work more efficiently when you maintain a constant temperature. Don't lower your thermostat unless you plan to keep the lower temperature for eight hours or more. When you raise the temperature back up, increase the thermostat by 2 degrees at a time to lock out the auxiliary/emergency heat. A programmable thermostat can do this for you. Auxiliary/emergency heat is typically much less efficient.

Find and Seal Leaks

- Seal the air leaks around utility cut-through for pipes, gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Add caulk or weather-stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

Maintain Your Heating Systems

- Find out what maintenance is required to keep your heating system operating efficiently.

- Heat Pumps and Furnaces: replace your filter once a month or as needed.
- Wood- and pellet-burning heaters: clean the flue vent regularly and clean the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that your home is heated efficiently.

Reduce Heat Loss from the Fireplace

- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide-open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- When you use the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly -- approximately 1 inch -- and close doors leading into the room. Lower the thermostat setting to between 50° and 55°f.
- If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.
- Purchase grates made of c-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room.
- Add caulking around the fireplace hearth.



Unless it's done properly, using a fireplace to heat your home can cause higher electric bills.

Lower Water Heating Costs

- Water heating can account for 14% to 25% of the energy consumed in your home.
- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°f). You will not only save energy; you avoid scalding your hands.

Lower Holiday Lighting Costs

- Use light-emitting diode - or "led" - holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating your home for the winter holidays.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: www.energy.gov



Giving Back to Our Community

Over the years, you have probably heard or read about Volunteer Energy Cooperative's (VEC) concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart. It's who we are as a co-op.

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission—to be a catalyst for good.

You are probably aware of our VEC Customers Share program, where we take donations from generous members like you who have "rounded up" the amount due on their electric bill to help our communities. Or our Youth Tour program, where we take 8 of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action.

We also have a strong commitment to safety—not just for our employees, but for our community as well. We visit schools to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We hold safety demonstrations at community meetings and other gatherings. We have also held safety training for a local company's maintenance workers.



Vice President of Operations Melvin Holmes spends time speaking with a senior VEC member.

VEC invests in the economic development of the community through an active role in our local Chambers of Commerce. We have also allowed census workers to use our Learning Resource Center for training. Local economic organizations and visiting state and federal representatives have also used our LRC pre-COVID-19.

You will also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports, volunteering at charitable events



*Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative*

(continued on page 3)



VEC Customers Shares is a grant program funded through the rounding up of member's bills to the nearest dollar. The most an individual member would pay within a year is \$11.88. Our members usually average \$5.50 each yearly.

In return for the rounded up change from our members, we contribute to organizations across our 17 county service area. Each month the VEC Customers Share Board meets and distributes the funds collected in the previous month. A board member represents every service area. In September, VEC Customers Share Grants totaled \$27,300.

One of the organizations receiving funding is Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau. Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau is a therapeutic equine center in Crossville. They opened last year and now teach over 100 student lessons monthly, including therapeutic riding for individuals with autism, ADHD, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and various other physical and mental challenges.

Healing Hooves provides no-cost therapeutic equine activities for veterans and their families to help them heal from PTSD, family separation and other issues. They also teach able riders looking to improve their equestrian skills and reduce stress.

As their vision statement so aptly says, "(They) aspire to provide a multitude of opportunities focusing on abilities instead of disabilities by collaborating with others in our community to nurture a commitment to integrity, learning and excellence."



Riding backward and feeling comfortable on the safe gentle horses at Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau.

Organizations receiving grants in September

Healing Hooves of Cumberland Plateau	\$1,750	Invitation Ministries	\$500
Hull-York Chapter #five D.A.V.	\$1,500	McDonald Blackfox Ruritan Club	\$500
Monterey Food Bank	\$1,500	Cedine Ministries	\$500
Hamilton Co. STARS	\$1,500	York Institute Cross-Country Program	\$500
McMinn County Rescue Squad	\$1,500	Helping Hands Helping Hearts	\$500
Tennessee Club Lamb Producers	\$1,500	Meigs County Fishing Team	\$500
Midway High School Football Booster Club	\$1,250	Meigs County Rodeo	\$500
Polk County High School Volleyball Club	\$1,000	Pickett County Veterans Service Office	\$500
Prospect STEM Innovators	\$1,000	Operation REACH	\$500
Crossville Model Railroad Club/UCRS Museum	\$1,000	Boots N Roses Dance Club	\$500
Cumberland County High School (CCHS) Cross-Country	\$1,000	Foundation House Ministries	\$500
Ooltewah High School Basketball Booster Club	\$1,000	Bradley County High School A/V Production	\$500
Polk County Women's Soccer	\$1,000	Monterey Jr. Wildcat Football	\$500
Spring City Chamber of Commerce	\$1,000	Meigs High Cheerleaders	\$500
Midway High Bass Club	\$750	Meigs County Historical Society	\$400
Jones Chapel UMC Celebrate Recovery Ministry	\$500	Meigs County High School Golf Boosters	\$400
		Stone Memorial Gaming Club	\$350
		Cumberland Adult Reading Council	\$200
		Girls Scouts of the Southern Appalachians	\$200

