

# SVEC maintenance program is ‘preventive medicine’

Two of the greatest concerns in our country today are the cost of energy and the cost of health care. Both of these problems can be alleviated with “preventive medicine.”

People who practice good health habits — eating right, getting regular exercise and following the recommended guidelines for health screenings — are much less likely to experience serious health concerns.

Health problems that are caught early with regular physicals and health screenings can be treated more successfully and at a much lower cost than if they go undetected and are allowed to progress until they require much more serious emergency treatment. And often those efforts come too late for the patient to make a full recovery.

Granted, it sometimes takes a little more effort to live a healthy lifestyle. Plus, there are costs for preventive health care, but they are far less than those for treatment of serious health problems, and the benefits of good health to your quality of life are immeasurable.

The same is true of the energy concerns of our co-op and nation. We must think ahead to develop a plan that will keep our electric system “healthy” and providing for the energy needs of our area and nation today and in the years to come.

It has been 75 years since the forward-thinking legislation that created the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Rural Electrification Administration was passed. Money invested then — in the midst of the Great Depression — allowed our rural area to rise out of that economic disaster and build a healthy, thriving economy.

Money was spent to build an electric system that, at the time, was “state-of-the-art.” However, an aging electric system, like an aging person, needs regular “check-ups” and preventive medicine to stay healthy.

In times of recession, it is tempting to try to save money by cutting from the budget such things as preventive maintenance

on the electric system and “putting out fires” by taking care of only the emergency situations.

However, just as it is much more expensive to take care of health problems in the emergency room and with a much lower success rate, it is much more costly to make emergency repairs on an electric system.

Materials and equipment that must be located and purchased in an emergency situation are almost always more expensive. Labor costs go up when extra workers must be called in and paid premium rates for the long hours that must be spent to restore service, not to mention that our members are inconvenienced with a power outage.

An unplanned power outage can mean lost revenue for local businesses and in extreme weather conditions can be life-threatening for individuals with fragile health conditions.

The board and management of Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative have chosen to take the proactive route to keep our electric system “healthy” to ensure that our members receive reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost.

We recently conducted an infrared scan of our substations and our main distribution lines to detect areas of highest stress. By addressing these problem situations before they get to an emergency state, we will save a great deal of money and prevent the inconvenience and expense an outage would cause our members.

Since we have been conducting these scans and making the needed improvements to the system, we see fewer and fewer problem areas each year.

As a result of planning ahead and investing in the future, the prognosis for the health of the SVEC electric system looks good. Check out the article on the next page for more information on this “high-tech” diagnostic program.



**Bob Matheny**  
SVEC President/CEO



## Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative

Serving all or portions of Bledsoe, Grundy, Marion, Sequatchie, Coffee, Hamilton, Rhea and Van Buren counties.

### Service Centers:

512 S. Cedar Ave.; P.O. Box 31,  
South Pittsburg, TN 37380  
Telephone — 423-837-8605  
Toll-free — 800-923-2203

97 Resource Road; P.O. Box 518,  
Dunlap, TN 37327  
Telephone — 423-949-2198

3396 Main St.; P.O. Box 441,  
Pikeville, TN 37367  
Telephone — 423-447-2131

14002 Highway 41; P.O. Box 100,  
Tracy City, TN 37387  
Telephone — 931-592-2511

14087 Highway 28,  
Whitwell, TN 37397  
Telephone — 423-658-7832

**After hours: 888-421-7832**

SV Propane  
877-521-3055 (toll free)  
931-592-5126

[www.svalleyec.com](http://www.svalleyec.com)



SOUTH PITTSBURG, TENNESSEE

**Visit SVEC's tent  
at the  
National Cornbread Festival in  
South Pittsburg  
April 24-25  
Free Salsa Cornbread**



# Proactive maintenance program equals great reliability

During the first couple of weeks in February, you may have noticed a truck with a strange glow driving slowly past your home. It wasn't aliens landing, and it wasn't anyone transporting radioactive waste. It was Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative and its contract company, TP Utility Services, conducting the annual infrared camera scan of the SVEC system.

## Infrared thermography

- Infrared thermography is a noncontact, nondestructive method of detecting possible problems on the electric system.
- The camera shows areas of varying heat in differing colors.
- Excessive heat shows up as a "glow."
- Overheating is a sign of impending trouble.
- High temperatures indicate too much electrical resistance, failing components, ground faults, short circuits or other common problems in electric equipment that can lead to expensive or even catastrophic failure.

Trying to find these problems with regular visual or manual inspections is a costly and time-consuming endeavor that still might not lead to locating the potential problems.

## Line maintenance

As a part of its ongoing maintenance program, SVEC conducts this effective and efficient preventative scan of the main distribution lines once a year. The co-op began this program, which covers the entire SVEC service area, some 20 years ago.

The scan is done at night (from about 5 p.m. to midnight) because the lower nighttime temperatures reduce the possibility of false readings caused by heat from the sun. The scans are generally scheduled in winter during peak heating season to test the system during times of greatest stress, making problem areas easier to find.

