

Staying Warm Without Cranking Up the Heat

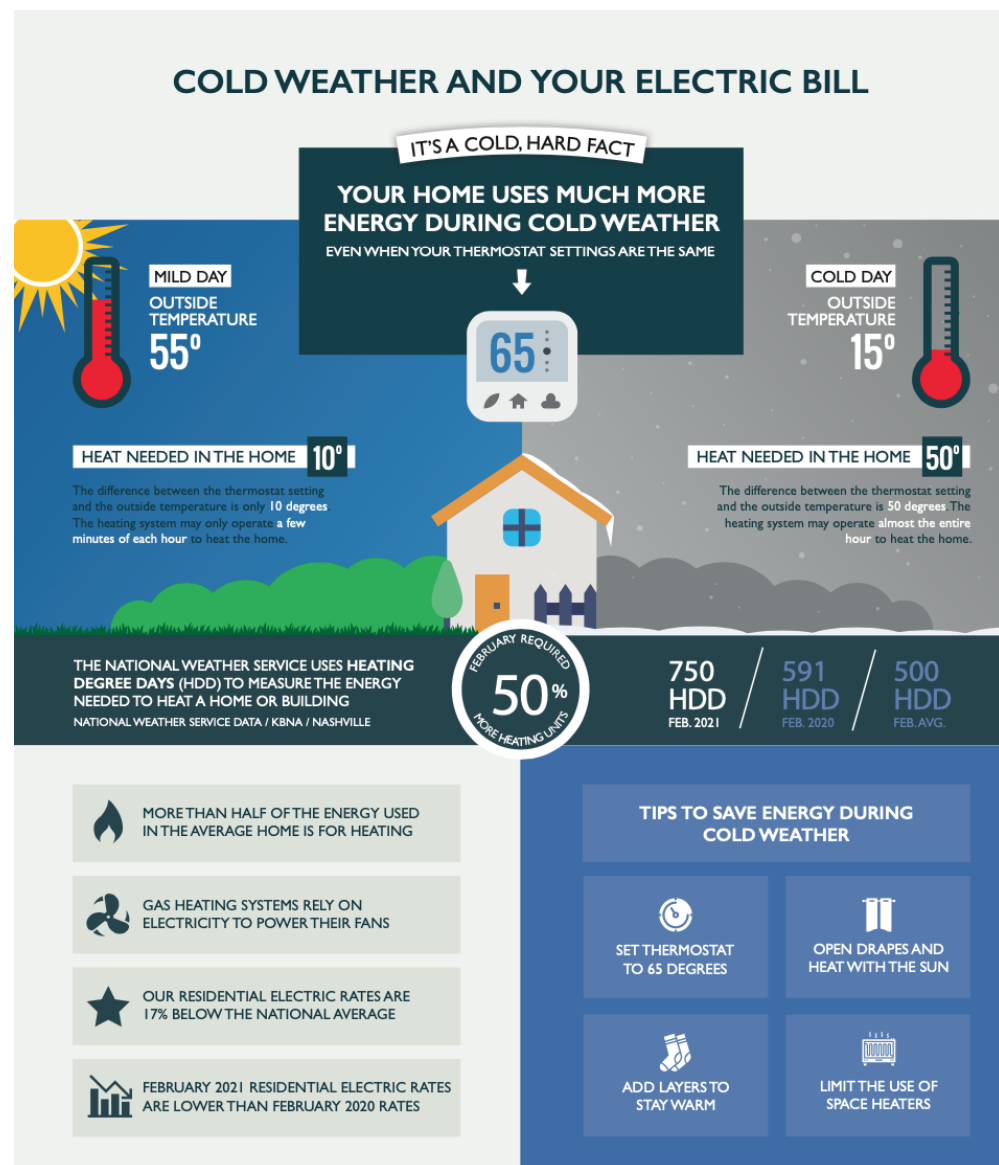
Stop shivering indoors just because it's cold outside. You don't have to crank up the heat to stay warm on winter's frostiest days.