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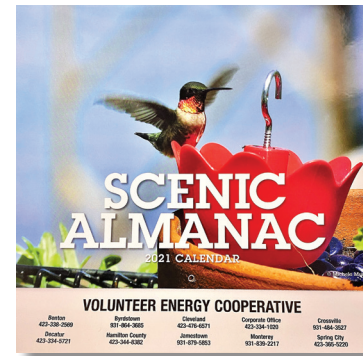


Employees from Benton, Cleveland and Corporate packing and distributing food to families in Benton.

and participating in food drives. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is—after all, without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. We know that our core job is to keep the lights on; but our passion is our community. Because we live and work here too, and we want to make it a better place for all. If there's anything we can do to help you—whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discuss payment plan options during these difficult times—please reach out to us at your local office. Concern for the community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you.

2022 Calendar Contest

Our 2021 Calendar winner is Michele Muniak's image of a Hummingbird. The 2021 calendars are now available at your local service centers. For our 2022 calendar, we are asking for photo submissions from our Co-op members.



To qualify:

- This year we are looking for photos that include barns and must be found within our service area.
- The composition must be horizontal (landscape).
- Digital not printed.
- Submitted by email to jjones@vec.org or by dropping off a flash drive at your local office.
- Have a resolution of 300 dpi or higher and be a minimum of 4mb image. Cropped images often do not have the resolution or size for a quality print.
- Have the photographer's name and contact information along with the location of the photo.
- **Photos must be submitted by March 1, 2021, for the 2022 contest.**
- There is a limit of five photos per account.

We will have a team review the photos submitted for the calendars. If your photo is picked for one of the months, you will receive credit on the last page of the calendar. The overall winning photo will be chosen for the cover of the calendar. If your photo wins the cover, you will also receive a \$50 bill credit certificate.

Financial Statements for VEC For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2020

Assets

Electric plant in service	\$ 503,283,766
Less depreciation	<u>248,039,210</u>
Total	255,244,556

Other property and investments 11,641,798

Current and accrued assets

Cash and temporary cash investments	45,691,964
Accounts receivable	14,440,447
Materials and supplies	5,257,407
Prepayments	714,432
Other current assets	<u>1,652,834</u>
Total	67,757,085

Deferred debits

Receivables-conservation	4,399,554
Other deferred debits	<u>812,121</u>
Total	5,211,675

Total assets \$ 339,855,114

Capital and Liabilities

Capital

Membership certificates	\$ 462,795
Earnings reinvested in system assets	<u>280,528,311</u>
Total	<u>280,991,106</u>

Long term debt 16,070,486

Other noncurrent liabilities 7,800,298

Current and accrued liabilities

Other notes payable	-0-
Accounts payable	18,217,448
Customer deposits	4,889,151
Taxes and interest	1,250,595
Other current liabilities	<u>1,052,235</u>
Total	25,409,429

Deferred credits 9,583,795

Total capital and liabilities \$ 339,855,114

Volunteer Energy Cooperative Statements of Income and Earnings Reinvested in System Assets Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

Operating Revenue

Sale of electric energy	
Residential	\$ 152,332,218
Commercial	23,577,396
Industrial	56,556,432
Street and other lighting	<u>4,100,998</u>

Total sale of electric energy 236,567,044

Other revenue 6,043,449

Total operating revenue 242,610,493

Operating Expenses

Cost of power purchased from TVA	\$ 184,094,478
Distribution and transmission expense	18,129,582
Customer accounts expense	4,087,066
Customer service, sales and information expense	800,155
Administrative and general expense	6,468,071
Depreciation	16,977,155
Taxes	3,068,799
Interest expense	<u>694,051</u>

Total operating expense and interest 234,319,357

Operating income 8,291,136

Other income 1,492,264

Non-Operating Expense 1,228,334

Net Income \$ 8,555,066

Earnings Reinvested in System Assets

Beginning of fiscal year \$ 271,973,244

End of fiscal year \$ 280,528,311



Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment
Effective **October 1, 2020**

1.547¢

For the most current FCA information, visit www.vec.org
Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

