

Average Monthly Payment Plan — Page 4**Opportunities for Students in 2016****Apply Today!****YouthPower Energy Camp****Essay Topic**

Why is electricity important in my life?

Essay Guidelines

300-500 words

Students may write the essay individually or in a two-person team.

Essay Deadline

March 7, 2016

Washington Youth Tour**Essay Topic**

Who owns VVEC and what are the advantages of co-op ownership?

Essay Guidelines

600-800 words

Essay Deadline

March 7, 2016

Test Information

Contact Misti Frazier at VVEC at 918-371-2584, ext. 6226 (Mon.-Fri., 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.) or at MFrazier@vvec.com

YouthPower Energy Camp

Each year, eighth-graders from across Oklahoma are chosen to attend the YouthPower Energy Camp, a leadership development camp held at Canyon Camp in Hinton, Okla.

During the four-day experience, chaperones from Oklahoma's electric cooperatives teach students about leadership, community development, electrical safety and the importance of rural electrification in their community. Participants learn about electric cooperatives as they form their own "coke and candy co-op," tour a generation and transmission cooperative, climb a utility pole and ride in a bucket truck. Friendships are formed as students take part in fun activities including swimming, hiking, and volleyball tournaments.

YouthPower Energy Camp will be held May 31-June 3, 2016. See sidebar for application details.

Washington Youth Tour

Two high school juniors have the opportunity to represent VVEC as delegates on the annual, all-expense-paid Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Students will join other delegates from Oklahoma and across the U.S. at the nation's capital as

they learn about electric cooperatives, experience American history, witness the government in action, meet elected officials, and more.

Youth Tour will take place June 10-16, 2016. Applicants can either write an essay or take a test. (See sidebar for application details.) VVEC will select one essay winner and one test winner. The co-op will also select four runners-up: two \$750 scholarship winners and two \$500 scholarship winners.

More Information

- An Energy Camp information packet is available from eighth-grade English teachers in VVEC's service territory
- A Youth Tour information packet is available from high school English teachers in VVEC's service territory
- Download the information packet at www.vvec.com
- Contact Misti Frazier at VVEC at 918-371-2584, ext. 6226 (Mon.-Fri., 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.) or at MFrazier@vvec.com

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General Manager

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VVEC Headquarters

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Mailing address

P.O. Box 219, Collinsville, OK 74021

Phone number

918-371-2584 or 1-800-870-5948

Office hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.,
Monday through Friday

Power Circuit Editor

Laura Araujo

Winter Residential Rates

October through March usage,
November through April billing

Customer Charge	\$25.00
Energy Charge	
1st 1,000 kWh	\$0.0738/kWh
Over 1,000 kWh	\$0.0678/kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 55.993 mills per kWh.

In addition, a gross receipts tax of 2 percent of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes if applicable.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

New Employees Enjoy Serving Members

Vickie Limbocker is an Oklahoma native and an 18-year Collinsville resident who began working at VVEC as a cashier in April 2015.

“We have really good members and a great group of people who work here,” she says.

A mom of four, Limbocker stays busy with her kids’ school activities. She also serves on the board of the Miss Collinsville scholarship pageant and attends Life Church in Owasso. In her free time she enjoys going to the lake and fishing.

Jennifer Michael, a Collinsville resident and VVEC member, began working as a cashier at the co-op in May 2015.

Born and raised in the Vinita area, Michael and her family moved to Collinsville in 2011.

Michael and her husband have



New VVEC employees Jennifer Michael (left) and Vickie Limbocker (right) work as cashiers. Photo by Misti Frazier

two sons who are active in FFA, football and wrestling. She enjoys camping, fishing and antiquing in her spare time.

“I love working here,” Michael says. “I thoroughly enjoy interacting with our members and my co-workers are great too.”

What to do if Your Power Goes Off

1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers. Every service is different. You may have fuses or circuit breakers in your house, on the side of your house, under your meter, or in all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.
2. Call the co-op at 371-2584, or 1-800-870-5948 if the call is long distance. Have your account number, name as it appears on the account, and address handy to give to the dispatcher. If you should get a recording, please don't hang up; leave your information. It will be retrieved and given to the correct department. Every message is answered.

