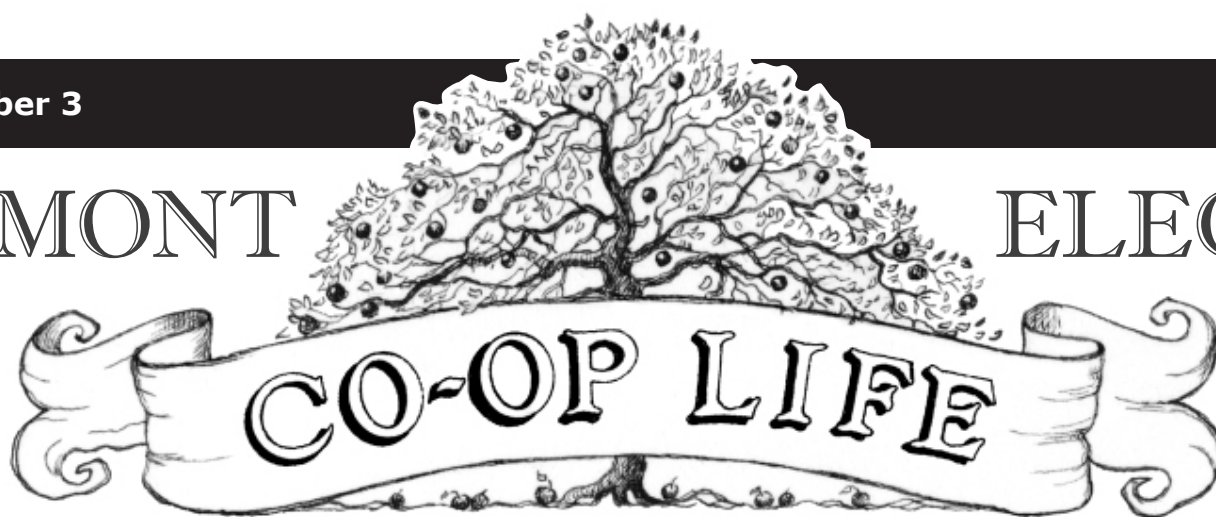


VERMONT

ELECTRIC



With a Sharp Eye on Costs, VEC Files Rate Case to Support Our Mission

By Rebecca Towne

On November 15 we filed a request with the Public Utility Commission for a 4.84 percent rate increase effective January 1, 2025.

As is always the case, this request is an attempt at balance: keeping rates as low as possible while at

the same time assuring that we accomplish our core mission of providing safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services to our members.

Our team has also worked very hard scouring our 2025 budget to find all prudent savings. We know affordability is important to our members – and it’s important to us too. As always, we strive to keep rates as low as possible while ensuring we provide excellent electric service in our northern Vermont communities today and into the future.

There Is Some Good News

This rate increase is higher than we had hoped, and like our members we are experiencing much frustration over ongoing cost pressures. However, there are also some positive shifts happening that are quite different than the last couple years and worth highlighting.

Purchasing electricity/power supply. After several years of dramatic increases in the cost of purchasing power to provide our members, we are seeing those costs decrease. Most of our power is procured through contracts. Some of these contracts are fixed price, but others have adjustments that reflect the market. During the last few years, these contracts have been impacted by the rising regional power market. However, in 2025 the contract price is falling due to a lower power market. Because of that, our costs to purchase power will be slightly less in 2025 than we experienced in 2024.

Sharing infrastructure costs. Over the last several years, we have been adding more infrastructure to our system. At the same time, we’re now seeing the

increased total system power usage from the addition of new members, as well as growing electrification of existing members through heat pump and electric vehicle adoption. The result is that we are sharing the costs of our operations and infrastructure with a larger pool of members and more sales revenue, and that’s a net benefit for us all.

What Are the Key Cost Drivers of This Increase?

As an electric distribution company in New England and a business in Vermont, many of our costs come from owning and operating significant physical infrastructure in a regional electric grid.

- **Transmission costs.** We are part of a regional system of transmission that delivers power from generators to consumer distribution systems, and ensures an adequate power supply and balanced flow of electrons in our system every minute of every day. As part of this system, VEC shares in the regional costs of these services. This year New England growth in transmission construction has resulted in increased costs – which is a trend we expect to continue in the coming years. These costs represent one-quarter of the cost increases driving our current rate request.

