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From left: Collinsville Rural Fire Department Chief Jimmy Wilson and Captain Derek Hunt receive a Rural Fire Department Grant from VVEC representatives Mike Hall and Chub Brewer.

VVEC supports safe communities

Co-op grants empower rural fire departments

By Randy Riddle

Each year VVEC takes applications for grants to rural fire departments within its service territory. The grants are for capital improvements such as land purchases for expansion of existing departments and the establishment of new fire departments (land, buildings, equipment, etc.). They can also be used for dry hydrants. The ISO certifies dry hydrants. The rural fire defense program coordinator for the applying department must approve the need for the dry hydrants. And lastly, equipment. Examples of equipment include vehicles (assigned to rural fires) tools, pumps,

hoses, clothing, communications, and more.

Rural fire departments across the state are always in need of operating funds. The same holds true for the departments operating in the Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative service area. We recently visited with a couple of firefighters from the Collinsville Rural Fire Department about the issues they face. Jimmy Wilson is a 40-year firefighter with the fire department, and has spent the past 29 years as the fire chief.

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RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT GRANTS - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Collinsville Rural Fire Department Chief Jimmy Wilson (left) and Captain Derek Hunt (right).

Wilson says the Collinsville Rural Fire Department receives funds from Tulsa County rural property taxes. However, this rural fire department also services some of western Rogers County which receives no funding. This is where the membership fees come into play. They collect dues from the Rogers County members who get fire protection services from

them. Collinsville Rural used to do a mass mailing to its Rogers County members once a year and struggled to get the dues returned to the fire department.

A few years back VVEC began to offer dues collection services to rural fire departments (and a couple of municipal EMS services that extend their EMS service to the rural areas). Wilson says the service has been great for the rural fire departments. Their dues collections have nearly doubled since the service began, allowing them to hire another full-time firefighter. Prior to that the fire department had three full-time firefighters who worked a 24-hour shift and off 48 (the typical firefighter schedule). They have now another full-time firefighter who works weekdays from 8 to 5. The more firefighters they have who are readily available, the better.

Derek Hunt, one of the full-time firefighters and a member of the department for 30 years, says when he joined the department they always had a full roster of 30 volunteers. In recent years though the roster has gotten smaller. They currently have 18 volunteer firefighters on the roster.

Funding and manpower will always be a concern. The better funded, staffed and trained a rural fire department is, the better off the rural members are. It shows on their response times and ratings. It also shows on the members' insurance rates. If it's good for our members, it's good for VVEC. ■



VVEC's headquarters in Collinsville, Oklahoma

SAFETY TIPS

SAFETY TIP: Always Call for Help

If you do something that causes an accidental contact with a power line, never try to resolve or remove it yourself.

Stay clear and call VVEC immediately!



OFFICE CLOSED NOTICE

VVEC's office will be closed on Monday, July 5th, in observance of Independence Day.

IN CASE OF AN OUTAGE

- First, 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 all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.

- Then, call the Co-op at 371-2584, or 1-800-870-5948. 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, leave your information; every message will be answered. Or, download the SmartHub app to report outages from your smartphone.

SUMMER RESIDENTIAL RATES

April through September usage,
May through October billing

Customer Charge | \$30.00

Energy Charge

1st 2,000 kWh | \$.08272/kWh

Over 2,000 kWh | \$.08782/kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 59.87 mills per kWh.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

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SUMMER SAVINGS TIPS

Three ways to beat the heat and save energy this summer



1

Instead of cranking up the A/C, use ceiling fans to make rooms feel a few degrees cooler.



2

Delay heat-producing chores like running the dishwasher or doing laundry until the evening hours.



3

Keep blinds and curtains closed during the day – especially for east- and west-facing windows.



VVEC's team of customer service representatives is ready to serve you! From left: Jodi Cooper, Darrell Lawson, Nicole Weiser, Megan Jackson, Roberta Kickapoo and Melinda Edgar.

Here to serve you!

When you step into VVEC's lobby or give us a call, you will most likely visit with a member of our billing department. They handle most of our day-to-day interactions with members and are here to help with all of your needs—everything from establishing service and providing account information, to answering billing and usage questions, resolving issues and caring for our members' concerns.

Blueberry Crisp

Ingredients:

- 5 cups blueberries
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons Shawnee Mills all-purpose flour
- 1 lemon
- 1/3 cup Braum's butter, softened
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup Shawnee Mills all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped Miller Pecan Co. pecans



In a large bowl, combine blueberries, sugar, flour and juice of 1 lemon. Place in a buttered 8- or 9-inch square baking dish. To make the topping, in a medium bowl, combine butter, brown sugar, flour, oats and cinnamon. Use two forks to blend butter into flour mixture. Mix in pecans. Sprinkle mixture over blueberries. Bake in a 375°F degree oven for 35-40 minutes or until golden and bubbly. Serve with Braum's vanilla ice cream. Yields 6 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of the Made in Oklahoma Coalition

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler.

This will minimize indoor heat during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest.