The scanning begins with the most critical parts of the system, the substations. From there the camera follows the three-phase lines, checking critical equipment such as transformers, reclosers and breakers along the route.

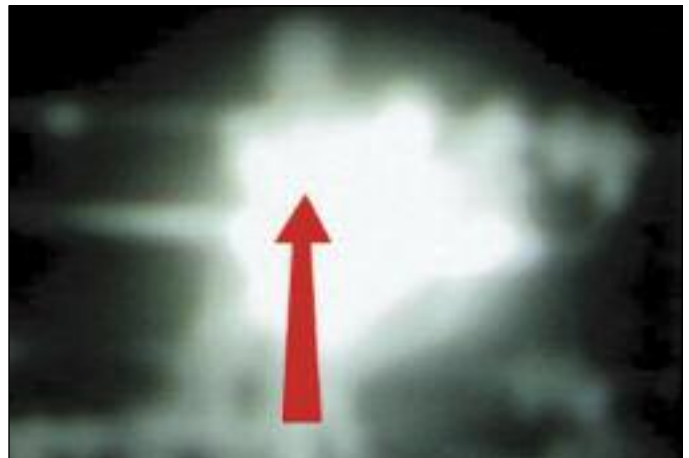
Scanning then continues at points of high electric use such as hospitals, industrial parks and shopping centers and along the lines in between. As time permits, crews also check more densely populated residential areas. The goal is to be as efficient as possible and only travel down any stretch of line once.

Results from this annual scan pinpoint any "hot spots" in the SVEC electrical system and allow the cooperative's engineers and operations staff to prioritize maintenance and repair work to substantially reduce unscheduled outages, after-hours emergency repairs and losses due to damaged equipment.

The maintenance performed in response to the information from the infrared scan should result in SVEC's members experiencing fewer outages.

## Reliability is a high priority

No one likes the inconvenience of a power outage, but for our industrial and business customers, it is more than an inconvenience — it can mean a loss of revenue. These economic concerns only serve to reinforce SVEC's commitment to preventive maintenance.



**Above are the regular-light and infrared-light photos of a switch site in Kimball that was about to fail. It was repaired the next morning during regular hours with no outage occurring.**

In this time of rapidly rising energy costs, SVEC is also looking at ways to reduce the cost of doing business and keep rates as low as possible. Using this kind of preventive analysis to avoid costly unscheduled maintenance and loss of equipment is one way of meeting that goal.

The maintenance and system improvements that have been completed as a result of past infrared scanning have paid off. Significantly fewer problem areas were found in this year's evaluation of the lines.

"Prior to 2007, we spent one week on the survey," said Mike Simmons, SVEC safety and maintenance coordinator. "Beginning that year, we increased the time spent scanning to two weeks. Naturally, this resulted in an increase in the total number of faults we found initially, but over the last few years we have seen a downward trend in the number of faults."

"This can be attributed to the discovery and repair of problems found during the survey, but it also is an indication of the effectiveness of our other system improvements and maintenance programs."



# Co-op leaders visit state Capitol

Each of Tennessee's 23 electric cooperatives has deep ties to the communities it serves. Locally owned and governed, co-ops exist for the sole purpose of bettering the lives of those who live in their service areas. Not only do member-owners receive reliable, affordable electric service from their local cooperative's lines, but the co-op works to foster growth and stability of the communities through programs to promote economic investment, member and youth education and environmental stewardship. Members elect a board of directors to oversee how the cooperative is run; these directors are your neighbors and themselves member-owners of the cooperative.

On March 2, these local directors, along with key co-op staff members, arrived in Nashville for the annual Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA) Legislative Conference to meet with their state legislators. Informing and educating elected officials is another vital role electric cooperatives must perform to protect the interests of Tennessee's co-ops and their member-owners.

Representing Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative at the meeting were SVEC President/CEO Bob Matheny, Chief



**The SVEC delegation meets with State Sen. Eric Stewart, seated, in his office to discuss issues of concern to SVEC members. From left are Bobby Gravitt, Mike Jordan, Bob Matheny and Mike Partin.**



**State Sen. Andy Berke, left, answers questions from the SVEC delegation during the recent TECA Legislative Day in Nashville.**

Operating Officer Mike Partin, Board Chairman Michael Jordan and board member Bobby Gravitt.

"As more and more of our state's population moves away from their rural roots, it is important that those of us serving rural Tennesseans keep our legislators informed on key issues that affect our membership," stated Matheny.

"We maintain a presence at the state Capitol to ensure that our legislators remember that they represent some 2 million rural electric member-owners," said Tom Purkey, general manager of TECA, the statewide organization that formulates legislative, public relations and safety programs for its member systems. "These board members, general managers and staff members visit not only as spokespeople for their cooperatives but as constituents — folks from back home who

helped elect these legislators. It's our job as representatives of rural electric cooperative member-owners to be sure your interests are protected in the General Assembly."