- **Property taxes.** VEC owns over 2,400 miles of line and 37 substations in 75 Vermont communities. As a not-for-profit, we do not pay income taxes but we do pay local property taxes. Like many of you, we are experiencing significant increases – in our case a 28 percent increase in 2024. Property tax increases are second behind transmission in total cost increase impact.

- **Inflationary costs of wages, benefits and interest rates.** We are still experiencing the result of years of high inflation. From a 17 percent increase in health insurance to ongoing high interest rates – these costs show up in our

Continued on page 6

Innovation Webinar: Helping the Co-op Save Money Through Flexible Load Management

VEC experts recently outlined the details of VEC’s Flexible Load Program in our most recent webinar in our Innovation Webinar Series.

In short, the Flexible Load Program is a joint ef-

fort between the co-op and participating VEC members to move load away from peak times, which in turn lowers costs for VEC’s system as a whole.

During the webinar, three of VEC’s experts in this area led the conversation and took questions from members.

Currently, VEC offers two types of incentives in this program: one for home batteries and one for electric vehicle (EV) charging.

Under the home battery program, members who have batteries can sign up to periodically share with VEC the power in their batteries in exchange for a monthly bill credit. Under the program, the co-op may draw on enrolled batteries four to six times per month and will never draw the battery below a 20 percent state-of-charge. The co-op also avoids drawing on batteries if there is a possibility of widespread outage event.

The co-op also offers an EV charger program. Under that program, members get an incentive to allow VEC to manage their charging so that demand is moved away from peak hours.

Generally, those high-demand hours are 5-9 pm

on weekdays, said VEC’s Dan Potter, one of the webinar panelists.

“That’s when everybody comes home from work, they’re cooking dinner, they’re starting the dishwasher, they’re starting their clothes dryer,” he said. If VEC can reduce overall demand during those hours through managed VEC charging or borrowing electricity from home batteries, the co-op saves money.

So, what does the future hold in this area?

“One of the things very much on our radar is bi-directional charging,” noted Lisa Morris, another of the webinar panelists. With this technology, a member’s EV battery could feed electricity back into that person’s home in the event of an outage, or even onto the grid for peak reduction.

While there aren’t many EVs currently equipped for bidirectional charging and the charging equipment is expensive, the technology is evolving and costs are likely to come down, she said.

You can watch the recorded webinar on-demand, and others in the series, here: vermontelectric.coop/innovation-webinar-series.

INNOVATION WEBINAR SERIES



ADDING VALUE THROUGH FLEXIBLE LOAD: VEC'S STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING THE GRID

FIND RECORDINGS OF THIS AND OTHER WEBINARS HERE:

VERMONTELECTRIC.COOP/INNOVATION-WEBINAR-SERIES



LISA MORRIS
Energy Services Analyst



DAN POTTER
Power Planning Analyst



CYRIL BRUNNER
Innovation & Technology Leader - Moderator

Ford F150 Lightnings: Putting them Through the Paces Across VEC Territory

Last year VEC purchased four all-electric Ford F-150 Lightning pickup trucks to join our fleet. Three of those trucks have been deployed to VEC Utility Designers who work with members to get power to their properties, upgrade service, and more. The objective is to pilot electric vehicles under actual working conditions in the field, and to learn first-hand the benefits and drawbacks of this technology. At the end of the year, VEC will be analyzing our experience with these trucks.

Here, two utility designers and a member of VEC's human resources team share their experience with the trucks, both working in the field and as transportation among districts and events.

"This Truck Doesn't Get Special Treatment Just Because it's Electric"

Bill Johnson, Utility Designer

I use this truck daily for site visits to members, storm restoration, any type of field visit – anything from pole replacements, member visits, solar installations, etc.

Some of the things I like about the EV – all the systems are independent, not reliant on an internal combustion engine. Heating and cooling, for example is not connected to an engine, so there is no waiting for 2, 3 or 4 minutes for the truck to heat up or cool down.