First, bundle up. Dressing in layers is a great way to keep yourself comfortable without extra heat. Here are 5 more ways to make your home and yourself more comfortable during winter without increasing your energy use:

1. Identify places in your walls where heated air can escape your home and cold air can get in. Look around windows and doors. Find penetrations on the indoor side of exterior walls where cables, cords and wires come into the house. Search for cracks around baseboards. Check the hatch that leads to the attic. Then caulk liberally.
2. Invest in a smart thermostat that allows you to program it to lower the heat when you go to bed, raise it just before everyone wakes up, turn itself down again when the family leaves for the day, and warm up the house before you return at dinnertime. You could save 10% or more on your heating bill.
3. Maintain your heating system. Hire a tech to inspect yours for inefficiencies or hidden problems. Clean or replace your furnace filters regularly.
4. Scatter area rugs in rooms without carpets. They can prevent heat from escaping through the floor. They also feel warmer to walk on.
5. Open the drapes on sunny days to let natural daylight and the sun's warmth into your rooms. Close them when the sun sets and it gets cooler outdoors.



Cold Weather and Your Electric Bill



Rody Blevins
President/CEO
Volunteer Energy
Cooperative

Fiber Broadband Status Update

This year we celebrate the 85th annual Membership Meeting of Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC). Although offered through a nontraditional format, observance of the meeting means two things have happened: another year of operation has been successfully completed, and we are looking to VEC's future once again.

Over the past few years, one of VEC's main focuses has been bringing fiber broadband internet services to our members. In 2017, we took initial steps to implement a broadband pilot in Bradley County. I'm pleased to tell you that our broadband service has expanded from the pilot in Bradley County to include Hamilton; Meigs; McMinn; Roane; Cumberland; and Putnam counties, and it continues to grow.

Since the initiation of our broadband pilot, VEC has been awarded seven grants totaling over \$13.6 million. These grants have been used to aid the cooperative in the cost of constructing our fiber optic network. We currently have two projects that are still ongoing, both in Meigs County. In early 2020, the USDA awarded VEC a \$3.7 million Reconnect Grant. This grant will provide service to over 2,000 homes and businesses in southern Meigs County. Currently, an engineer firm is working to finalize the details of the project design, and we hope to start construction soon. In late 2020, the state of Tennessee also awarded VEC a \$650,000 Broadband Accessibility Grant. This grant will provide service to 390 homes and businesses in the Cottonport community of western Meigs County. The contractor for this project is currently working on the project make-ready. Construction of these two projects will begin in late 2021 or early 2022. The state of Tennessee has announced that \$500 million of the American Rescue Plan money will be made available to local Tennessee providers through a competitive grant process, which is already underway.

VEC has plans to submit eight proposed projects which may be awarded funds from the American Rescue plan, including projects in Bradley, Cumberland, Hamilton, Meigs, McMinn, Polk, Rhea, and Roane counties. These eight projects combined represent over \$78 million of total fiber optic broadband expansion. If awarded, the projects will also provide new access to over 12,000 homes and businesses across the VEC service area. We will continue to update our members with the progression of the fiber broadband projects.

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STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, disability, or age. Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed at USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complain form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, Fax: (202) 690-7442, Email: program.intake@usda.gov. VEC is an equal opportunity provider.



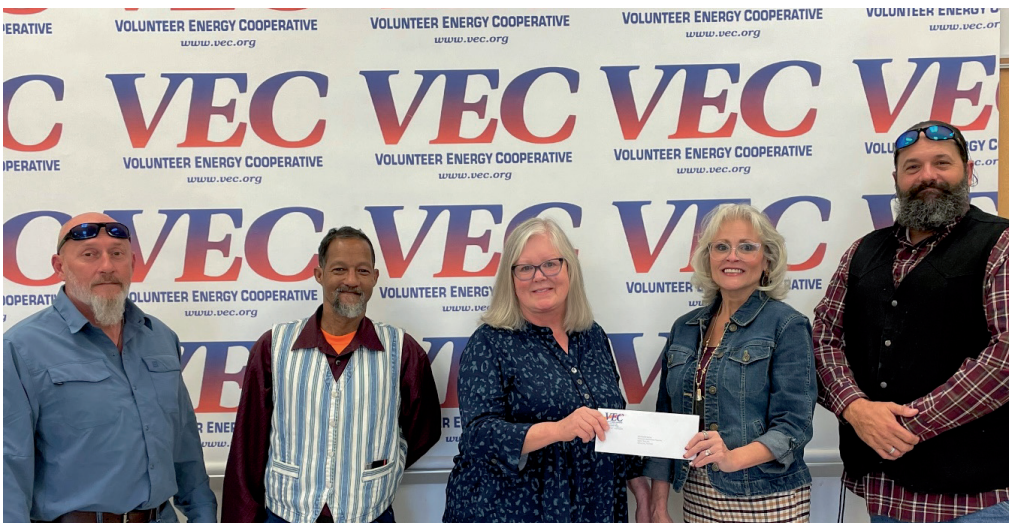


VEC Customers Shares is a grant program funded through the rounding up of members' bills to the nearest dollar. The most an individual member would pay within a year is \$11.88. Our members' yearly average is usually about \$5.50 each.

