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New Co-op Connections® Program Offers Value to Members

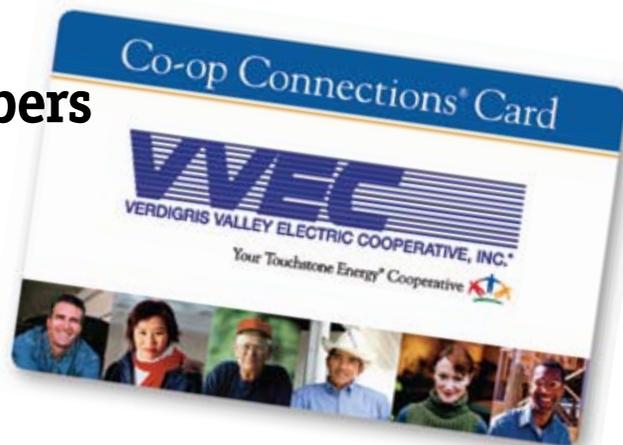
Verdigris Valley Electric Co-op has launched a program that offers further proof that being a member of an electric cooperative has its advantages. The Co-op Connections® program, a new card-based member benefit program for Touchstone Energy® cooperatives, is designed to deliver added value to cooperative members. VVEC is implementing this program in conjunction with other Touchstone Energy co-ops serving 22 million member-owners nationwide.

A free offering for co-op members and participating businesses, the program benefits cooperative members by offering valuable discounts at participating local and national businesses. At the same time, those businesses benefit from increased customer visits by co-op members participating in the program.

VVEC members will receive Co-op Connections cards in the mail in the coming weeks. Once the member has signed the back of the card, it may be used at participating businesses locally and nationwide. Co-op members can get a flavor for which businesses are participating in the Co-op Connections program by logging on to VVEC's Web site: www.vvec.com.

Whenever a Co-op Connections customer — whether from VVEC or from one of the hundreds of Touchstone Energy electric co-ops across the country — shows their card at a participating business, they receive a discount.

“The Co-op Connections card is a valuable tool that



creates an even greater sense of membership and reinforces VVEC's longstanding commitment to community,” said Paula Lanni, VVEC member services representative. “It will add value and increase customer loyalty at participating businesses. Simply put, the Co-op Connections program is another way our members benefit from being a part of their electric cooperative,” adds Lanni.

Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 650 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 22 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a longstanding commitment to communities.

Pharmacy Discount Frequently Asked Questions

How much will I save?

The discounts save you 10% to 60% on prescriptions at over 48,000 pharmacies nationwide, including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Target and more.

How much does the feature cost?

Your pharmacy discounts are provided as part of your Co-op Connections® program at no cost.

Does everyone in my family need an individual card?

No. One card may be used by the entire family.

I just received my card. Can I use it right away?

Yes, just present your card and prescription at a participating retail pharmacy to receive a discount at the time of purchase.

How are these pharmacy discounts different from traditional prescription insurance?

This plan is not insurance; it is a pharmacy discount offer. The card provides immediate discounts at the pharmacy. Upon presenting your card to the pharmacist, you will pay the lower of a discounted price or the pharmacy's regular retail price. There are no forms to fill out and no limit to the number of times you can use the card. These discounts are available only at participating retail pharmacies. *Continued on page 2*

NEWS

Bogart Retains Trustee Seat



Members in district 2 met Monday, Nov. 23, but low attendance prevented any business from being conducted. This includes holding an election for the trustee position.

Cooperative bylaws require that at least 5 percent of the members in any district must register their attendance in order for business to be transacted.

As a result, trustee Jack Bogart will continue to represent district 2 members for another three year term.

Reminder

Don't forget that on January 1 the following monthly rate minimum changes take effect:

All Residential Rates - Monthly minimum charge increases from \$12.00 to \$20.00

All Single Phase Commercial Rates - Monthly minimum charge increases from \$15.00 to \$25.00

All Three Phase Non-Demand Commercial Rates - Monthly minimum charge increases from \$30.00 to \$40.00

VVEC Board of Directors

District 1 -

District 2 - **Jack Bogart, 371-9587**

District 3 - **Vernon Lewis, 341-5225**

District 4 - **John Hibdon, 847-2320**

District 5 - **Jimmy Lambert, 342-4662**

District 6 - **Dennis Lenox, 396-1574**

District 7 - **Charles Huerter, 333-3107**

District 8 - **Ken Howard, 371-4833**

District 9 - **Buddy McCarty, 272-5134 or 272-5364**

General Manager - Alice Houston

VVEC Headquarters

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Office hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mon. - Fri.

Editor - Kay Rabbitt-Brower

Pharmacy Discount Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

I've lost my card. How can I get a replacement?

Please contact our Member Services Department at (918) 371-2584.

Can I use my Co-op Connections card with my current insurance benefit to reduce my costs?

Your card cannot be used in conjunction with insurance. However, use your card to purchase prescriptions not covered by your insurance plans at a discounted rate.

Where can I get a list of pharmacies that accept the card?

The Co-op Connections card is accepted at over 48,000 retail pharmacies nationwide, including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Target and more. You can find participating pharmacy locations at www.locateproviders.com.

Will I always receive the lowest price?

Yes. You will receive the best price available to you through this program at the pharmacy. On occasion, pharmacies will price a particular medication lower than the discount rate provided by the card. If that occurs, you will receive the lower price.

Can I find out the discounted price of my prescriptions before going to the pharmacy?

Yes, if you know the name, strength and quantity of the medication, you can find the discounted price of the medication by visiting www.rxpricequotes.com.

Why did the price of my prescription change since my last purchase?