And the "frunk" is useful. We carry a lot of gear with us – change of clothes, boots, rain gear, winter gear. This is a good place to keep that gear, dry and out of the way.

In summertime, I'm finding it has good range in the battery. In winter, the battery depletes to about 150-170 miles range. That can lead to challenges when access to charging is not available, especially rapid charging. Currently in Vermont, the availability of Level 3 fast charging is fairly limited,

especially across a lot of our rural territory.

Some final thoughts . . . drivability is actually very similar to any other vehicle. I thought it would drive differently but it doesn't. The biggest difference is that you no longer hear an engine transmission working as you are accelerating. It's linear. It's very smooth.

Another thought: I use this vehicle the same way as I would use any other vehicle for the work I do. It doesn't get special treatment because it's electric. It goes onto corn fields, it goes onto construction sites, gravel roads, dirt, or mud, it does just as good as any other vehicle I've ever driven. Overall, I'm satisfied with the truck. They are good vehicles.

"It's Been a Great Truck for my Day-to-Day Use"

Jordan Doyon, Utility Designer

I've been piloting the Lightning since last December. I use it for my day-to-day, in the Chittenden County area mostly. I've used it in a variety weather and road conditions. So far, it's been a great truck.

The truck has a "frunk" which I think is a great use of space. I can store our outdoor work equipment, fuses, and tools in a dry confined space. This I find very useful, it's a great use of space and has plugs and lighting in here.

The charging issue can be a little bit of a downside in a storm situation. Running the roads over a full day during restoration, we can use a lot of battery.

The key is to be sure it's charged in the morning, but also pre-routing out where the charging locations will be where you will be working, in case you need to make a stop to charge up. In a recent three-to-four-day storm, it worked out ok, though. I only had to charge a couple of times throughout the storm.

So far, this has been a great truck for my day-to-day use.



"It Made Me Think about Getting a Truck"

Norka Chamorro, VEC Senior Human Resources Generalist, has used one of VEC's Lightnings several times this year to travel among VEC district facilities.

Below are her thoughts on the truck.

Driving was a really good experience. It made me think about getting a truck, honestly. It was really comfortable and smooth. It was easy to maneuver. And when you accelerate, it really moves.

It wasn't complicated to drive – it was very similar to other vehicles.

Even though with the driving distances I was traveling I did not need to charge it up, I plugged it in anyway, to top it off. Plugging it in was really straightforward.

The truck worked great for my purposes. Quick advice – before you head out, get familiar with controls, like the windshield wipers for example. It's Vermont – you never know what you are going to get, weather-wise!



Utility Scale Battery Will Help VEC Shave Peaks, Soak up Renewable Energy

VEC, in partnership with project partners, has commissioned a second utility scale battery in our territory to make it easier to utilize renewable energy and reduce the cost to provide power to VEC members during peak demand times.

The battery project is the second that VEC has been involved with. The first, located in Hinesburg, was commissioned in 2019.

The battery project in North Troy – a joint effort among VEC, Green Mountain Power and Hydro-Quebec subsidiary EVLO – consists of sixteen white shipping-container-like boxes. The 3-megawatt battery project can store enough energy to power 600 homes for a day.

The battery is located in a unique location in Vermont, known in the local utility sector as the Sheffield-Highgate Export Interface, where sometimes there is more renewable energy produced than there is capacity to either use locally or to export. Part of the role of this new battery is to soak up that energy for use at a later time. The battery can also supply energy to the VEC system during peak demand times – when the cost to purchase power on the open market and transmit it to VEC members is expensive. This enables VEC to save money.



Storm Preparation: Here are a Few Tips

Despite VEC's ongoing efforts to minimize outages, we urge our members to be prepared when storms do knock out power.

Below are a few steps you can take before a storm hits to allow you and your family to weather possible outages more comfortably:

Build/restock an emergency kit. This kit should include at a minimum: flashlight(s) or headlamp(s); extra batteries; first aid kit; manual can opener; bottled water; non-perishable food. Additional items could include a radio (battery powered or hand crank); sets of warm clothing and sleeping bags and/or blankets; toiletries including towelettes/wipes, hand sanitizer, diapers and prescription medications.

