

VEC Supports Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) is proud to announce its commitment to National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, held annually in October. This year's Cybersecurity Awareness Month theme is "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart," aimed to empower individuals and organizations to own their role in protecting their part of cyberspace.

"By increasing awareness and enhancing understanding of basic cybersecurity practices, we can all work together to combat cyberthreats," said President and CEO Rody Blevins. "The human element is oftentimes the biggest cybersecurity risk. Each of us has a critical role to play to ensure the security of our personal and professional data."

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month is spearheaded by the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The message of this year's theme, 'If you Connect it, Protect it,' dives into the importance of keeping connected devices safe and secure from outside influence. With more people spending time at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever before, connected devices are an integral part of how we communicate and access services essential to our well-being. Data collected from these devices can include highly-specific information about a person or business, which can be exploited by bad actors for criminal gain.

Cybersecurity Awareness Month aims to shed light on these security vulnerabilities, while offering guidance surrounding simple security measures to limit the susceptibility of threats for common devices.

Now in its 17th year, Cybersecurity Awareness Month continues to build momentum and impact with the ultimate goal of providing everyone with the information they need to stay safer and more secure online. VEC is proud to support this far-reaching online safety awareness and education initiative.

For more information about Cybersecurity Awareness Month and how to participate, visit staysafeonline.org/cybersecurity-awareness-month/. You can also follow and use the official hashtag #BeCyberSmart on social media channels.



Tip of the Month

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The average household owns 24 electronic products, which account for roughly 12% of home energy use. When shopping for electronics, consider purchasing ENERGY STAR®-certified products, which can be 70% more efficient than conventional models.

Source: www.energystar.gov



Power On: October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our community—and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is "concern for community." To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC), and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we "Power On." Keeping this theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving our community.

Who could have imagined in March that COVID-19 would amount to a test of our community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we've all been challenged to operate differently, and VEC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

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Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Rain or shine,
day or night,
we're here for you.
October is National Co-op Month.
#PowerOn

Then. Now. Always.
We're proud to power your life.
October is National Co-op Month.

#PowerOn



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 August, VEC Customers Share Grants totaled \$32,500.

The Caring Place is a non-profit organization in Bradley County, Tennessee. Their mission is to provide access to the basic resources and opportunities for families in need. Each month the Caring Place serves over 1300 individual households with food, clothing and or social services. They have 150 volunteer positions and currently have 134 active volunteers. In addition to providing food at The Caring Place, during the school year, they provide food-insecure school-aged students with a Sac Pac each week. They also offer free social work to help connect individuals to available and appropriate community service. Their Getting Ahead Program is a small group experience that allows individuals the change to work and learn together to create an effective path out of poverty.

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Volunteers pack food for families in need as well as preparing Sac Pac's for school-age children.

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As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our employees began working on staggered schedules to maintain separation. Some staff worked remotely. In the office, we limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We also adjusted our walk-in availability to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. We think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements. We also offered payment assistance through our Project Deserve program, a fund made possible through your kind donations.

In addition to Project Deserve, VEC Customers Share Program donated all of April and May's funds to area food banks. In partnership with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the Share's program donated \$53,865, and TVA gave \$34,180. In total, our foodbanks received \$88,045 to help with the increased need due to Covid-19.

I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast about VEC but to explain how much we care about this community—because we live here too.

We've seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that's what communities do. While the difficulties caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I'm encouraged to see how everyone is pulling together.

In 1935, VEC was built by the community to serve the community, and that's what we'll continue to do – Power On.

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Organizations receiving grants in August

Mrs. Rena's Math & Science Club	\$3,000	Meigs North Elementary PTO	\$800
Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Dept Inc.	\$2,500	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$800
We Care Safe Haven Home	\$2,500	Christian Counseling Center of Cumberland County	\$750
Monterey High School Readers Choice Club	\$1,850	Character Counts Community Initiative	\$700
The Caring Place	\$1,500	Mountain Valley Blue Star Mothers TN4	\$700
Fentress County Food Bank	\$1,500	Imagination Library - Meigs County Chapter	\$700
Great Smoky Mountain Council - Boy Scouts of America	\$1,350	Miracle Lake Inc.	\$700
Monterey Anglers Booster Club	\$1,150	The Avalon Center Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Program	\$625
Boys & Girls Club of the Ocoee Region - Andor Program Bradley Co.	\$1,000	Martin Junior Beta Club	\$625
Polk County High School Cross Country GROW	\$1,000	Stone Memorial Wrestling Booster Club	\$600
UCHRA/CASA of Cumberland County	\$925	York Institute Golf Program	\$500
Midway Quarterback Club	\$900	Meigs County High School Golf Boosters	\$400
Hospice of Cumberland County Inc.	\$875	STARTS (Support The ARTS)	\$375
Fairfield Glade Lions Club	\$875	Tennessee Club Lamb Producers	\$300
Midway High School Baseball Boosters	\$850	Jones Chapel (UMC) Celebrate Recovery Ministry	\$200
Meigs Middle School PTO	\$800	US History Club - National History Day	\$150



CO-OP MONTH FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?

Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about a few ways co-ops are unique! Use the word bank if you need help.



- Co-ops and their members work together toward a common _____.
- Co-ops are _____ organizations, so they understand the communities they serve.
- All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative _____.
- Concern for _____ is the seventh cooperative principle.
- Co-ops don't have customers; we have _____.
- Co-ops are _____ by the members they serve.

WORD BANK

LED LOCAL GOAL MEMBERS
LOCAL PRINCIPLES COMMUNITY

Answer Key: 1) goal 2) local 3) principles 4) community 5) members 6) led

Tennessee Valley Authority

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

1.377¢

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