Drug prices are different from pharmacy to pharmacy. Even chains have different prices in their stores depending on the population they are servicing. Additionally, manufacturers' drug prices change periodically.

What is the mail order program?

To ensure members always save money on their prescription drugs, a unique mail order program was created to complement the network pharmacy benefit. Since most maintenance (long term) medications are purchased in 90 day supplies, members maximize savings and have the convenience of home delivery (at no additional charge) by ordering through the mail order option.

Pharmacy discounts are not insurance, and are not intended as a substitute for insurance.



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 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 for you. 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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Washington Youth Tour and YouthPower Energy Camp Offer Fun Opportunities

High school juniors could spend a fun-filled week in Washington, D.C. in June with young people from across the nation, with all expenses paid!

The annual Rural Electric Washington Youth Tour is a fun-filled week touring Washington, D. C. with other high school juniors from across the country.

To compete you must be a junior this year, single, and attending high school in VVEC's service territory. Your parents do not have to be members of VVEC for you to participate in this program.

You are required to write an essay of between 350 and 500 words on a specific co-op related topic. This year's topic is "How can Smart Grid Technology Help America Meet Growing Power Demands?" The topic, along with the program's rules and regulations, are detailed in the Youth Tour Information Packet.

Eighth graders wanting to participate in our Energy Camp competition are asked to write a 125-word essay on the same topic.

Rules and regulations for each program are detailed in the Youth Tour and Energy Camp Information Packet, which is available this month through your English teacher or on our Web site at

www.VVEC.com.

This year 8th graders can write an essay in two-person teams. The winning team will go to Energy Camp.

YouthPower Energy Camp develops leadership skills, and promotes team work in a fun environment. Camp participants experience first-hand the exciting world of rural electrification by electing board members, and interviewing to be the manager of the cooperative they will form. They also witness safety demonstrations and climb a utility pole while wearing appropriate climbing gear.

Energy Campers have the chance to participate in a volleyball tournament and visit Celebration Station in Oklahoma City, along with swimming and other outdoor activities.

Essay deadline for both programs is 4 p.m. Friday, March 12.

Essays are judged by an independent panel on command of subject, strength of ideas, style, and writing convention and grammar. Youth Tour judging determines the four finalists who compete in the final level of competition. The two highest scoring finalists at that level win the all expense-paid trip to Washington, D. C. and the two alternates each receive a \$500 scholarship.

FYI

Cut Out Fluctuating Electric Bills with Our Average Monthly Payment Plan

If your electric bill fluctuates from month to month, you might want to try our Average Monthly Payment (AMP) Plan.

The AMP Plan is available to all VVEC members who meet the following criteria:

- Have been a member of VVEC 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 11 preceding months' usage and dividing them by 12. This total is then figured in 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.

Members Owed Capital Credits Listed on Co-op Web Site

A list of members who have not collected their Capital Credits can now be found on our Web site – www.vvec.com.

Frequently, members don't give us a forwarding address when they move off of co-op lines, so we don't know where to send their Capital Credit checks.

If you know a former member, please encourage him or her to visit the Web site to see if their name is on the list. Or call us if you have information on how to reach someone on the list.



Changes to SEER for Heat Pump Rebate

As of January 1, the SEER rating for heat pump rebates has increased.

In order to be eligible for a rebate, heat pump systems are now required to have a SEER rating of 14.5 or greater. The previous rating was 14.

Ground-source heat pumps are rebated at \$300 per ton and should be Energy Star® rated. Replacement units are rebated at \$150 per ton, must meet the same SEER/EER criteria, and be a gain of at least 3 SEER/EER over the old unit.

Air-to-air or dual-fuel heat pumps are rebated at \$150 per ton, including electric resistance or fossil fuel backups, and must be Energy Star rated with the same SEER/EER values listed above.

Members interested in participating in the rebate program need to contact VVEC's member services department, or download a rebate form from our Web site – www.vvec.com. The completed form needs to be submitted to VVEC within 90 days of purchasing the appliance. Certain restrictions apply and new units are subject to on-site verification by the co-op after installation.

VVEC also pays rebates on Energy Star clothes washers and dishwashers (with an electric water heater) and room air conditioners.

For information on the rebate program, contact the member services department at (918) 371-2584, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.



RECIPE

Hot Caramel Chocolate

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup water
- 6 milk-chocolate-covered round caramels
- 6 cups milk, half-and-half, or light cream
- Whipped cream (optional)
- Milk chocolate-covered and/or candy-coated round caramels (optional)

In a large saucepan combine sugar, cocoa powder, and water. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Add candies; cook and stir until melted. Stir in milk. Heat through. Pour into mugs; top with whipped cream and additional caramel candies.

YIELD: 6 servings.

Love your appliances

This Valentine's Day, show your trusty household appliances a little love—and you'll keep them humming all year long.

These simple maintenance tips can extend the life of your largest electric appliances and help them operate more efficiently, saving you money on your monthly energy bill.

Once a year, shut off the water to your water heater and drain the tank completely. Then turn the incoming water on and off alternatively for 20 seconds to flush minerals and sediment that collect at the bottom of the

tank and cause it to operate inefficiently.

If you have an older refrigerator with condenser coils at the back or bottom, vacuum them to remove dust that impairs the efficiency of the unit. To ensure that refrigerator and freezer doors seal tightly, place a dollar bill between the door frame and the gasket. If the dollar bill pulls out easily or falls out, the gasket needs replacing.



Pull your clothes dryer out from the wall and remove the vent tube from the back of the dryer. Using your hand and a vacuum, remove built-up lint from the back of the dryer and inside the vent tubing.

Remove plant overgrowth and debris from around the air conditioner's outdoor compressor unit or your heat pump to prevent the system from working harder than necessary to heat and cool your home.