

## Youth Programs Offer Memories, Adventures

Two 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, students must be a junior this year, single, and attending high school in VVEC's service territory. The student's parents do not have to be members of VVEC for them to participate in this program.

Students are required to write an essay of between 350 and 500 words on a specific co-op related topic. 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 from schools' English teachers or on VVEC's Web site at [www.VVEC.com](http://www.VVEC.com).

Eighth graders can write an essay in two-person teams. The winning team goes 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 on command of subject, strength of ideas, style, and writing convention and grammar by a panel of independent judges. Youth Tour judging determines 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. 

### Trustees Retain Positions on Board

Members in districts 7, 8, and 9 met in November to elect trustees. However, since a quorum was not reached at any meeting, the incumbent trustees retain their positions for another three-year term. Those trustees are Chuck Huerter, Ken Howard, and Buddy McCarty, respectfully.

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.

VVEC Board of Trustees

District 1 - **Jim Brackett, 720-4531**  
 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.,  
 Monday through Friday

**Editor** - Kay Rabbitt-Brower

## Winter Residential Rates

October through March usage,  
 November through April billing

Customer Charge                      \$20.00

**Energy Charge**

1st 1,000 kWh                      \$0.0731/kWh

Over 1,000 kWh                      \$0.0671/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% of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes if applicable.

## Get Your Chimney Ready for Cold Weather

You empty the ashes and sweep your fireplace after every use to keep it safe and looking nice. But is it really clean and safe?

Your fireplace isn't really clean until you remove what you can't see: the creosote, soot, ashes, dust, leaves and even birds that are stuck in the flue and chimney.

Unless Santa scraped off the flaky mess with his big belly on his way down the chimney Christmas Eve, it's a responsibility that falls to you, the homeowner.

If you take care of this, you'll have a clean, safe chimney and fireplace to sit around and enjoy during the cold of winter.

Since most people don't want to tackle this dirty job themselves, you might want to hire a professional chimney sweep to do this time-consuming and messy job. That will cost you \$100 or so.

Why bother? When smoke from your fireplace goes up the chimney, some of it condenses into soot and tar in the flue, which is the chimney's inner surface. That creosote builds up over time, and it's highly flammable.

Keeping your chimney clean will allow your family to enjoy cold evenings being cozy around a dancing fire – worry free. 



## Heat Pump Rebate Program Changes

Beginning January 1, SEER and EER values for our heat pump rebates are changing. To learn about these changes, please visit our Web site – [www.vvec.com](http://www.vvec.com) – or call our member services department at 371-2584.

## 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.



Power Circuit is published monthly by Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative, Collinsville, Oklahoma for its members in Tulsa, Rogers, Washington, Nowata and Osage counties. Periodical postage paid at Tulsa, Oklahoma and other additional mailing offices. Subscription price is \$0.21 per month.

POSTMASTER - send address changes to Power Circuit, P.O. Box 219, Collinsville, OK 74021.

VOLUME 70 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2011

# 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 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. 

## Cool Off Your Winter Energy Bill

You budgeted for last month's holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation – and with money tight, that doesn't leave much room for home energy efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks:

- **Drape Delivery:** Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.
- **Thermostat:** Set your thermostat to 68°F (or lower if comfortable).
- **Got tape?** Though not as durable as foam, rubber, or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash; door frames; attic hatches; and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.
- **Fan it up:** Run ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.
- **Free vents:** Your HVAC system will have to work twice as hard if your air registers and vents are blocked by

rugs, furniture, or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

- **Garage Drain:** Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.
- **Rug Relief:** Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.
- **Cool Food:** Don't make your fridge work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34°-37° F; leave the freezer between 0°-5° F. Keep the freezer full—frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

- **Hot Savings:** Heating water accounts for 12 percent of your home's energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120°F. For households with only one or two members, 115°F works.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers, and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night. Find more ways to save at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com). 

## Members Owed Capital Credits Listed on Co-op Web Site

A list of members who have not collected their Capital Credits are found on our Web site – [www.vvec.com](http://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. 

# Do You Have a Light Bulb in Your Closet?

Unless there's a window in your closet, there's probably a single, exposed light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Here are two tips that could make your closet a safer, more efficient space:

1. Cleaning out your closet could help prevent a fire. If you cram enough

clothes and boxes into a closet to touch that exposed bulb, it could catch them on fire.

In fact, 12 percent of house fires start in the closet. Tip: Store clothes as far away from the light bulb as possible. And shield the bulb with a decorative cover so it can't directly touch your clothing.

Likewise, if you have a skylight in a closet, the sun literally can scorch your clothes. Cover your skylights with UV film.

2. You won't save much energy if you put a compact fluorescent light bulb in a closet.

CFLs operate the best when they're on for 15 or more minutes. In fact, they take about three minutes to warm up when you turn them on. In a closet, you probably flip the switch on and off within a couple of minutes – a practice that will shorten the life of a CFL. 

## Keep Those New Computers in Good Shape

If Santa brought you computer equipment, keeping it clean and tuned-up can help it have a longer life. A few tips:

- Set up your new computer in a room that has no carpet. Static from carpet, some say, can damage the computer's circuits. If your home office already has a big rug, use an antistatic spray or mat to reduce static buildup on the carpet.

- Keep computer surfaces clean. Use a lint-free cloth and an antistatic cleaning fluid. Spray the fluid onto the cloth rather than directly on the keyboard or other surface. Turn the computer off before you clean it.

- Avoid cramming the computer amid lots of other equipment, and don't stack books or paper on or around it. Computer equipment needs air to circulate around it so it won't overheat.

- Don't smoke near your computer equipment.

- Insert three-prong plugs into three-prong outlets. Those outlets are grounded. If your older house has two-prong outlets, call an electrician to upgrade them.

- Be sure to use three-prong electrical outlets for your computer. The three-prong plug grounds the equipment. 



### RECIPE

## Crockpot Seasoned Beef Sandwiches

- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. oregano
- 2 tsp. seasoned salt
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. rosemary
- 4- to 5-lb. beef roast, cut in large pieces
- 18 lg. hamburger buns or Hoagie rolls

Put about 1 inch of water in crock pot. Add seasonings and meat. Cook on low setting about 12-14 hours. Shred meat and keep warm. Spoon mixture onto roll and serve with desired condiments.