When the co-op delegations arrived on Capitol Hill for this year's visit, they concentrated on one main concern: pole-attachment fees, an issue cooperatives have been battling for years. It's a topic that has a long history of debate in the legislature as cable television companies seek to lower what cooperatives can charge them to attach lines to their electric poles.

"Simply put, co-op members should not have to pay higher electric rates so that cable television companies can have more revenue," said David Callis, TECA director of government relations. "Lower attachment rates mean greater profits for cable television companies from the pockets of rural Tennesseans, many of whom do not even have access to cable television."

During their visits with state House and Senate members, co-op representatives distributed information on the compromise attachment-rate bill and a report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations on its pole-attachment study. They also made sure their legislators understand what cooperatives are, thanked them for their support in the past and answered their questions, stressing that the co-op board members and staff are available at any time should they need more information.

"It may not be our most visible or well-known responsibility, but our legislative visits are very important to ensuring the stability of our electric cooperatives," said Purkey. "We make sure that our elected officials remember rural Tennesseans when making laws that affect the outstanding electric service provided by co-ops across the state."



## The Value of Electricity

A dollar's worth can get you:

# 36



(intense) hours of gaming

# 48



hours of watching TV

# 72



freshly-ironed shirts

# 72



hours of laptop Internet access

# 100



hot pots of coffee

# 375



pieces of toast (nicely browned)

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy;  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



Visit  
**SVEC's Energy Calculators**  
at [www.svalleyec.com](http://www.svalleyec.com) for energy-  
and money-saving tips!

# 'This little thing saved my computer!'



**"This little thing has been a lifesaver to me. I would tell anyone that it is worth the money to have this protection."**

*Inez Winton, Tracy City*

**W**hen lightning damaged Inez Winton's television, computer modem and telephone, she took action. She called Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative and had "The Shield" Surge Protection system installed.

That action paid off a year later when lightning again entered her home.

The only damage that time was to the surge protector strips that were connected to her computer and telephone.

SVEC replaced her damaged surge protectors, and Mrs. Winton is now a firm believer in the co-op's surge protection program.

You can't control the forces of nature. But you can control how vulnerable your home is to power surges with "The Shield" Surge Protection Program from SVEC.

It features the best surge protection products for protecting the connected electronic appliances in your home.

**Sign up now for free installation April 1-June 30.**

Call your local SVEC office for details!



# Get more green 'bang' for your buck AND a \$5 credit on your electric bill



Sign up for Green Power Switch and save as much carbon dioxide as 1.5 hybrids.  
Or for a 'paperless' e-bill and reduce the waste paper in the landfill.

Here are the facts: You can sign up for Green Power Switch for as little as \$4 a month. When you do, you'll be helping support the local\* production of clean energy from wind, solar and methane capture. Believe it or not, that \$4 a month keeps more carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere than 1.5 hybrid vehicles.\*\*

It's shocking but true. And for the last 10 years, folks just like you have been shrinking their carbon footprints by signing up for Green Power Switch. Isn't it time you joined them?

Each block you purchase is a \$4 addition monthly to your power bill. Buy one or as many as you like. There is no contract. The green power you purchase goes straight into the grid right here in the Valley.

If you would like to reduce the amount of mail in your mailbox and waste paper in the landfill, sign up for our "paperless" e-bill program. You will receive your Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative bill by e-mail rather than by regular "snail mail." You may then pay it online; by mail, bank draft or e-check; in our office; or by any of the other convenient payment methods offered by SVEC.

To sign up, fill out this form and return with your bill payment or sign up online at [www.greenpowerswitch.com](http://www.greenpowerswitch.com). For more information, call 866-637-4340. If you sign up for either Green Power Switch or the e-bill program by June 30, 2010, you will receive a \$5 credit on your SVEC bill.



## Yes, I want to make the Green Power Switch

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SVEC account No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this completed form to: Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative,  
P.O. Box 31, South Pittsburg, TN 37380, ATTN: Marketing Department

To receive a \$5 credit on your SVEC electric bill, return form by June 30, 2010.

Circle the number of green power blocks you want to buy each month.



Green Power Switch

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 — 150 kwh (\$4)  | 4 — 600 kwh (\$16) |
| 2 — 300 kwh (\$8)  | 5 — 750 kwh (\$20) |
| 3 — 450 kwh (\$12) | Other _____        |

Yes, I want to do more! Sign me up for a paperless e-bill.

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\*Green-e Energy Certified renewables in Green Power Switch include 37.4% biomass (TN), 62.2% wind (TN), and 0.40% solar (AL, KY, MS, TN, VA). 2008. \*\*Compares yearly carbon dioxide emissions avoided by driving a hybrid vehicle vs. a comparable nonhybrid to purchasing 12 150-kwh blocks of green power. (EPA Green Power Equivalency Calculator)

## Free energy-conservation kits

For a limited time, the Tennessee Valley Authority will mail an energy-conservation kit to you upon completing a do-it-yourself energy audit. Visit [www.svalleyec.com](http://www.svalleyec.com) or call your local Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative office for details. Also ask about our In-Home Energy Evaluation program.