Plan for medical needs/devices. If someone in your home is dependent on electric-powered medical equipment, make sure you have a battery back-up or make alternative arrangements to ensure their needs are met.

Charge devices and fuel vehicles. Be sure cell phones, computers and tablets are charged and vehicles are full of fuel.

Watch the forecast. Keep updated with storm alerts and news from the National Weather Service. Get updates on outages and estimated times of restoration on VEC's Outage Center as well as on VEC's Facebook feed. Radio and TV stations may

offer outage information as well.

Avoid down lines. During and after a storm, keep a sharp eye out for downed power lines outside. Always assume every line is energized and dangerous and keep your distance. Don't drive across down lines even if they appear to be de-energized. Don't touch anything that might be in contact with a down line.

Locate a shelter. If your home becomes unsafe or you need resources during a major storm or during longer term outages, dial 2-1-1 to find the closest shelter in your area. Check on elderly neighbors and relatives. Be sure they are safe, warm and secure.

Stay off roads. During and after a storm, minimize unnecessary travel. Roads may have down lines and trees on them and traffic lights might be out. Staying off road will help first responders and utility crews more safely and quickly get their work done.

Use generators and stoves safely. Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area.

Stay alert even after restoration. When the power comes back on in your home, it doesn't necessarily mean all repairs in your area have been made. Remain vigilant for and stay away from any down lines or trees in your area.



Giving Season is Almost Here



A reminder that you can support your local community by contributing to the VEC Community Fund by rounding up your electric bill to the nearest dollar or donating your member capital.

The VEC Community Fund, supported entirely by voluntary donations from VEC members, is intended to strengthen the community by awarding grants to organizations that promote community development and economic security, underscoring the basic cooperative principle of "concern for community." The fund awarded its first grant in 2015 and since then has supported more than 150 different non-profit organizations in the VEC region.

Recent funding has supported food shelves, programs for the elderly, firewood to keep those in need warm, addiction recovery efforts, flood recovery, and more.

And, if you know a non-profit looking for funding, the Community Fund might be able to help. Applying is easy. Go online at the link below and click on Apply to fill out a simple online form.

The Community Fund Allocation Committee accepts applications on a rolling basis and committee reviews applications and makes allocations quarterly. Application windows for each quarter close on the following dates: December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. (Note: eligible applicants may not receive two grant awards within a six (6) month period.)

<https://vermontelectric.coop/community-fund>

Pictured left: Wood4Good, a non-profit effort that supplies firewood to Vermonters in need, has received grants from the Community Fund.

DRAFTY HOME?
HIGH HEATING BILLS?



The Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP) May be Able to Help

- ✓ Low monthly payments added to your electricity bill
- ✓ No credit check required
- ✓ Up to 75 % of project costs

More at vhfa.org/wrap

About VEC's Service Quality and Reliability Plan

VEC is committed to providing our members with the highest quality service. VEC, as well as other utilities, operate under the guidelines of a Service Quality and Reliability Plan (SQRP), which defines standards by which VEC's member service, safety, and reliability performance are measured. This plan requires the utility to monitor and report the results of its performance in these areas annually to the Public Utility Commission. Each SQRP also includes a "service guarantee" - a specific credit or financial benefit to the affected individual retail customers if the utility fails to meet one of its service commitments. You can find out more here: <https://vermontelectric.coop/service-quality-guarantees>

Solar Power For People, Not Profit!

