

VEC was Founded with the Goal of Creating Positive Effects in Communities

“When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.”

– George Washington Carver

In the early 1930s, only four out of every 100 farms in Tennessee were served with any form of electricity. Except for a few privately owned Delco battery power systems, the citizens of Meigs County lived and worked under primitive conditions compared to their counterparts in the larger towns and cities.

In 1933, Willis A. Shadow, University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension Agent for Meigs County, saw new hope for the residents along the Tennessee River with the enactment by Congress of the Tennessee Valley Authority Act. Mr. Shadow began talking “electricity” throughout the county. County Attorney J. W. Lillard joined the ranks, agreeing to furnish Mr. Shadow with legal advice without a fee. Enthusiasm gained momentum until a mass meeting of 500 citizens at the Meigs County Courthouse resulted in the May 29, 1935 formation of the Meigs County Power Association, Incorporated, which later became the Meigs County Electric Membership Corporation and today is known as Volunteer Energy Cooperative. The first lines erected in Meigs County were energized on August 6, 1936.

In 1939, just seven years after the Tennessee Electric Power Company refused to provide electric service to Meigs County, the rural cooperative entered into a contract with TVA to purchase the power company’s distribution properties in McMinn, Bradley, Meigs, Polk, Roane, Rhea, Cumberland, Putnam and Fentress Counties for \$276,700. Recognizing it would soon be serving an area far larger than Meigs County, the corporation changed its name to Volunteer Electric Cooperative.

Today, Volunteer Energy Cooperative is one of the largest rural electric cooperatives in the nation in terms of the area we serve. VEC delivers electricity to more than 120,100 members in all or part of 17 Tennessee counties with more than 10,000 miles of power lines from Georgia to Kentucky borders.



First Line Crew - An early group of employees poses in front of their trucks and the VEC office in Decatur.

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. 3 – Hamilton
 District No. 4 – McMinn
 District No. 7 – Roane & Loudon

As set forth in Article IV, Section 4.06, a member 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 24, 2021, 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 4, 2021.

Sammy Norton
 Secretary-Treasurer



Rody Blevins
 President/CEO
 Volunteer Energy
 Cooperative

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Filing

For many years, TVA and VEC have shared the common goal of providing the lowest-cost power to our consumers. However, in 2011 TVA implemented a new long-term financial strategy that included a base rate increase of 2.5% per year for 10 years. TVA planned to use this annual rate increase to help pay down its corporate debt. VEC took issue with the TVA debt reduction plan for one reason: it was too aggressive. VEC calculations showed TVA would ultimately reach its debt target three years ahead of schedule. Despite our protest, TVA moved forward with its financial plan which led to reaching the debt goal much sooner than anticipated. Ultimately, the TVA Board of Directors recognized the rate increases scheduled for 2019 and 2020 were no longer needed, and in response discontinued the final two planned increases. Due to its elevated rate, TVA produced record revenues ranging between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion for three straight years. By comparison, before implementation of the long-term financial plan TVA revenues ranged between \$400 million and \$500 million each year. VEC believes that TVA should now consider reducing rates, something TVA so far has refused to do.

TVA insists its rates are among the lowest in the nation, but various studies have proven this untrue. VEC partnered with a regional strategist, EnerVision, to compare TVA rates against other national energy suppliers. VEC also compared the EnerVision data against the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s annual report. Both data sets reveal the same fact, TVA rates are now among the highest in the Southeastern United States. Consequently, VEC set out to negotiate a contract with TVA, but they refused to negotiate on anything. Subsequently, VEC submitted a request for proposal (RFP) to purchase electricity from other regional power suppliers. VEC, along with other local power companies, recently filed a complaint with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The complaint requested that FERC require TVA to provide transmission access to VEC along with other local power companies. Allowing unbundled access to the TVA transmission network would expedite VEC’s ability to purchase power from another supplier. Unbundled access is already a national requirement of every other major United States power supplier. The only exception to this rule is the TVA transmission network, which remains closed to all outside companies securing TVA’s unregulated monopoly over the Tennessee Valley.



