

Stay Back and Stay Safe

by Anne Prince

Working with electricity can be a dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. In fact, *USA Today* lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why for Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) safety is the number one priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews' safety and that of the community above all else.

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, our consumer-members. Equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance – and your help!

For Volunteer Energy Cooperative safety is the number one priority.

Distractions can be deadly.

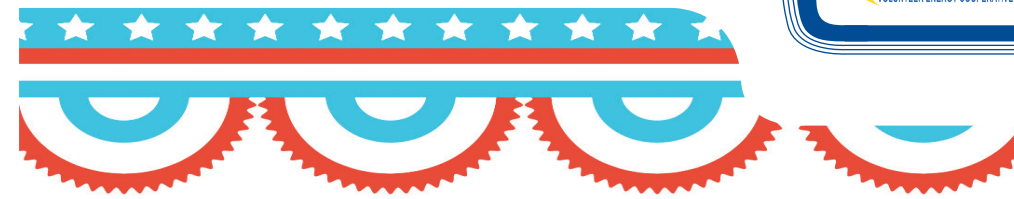
While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a lineworker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while lineworkers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can't distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet "supervising" the job.

Slow down and move over.

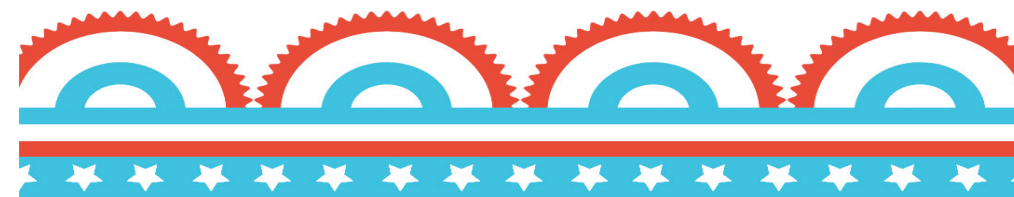
In addition to giving lineworkers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help all of us.

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

Have a safe and happy Independence Day.



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy Cooperative

Preparing for the Summer Storm Season

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the water and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will

(continued on page 2)

help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check VEC's SmartHub app or website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings, and download our SmartHub app to stay abreast of power restoration efforts and other important co-op news and information.

I hope we don't experience severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Tennessee's weather. At VEC, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.



Apple app



Android app



Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective

June 1, 2021

1.878¢



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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

The Winners - 2021 Washington Youth Tour Short Story Contest

Each year, Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) takes high school Juniors to Washington, D.C., as part of the Electric Cooperative Washington Youth Tour to learn about history, government and leadership. Health concerns prevented the 2021 trip, so VEC presented scholarships to this year's winners.

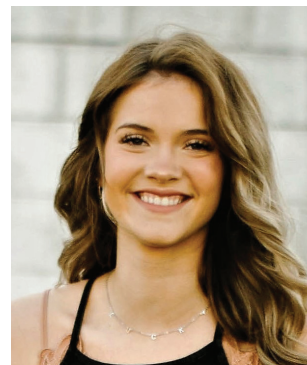
Six students from across VEC's service area were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to the college or trade school of their choice. Keirra Asberry of York Institute, Gracie Hall of Clarkrange High School, Tyler Hall of Cumberland County High School, Serenity Nolan of Monterey High School, Haylee Shoffner of Rhea County High School, and Teagan Sullivan of Stone Memorial are this year's recipients.

"Whether it be through the Youth Tour program or scholarships, supporting the future of these students and the communities they represent is an investment that will create a brighter future for us all," says Julie Jones, Communications and PR Coordinator. "We are excited to see them grow their talents and knowledge. The entire team at VEC is rooting for their success, and we are confident they will each find ways to impact our communities in the future."

Students could enter the contest by writing a creative short story about the various ways VEC is investing in a brighter future for the communities it serves.



Keirra Asberry
York Institute



Gracie Hall
Clarkrange HS



Tyler Hall
Cumberland County HS



Serenity Nolan
Monterey HS



Haylee Shoffner
Rhea County HS



Teagan Sullivan
Stone Memorial



The VEC Customers Share program funded community service grants totaling \$27,000 in May. 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 May

10th Judicial District Recovery Court	\$2,000	First Christian Church Byrdstown	
Byrdstown Masonic Lodge #496	\$2,000	Grief Support Group	\$500
Salem Baptist Church Youth Dept	\$1,500	Monterey High School Project Graduation	\$500
Meigs County Fair Association	\$1,500	Meigs County High School Lady Tigers	
Shepherd's Little Flock	\$1,250	Basketball Booster Club	\$500
Fleet Reserve Association (Branch 294)	\$1,250	Toys for Children	\$500
Friends of Harrison Bay State Park	\$1,000	Character Counts Community Initiative	\$500
The Art Guild at Fairfield Glade	\$1,000	Monterey Junior High Boys Basketball	
Art Circle Public Library Foundation	\$1,000	Team 2021-2022	\$500
Ooltewah High School Track Team	\$800	The Exchange Club Stephens Center	\$500
PHS Tech Club	\$750	STARTS (Support The ARTS)	\$500
Calhoun United Methodist Church Food Pantry	\$750	Midway Quarterback Club	\$500
Table Graces Community Food Bank	\$750	Midway Youth Cheerleading Organization	\$500
Chaos Soccer Club	\$750	Iglesia Cristiana Un Nuevo Comienzo	
Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Dept	\$700	Para Todos	\$250
Polk County High School Civics Club	\$625	Accelerated Reader (AR) Program -	
Polk County High School Cross Country Teams	\$625	Meigs South	\$250
Polk County High School Drama Club	\$625	Downtown Summer Nights	\$250
South Polk Elementary Outreach		Champ Ferguson/Standing Stone Camp	
Communication Committee	\$625	#2014 SCV	\$250
Friends of Fentress Co. Imagination Library	\$500	American Legion Post 99	\$250
Pall Mall Fire Department	\$500	Family Promise of Bradley County	\$250