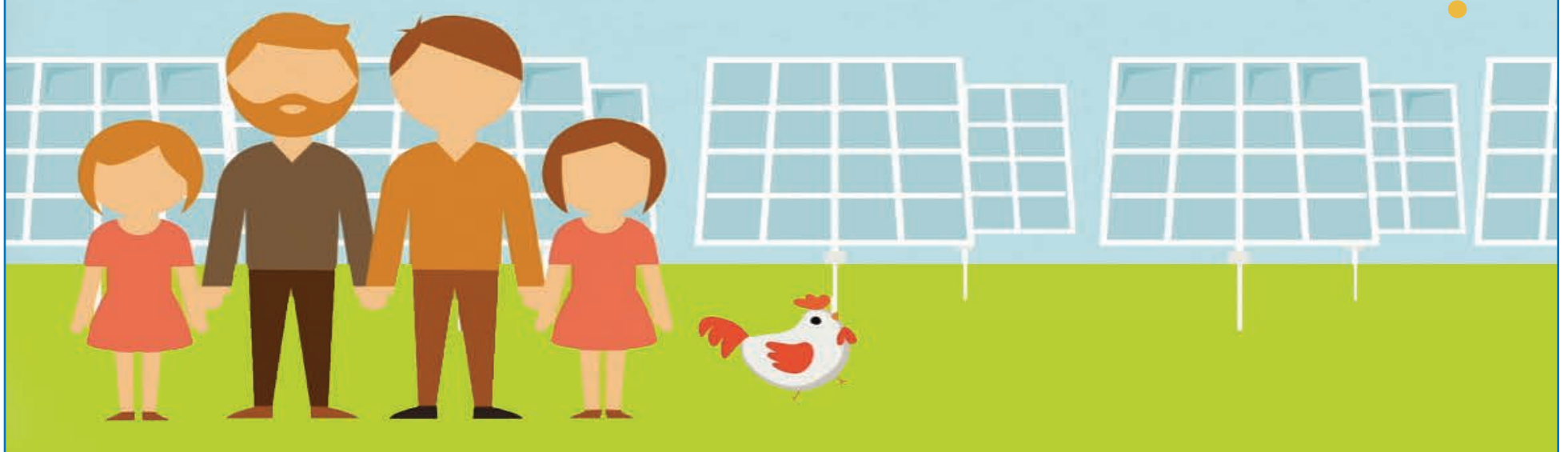
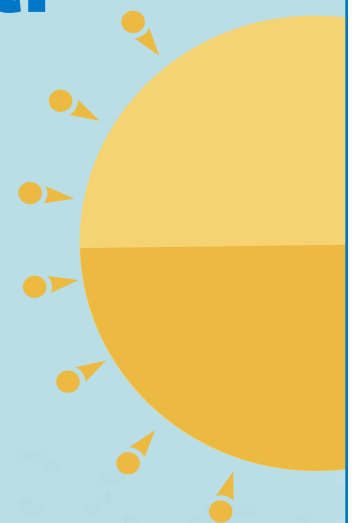
Vermont Electric Cooperative is member-owned and committed to the best interests of our members and their communities. This is why we developed VEC Co-op Community Solar—an easy and efficient way for all VEC members to get great value while supporting clean electricity.

VEC Co-op Community Solar is perfect for folks renting their home and for houses with a shady site or unsuitable roof.

Members simply make a one-time upfront payment to sponsor a portion of the solar array and receive a guaranteed fixed monthly credit on their electric bill.

Participants can opt out at any time for any reason, and get back a prorated portion of their sponsorship. Ten and twenty year terms are available and so is affordable financing.

With projects up and running in Alburgh, Grand Isle and Hinesburg, now is a good time to support solar with VEC Co-op Community Solar.



Save money. Support solar.

For more information, visit vermontelectric.coop/solar or call 1-800-832-2667.

All About the VEC Electric Bill

From time to time we get questions from members who want to know what the individual line item charges are on their electric bill. Here is an explanation of charges.

- **The Customer Charge** is a base charge for having a meter at your property that is connected and capable of using power. This charge supports operation of the electric system.
- **The Energy Charge** is the charge for the electricity you've used during the previous month. The top number is the charge for the first 100 kWh you used that month. The second number is the charge for any usage beyond the first 100 kWh.
- **The Energy Efficiency Charge** is the charge, which is based on a percentage of usage, that supports Efficiency Vermont's programs like rebates and incentives for efficient appliances, building materials, lighting, and other equipment. VEC, as well as the state's other utilities, collects this fee for the efficiency utility.
- **VEC Community Fund Bill Round Up** is the charge members can voluntarily have assessed to support the VEC Community Fund. This fund provides grants to local non-profits in the VEC region. (If you don't already support the fund, you can find our more info here: <https://vermontelectric.coop/community-fund>)
- **1-37 WATT- 20 LED** is a charge on some bills. A small minority of members have a VEC streetlight on their property designed to light up their dooryard or driveway, for example. (These are distinct from municipal street lights.) Members who have a light such as this pay a usage fee for the electricity that light uses.