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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



The VEC Customers Share program funded community service grants totaling \$33,100 in March. Since the inception of the program in October 2001, over \$7.2 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.

Organizations receiving grants in March

North Cumberland Elementary PTO	\$2,750	Helping Hands Ministry	\$750
Friends of Harrison Bay State Park	\$2,000	Veterans and First Responders Memorial	\$750
First Baptist Church Food Pantry	\$1,750	Polk County Youth Cheerleading	\$750
Brydstown-Pickett Co. Chamber	\$1,500	Byrdstown-Pickett Co. Chamber	\$600
Friends of the Art Circle Library (Children's Program)	\$1,500	Charleston-Calhoun-Hiwassee Historical Society	\$550
Cherokee Removal Park Blythe Ferry	\$1,500	Quarter Back Club of Meigs County	\$500
Midway High School STEM	\$1,500	Stone Memorial High School (SMHS) Volleyball Team	\$500
York Institute Baseball Program	\$1,500	Iglesia Cristiana Un Nuevo Comienzo	\$500
Hwy 58 Volunteer Fire Dept.	\$1,000	Para Todos	\$500
Woodsong Forest School	\$1,000	Valley Christian Academy Parent/ Teacher Fellowship	\$500
Monterey High School Cheerleaders	\$1,000	Meigs Fury 12U Softball	\$500
Grown Wings of Love Food Pantry	\$1,000	Meigs Crush 9U Baseball	\$500
Roane County High School Key Club	\$1,000	Fairfield Glade Bass Club	\$500
Calhoun High School Alumni Association	\$1,000	Roane County Rescue Squad	\$500
Rhea County Community Center	\$1,000	Monterey Baseball Boosters	\$500
Clear View Baptist Church Snack Packs	\$750	Distinguished Young Women of Rhea County	\$250
Cleveland Family YMCA	\$750	Cleveland United	\$200
Chilhowee Middle School Football Program	\$750		
Polk County High School Men's Soccer Team	\$750		
Tri-County Center	\$750		

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Instead of working with VEC on a new contract, TVA has decided to fight the FERC complaint, and to attack and discredit the power systems included in the FERC filing. TVA has been distributing an article from a Memphis newspaper that includes commentary from a businessman who described the unintended consequences of his local power company leaving TVA. Paducah Power Supply left TVA in 2009 and contracted with a company to complete the construction of an unfinished coal plant. Construction of the new plant resulted in significant budget overages, which led to an increase in Paducah's electric rates. The decision to build a coal-fired power plant was risky, and VEC would never consider such an ill-advised investment. Additionally, the electric markets have changed considerably since 2009. Because of deregulation, most electric rates have fallen, while the TVA rates continue to climb. Should VEC gain unbundled transmission access, the cooperative could pursue multiple power supply options. Based on our RFP from last summer, the best option would save VEC members approximately \$50 million per year. This savings equates to a 25% reduction of the retail rate. The estimated savings would not require investment in any new generation facilities. VEC would simply buy power from a different supplier. To reiterate, we have made multiple requests to TVA management to discuss establishing a new contract between TVA and VEC that would give VEC more flexibility to help our members. As recently as December 2020, VEC leadership met with the TVA CEO and the TVA Board Chairman. Again, they refused to negotiate on any part of the power contract.

VEC remains dedicated to our original mission, to provide reliable and low-cost power to our members. TVA used to share this vision. Now, TVA has secured 20-year evergreen contracts with 142 of the 153 power companies they serve. That contract gives TVA complete control over the electric rates with no room for negotiation. We hope the action we have taken at FERC will encourage TVA to do what is right for the Valley and lower electric rates. Regardless of the outcome, VEC will continue to fight for the interests of our members.



Stay in the Know

At Volunteer Energy Cooperative, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our consumer-members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages, text messages or email, *if* we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cell phone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize that in providing your contact information to the co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by VEC to send important information to you.

Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective

April 1, 2021

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