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Reporting Outages and Accessing Outage Updates

By Randy Riddle

Some winter storms can be devastating to an electric distribution system. A snowstorm, unless a very heavy, wet snow, usually does not cause a lot of trouble. There may be occasional outages that are not actually caused by the snow, but restoration efforts may be slowed by the snow.

The real problem is ice. When the ice begins we may have some minor outages caused by the high voltage tracking along the ice on weak or damaged equipment; this could blow fuses or trip breakers. The restoration times are also slowed by the road and work conditions. As the ice gets heavier, large trees—even those out of the rights-of-way—will lean and sag because of the weight and get on the lines and blow fuses or trip breakers. As the ice gets heavier the limbs or lines may start breaking, causing a domino effect. When a heavily strained pole gets broken several more may break on either side.

A wide-spread power outage like in past ice storms can cause problems on many levels. Broken lines, broken power poles and large trees on lines covered with ice are just a few of the problems. Getting to the outages and making repairs when everything is covered in ice makes the work much more hazardous.

Our communications between crews and the office is much improved since our last



Powerlines are weighed down during an ice storm.
Photo by Randy Riddle

major storm in 2007. Our two-way radio system has been replaced with a state-of-the-art digital system that allows truck-to-truck communications anywhere on our system as well as vehicle location technology. This will allow for more efficient and safe restoration procedures.

Our communication with our membership has also improved since 2007. Our website was actually pushed out early because of the storm and there were a lot of bugs to work out. The website we use today is much more user-friendly, with easy access to outage information and other helpful information.

Our Facebook page is another means of communication we have added since 2007. We use it as a tool to update our members on current events at VVEC, including outage

information.

Our phone system has been upgraded as well. We have 46 incoming lines to our offices entering our building via fiber optics. The only issue with the digital signal is that when all 46 lines are busy during a large outage members no longer get a busy signal. Sometimes members may get a message that the call cannot be completed or the call may get disconnected. This has been frustrating for some of our members during outages wondering if their outage has been reported. When we have a large outage affecting a few hundred to several thousand members and they are all trying to call, it is very easy to tie up 46 lines.

An alternate way to report outages is the SmartHub application, available to all of

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our members, either through our website or via smart phone. With SmartHub members can instantly see if their account is affected by an outage that has been reported. If the outage has not been reported the member can report it from the app within seconds.

We understand a lot of our members want to talk to a person to report and get outage information, but answering hundreds or even thousands of calls during an outage is very difficult.

Reporting when a large outage will be restored is largely a guess in most cases. When Mother Nature creates havoc with our lines, it is very difficult to estimate the time it will

take to restore power. In more cases than not when a storm does damage to a line it does it in several places. It is difficult to know how long each repair will take. We try to let members know when we know. We hate to publish that an outage will be restored in 30 minutes only to find when we tried to re-energize the line there were more problems we had not uncovered.

One thing we can tell the members of VVEC is our crews and staff do everything we can to keep the power on and restore the power when it does go out as quickly and safely as possible.

Randy Riddle serves as manager of operations at VVEC.

Average Monthly Payment Plan Eliminates Fluctuating Electric Bills

If your electric bill fluctuates from month to month, you might want to try the Average Monthly Payment Plan. The AMP Plan is available to all VVEC members who meet all the following criteria:

- Have been a VVEC member for at least 12 months
- Have not been late in paying the electric bill more than twice during the previous 12 months
- The electric bill is currently paid in full.

Your average monthly payment is figured by taking your current month's usage plus the preceding 11 months' usage and dividing them by 12. This total is then figured into the applicable rate along with any taxes.

The average is recalculated every month in the same manner.

If you are interested in participating in the AMP Plan or have any questions, please call our billing department at 918-371-2584, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RECIPE

Turkey Chili

Serves 12

1 medium onion, diced
1 large bell pepper, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup vegetable broth
1 pound ground turkey
15-ounce can diced tomatoes
1 can diced green chiles
2 teaspoons cumin
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 tablespoon oregano
2 cans black beans, drained
2 cans pinto beans, drained
2 cans kidney beans, drained

Saute onions, bell pepper and garlic in broth until soft. Add ground turkey and cook through. Stir in tomatoes and

green chiles and add all seasonings. Add beans and more broth to consistency you desire. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 20-30 minutes. Season to taste with salt.



Photo by Laura Araujo