Avoiding Usage Surprises

Here are some Tips for Locating Energy Culprits this Winter

Most people's electric bills fluctuate during the course of the year – and winter can be one of the higher use times of year.

To avoid high usage as we head into winter, keep in mind the following:

Electric heating/space heaters. Depending on how high it's set and how long it runs, electric resistance heating systems can use a lot of electricity. And space heaters can cause unexpected increases in usage. You can set thermostats and timers to help keep heat running only when needed. Heat pumps have carbon-reduction benefits and offer cooling in the summer, they can add significant winter load. That said, heat pumps often help reduce the cost of other heating fuels like propane or oil.

Water heaters. If you have an electric water heater, usage can increase if you use an unusual amount of hot water over a given period. Houseguests – which increase the number of showers and laundry loads for example – can kick usage up. Simple strategies to reduce the amount of hot water needed can be quite effective, such as using cold-water wash cycles in the laundry, taking showers instead of baths, using the dishwasher instead of running water from the faucet, and installing low-flow showerheads and aerators.

Electric heat tapes. During periods of extended cold weather, heat tapes around pipes, under mobile homes, and in other places can increase usage. Engine block heaters for tractors and trucks can also increase usage during frigid weather. Always select devices with thermostats, or install a timer to limit unnecessary run times.

Livestock/animal care. Livestock water anti-freeze systems, heat lamps for chickens, and even indoor fish tanks, especially if they are in a cold room, can all increase usage.

Winter = more time at home. One of the other drivers of higher usage in the winter is simple, but often overlooked: we spend more time inside. When we do, we tend to use more power. Because the days are much shorter and often cloudier, we use more lighting. Further, entertainment systems, holiday related cooking, laundry and water heating all can add up. And, even if you don't use electric heat, simply moving heat with fans and circulators – whether that heat is generated by an oil or propane system or pellet or wood stoves – takes electricity.

When Equipment Isn't Working Right

Sometimes an appliance that keeps running because it's not working properly can cause high usage. Common culprits are well pumps, septic pumps and water heaters. Sometimes members ask us whether their electric meter is functioning properly. Nowadays, utility electric meters are extremely accurate. While members do have the right to get their meter tested once a year, in the vast majority of cases a meter test shows the meter is working properly and higher usage is the result of the activities outlined above.

Meter #	Description	Days	Services	Readings	Metered Usage	Meter Multiplier	Recorded Usage
1083XXXX	BILLING	30	08/16/2023 - 09/15/2023	Previous: 29936, Present: 30567	631	1	631

Previous Account Activity		
Previous Balance		\$194.00
Payment Received - Thank You		-\$194.00
Balance Before Current Charges		\$0.00

Current Activity		
Customer Charge		\$19.63
Energy Charge	100 kWh @ 0.09946	\$9.95
Energy Charge	531 kWh @ 0.20076	\$106.60
Energy Efficiency Charge		\$6.99
VEC Community Fund Bill Round Up		\$0.84
1 - 37 WATT-20 LED		\$13.99
Total Current Activity		\$158.00
Total Amount Due		\$158.00

Usage History

Previous Year | Current Year

For more information on your usage, visit SmartHub on your computer or mobile device.

Add Predictability with Budget Billing

If you are interested in adding certainty to your monthly finances, you might consider choosing budget billing for your VEC electric bill. This allows you to spread your projected electric bill payments over a 12-month period. Under budget billing, VEC calculates members' individual monthly payments amount based on the average of your previous 12 months' bills. In the first budget year, VEC reviews the member's account part way through the year to ensure that projected usage is in line with actual usage and adjusts the monthly budget amount if necessary. At the end of the plan year, VEC reconciles the member's account. You can opt out any time. To learn more or enroll, please contact Member Services at 802-635-2331. And, you can learn more about all of VEC's payment options here: <https://vermontelectric.coop/payment-options>.