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 November, VEC Customers Share Grants totaled \$24,000.

Organizations receiving funds included Rock House Ministries (\$1,000). Rock House Ministries is a charity organization that offers free faith based long term residential recovery for life controlling issues. Mary Ann Malone, Director of Operations says, "We are very grateful [to receive this grant] and to be able to help save lives and save souls."

Since the inception of the program in October 2001, VECustomers Share members have awarded over \$7.3 million in grants. 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.



VECcustomers Shares Rhea County and Bledsoe County Board member Eddie Galloway (middle) presented a check to Pastor James Downs, Mary Ann Malone, Justin Bartley, and Dallas Miller - Rock House Ministries Representatives.

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In addition to all the broadband work for our members, we continue to upgrade and rebuild the VEC electric grid. We currently have under construction rebuilding of our high voltage transmission lines in Cumberland, Fentress, and McMinn counties. These multi-million dollar projects will improve reliability of the VEC system for decades into the future. VEC continues to invest over \$20 million a year on infrastructure for our power grid.

In closing, I want to say thank you for your support of VEC and our employees as we continue to work for the lowest power cost for our members.



New VEC Customers Share Board Members



Lisa Mantooh
Bradley County



Eddie Galloway
Rhea & Bledsoe
Counties



Roger Thackston
Cumberland County
- West



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Organizations receiving grants in November

Lake Tansi Police Department	\$2,000	HOSA Club (Health Occupations of Students of America (Polk County HS)	\$650
Brydstown Angel Tree Project	\$1,500	Iglesia Cristiana Un Nuevo Comienzo Para Todos	\$600
Rhea of Hope Food Pantry	\$1,250	Shenandoah Academy	\$600
E.G. Fisher Library	\$1,200	Martin Elementary School Health	\$500
Salem Baptist Church Food Pantry	\$1,000	Cumberland County Community Chorus	\$500
York Elementary Junior Cheer Squad	\$1,000	American Cancer Society - Hamilton County	\$500
Monterey Lions Club Inc.	\$1,000	UCHRA CASA of Cumberland County	\$500
Burks Elementary School Third Grade Booster	\$1,000	MARA Medical Ministry	\$500
Fentress County Fair Association	\$1,000	Pickett County Coordinated School Health	\$500
Ooltawah High School Boys Basketball Booster Club	\$800	Meigs County Retired Teachers	\$500
Midway Hall of Fame	\$800	CASA of Bradley and Polk Counties	\$400
McMinn County High School Girls Basketball	\$800	Bradley Bears Baseball Team Boosters	\$400
Eagle Dugout Club	\$750	Gamma Zeta Teachers Society	\$350
Tiger Sharks Basketball Club	\$750	Roane State Community College Foundation	\$200
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 257	\$700	Meigs Crush 10 U Baseball	\$200
Happy Hearts Seniors	\$700	Meigs Fury 14 U Softball	\$200
Benton Food Fund Booster Club	\$650		

Tennessee Valley Authority

Residential & Outdoor Lighting Fuel Cost Adjustment Effective

December 1, 2021

2.556¢

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

Volunteer Energy Cooperative is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.



Co-op Day of Service

In October, as part of national Co-op Month, co-ops across the nation participated in Co-op Day of Service. Co-op Day of Service was founded to give co-ops an opportunity to serve their communities. This year, Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) chose to collect and donate money, food, and school supplies to local food banks and schools. \$315 and over 200 pounds of food and school supplies were donated to seven different food banks and 1 elementary school across VEC's service area. "We are so blessed to have VEC. We have been looking forward to this day for so long," said Susie Hairrell, Director of Meigs Ministries in Decatur. "This will help out so many families," continued Hairrell.

VEC feels blessed and honored to be able to give to the underprivileged because "To whom much is given, much will be required." Co-op Day of Service occurs annually, and we encourage members to donate to the project and/or organization chosen for next year. To find out more information about ways you can help your community, please visit VEC's website at <https://vec.org/community-programs/>.