SmartHub: Information is Power

Your best defense against receiving an unexpectedly high electric bill is to monitor your usage on-line using the SmartHub platform. With SmartHub you can view monthly, daily and hourly usage, and even set up text or email alerts when usage is higher than normal. You can also pay your bill, get outage notifications, and more. If you have not signed up for SmartHub, now might be a good time. We've produced a simple sign-up step-by-step video you can find here: www.vermontelectric.coop/smarthub. (You'll need your account number handy.)

Here are the steps to sign up:

- Go to our website, vermontelectric.coop
- At the bottom left, click on the blue "My Account" box
- A green box will pop up. At the bottom, click on the text "New User? Sign up to access our self-service site."
- Fill in your account number.
- Enter your last name or business name
- Enter the email address for the account
- Click "submit."
- Select a security question, and type in the answer.
- Click "submit."
- You'll see a notification that a password reset link was sent to your email.
- Open that email and click "verify account."
- Choose a password, and type it in.
- Click "submit"

This will take you to your SmartHub portal – you have successfully signed up!

If you need help or want to learn more about the features of SmartHub, please don't hesitate to call Member Services as 802-635-2331.

VEC Has Used Vehicles for Sale

Vermont Electric Co-op is selling several vehicles, including pickup trucks, utility trailers and a UTV, by sealed bid.

The chart below outlines the vehicles for sale, their year, make and model as well as notes on their condition.

Bids should be mailed to: VEC, 42 Wescom Road, Johnson VT 05656, attention Amanda Cochran.

Bids need to be received by 4pm December 13, 2024.

For more information about the vehicles or the bidding process, please contact Tucker Williams at 802-730-1211 or via email at twilliams@vermontelectric.coop.

Note: the highlighted items below (the UTV trailer and the UTV) are being sold as a package.



Truck #	District Location	Year	Make	Model	Vehicle Type	Mileage
3	Johnson	2014	Ford	F-150	Pickup	147,126
70	Johnson	2011	Ford	F-150	Pickup	189,739
80	Johnson	2014	Ford	F-250	Pickup	236,230
7	Johnson	2015	Ford	F-550	Small Bucket	223,740
T24	Johnson	1998	Cross Country	Flatbed Trailer	Trailer	N/A
717	Newport	2012	Polaris	Ranger	UTV	1,772
T13	Newport	2018	Sure-Trac	UTV Trailer	UTV Trailer	N/A
79	Newport	2014	Ford	F-150	Pickup	123,536
76	Newport	2013	Ford	F-150	Pickup	104,263
81	Newport	2014	Ford	F-250	Pickup	220,409
T49	Newport	2005	Downeaster	Flatbed Trailer	Trailer	N/A
T67	Newport	2008	BIG TEX	Flatbed Trailer	Trailer	N/A
T3	Newport	2015	SURE TRAC	Flatbed Trailer	ATV Trailer	N/A

CEO update:

Continued from page 1

day-to-day business as our local workforce delivers core energy services to our communities.

- **Storm recovery.** As a VEC member, you are surely aware of recent weather that has wreaked more frequent havoc on our system. We now spend more time and dollars on storm restoration than in past years. While we are deeply grateful for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursements for some portion of our costs from these events, our average annual costs continue to increase significantly.

How Does This Rate Increase Roll Out?

With approval from the VEC Board of Directors, we filed the request November 15th with the Public Utility Commission. The Commission, with input from the Public Service Department, will review the request and determine the appropriate approval or investigation process.

The increase will take effect on January 1, 2025 as a percentage increase in all rate categories. As the PUC's review process advances over the next several weeks, VEC will provide updates to our members. And, please feel free to contact us at any time if you would like more information.

Last Chance to Win in VEC's ChargeItUp Program

VEC's ChargeItUp Program will be wrapped up by the end of the year so if you have an entry, send it in before Dec 31.

The ChargeItUp Program, launched in the summer of 2020, is a monthly drawing in which members can win a one-time \$100 bill credit if they submit information and about their battery-powered device that displaces the use of fossil fuel. Battery powered lawn and garden tools like string trimmers, chainsaws, and leaf blowers, as well as other items such as electric snow blowers, e-bikes, motorcycles are eligible. The item must be a technology for which VEC does not already offer an Energy Transformation bill credit, like an electric vehicle or pellet stove, for example.

Since the program was launched, we've had 184 entries and 40 winners.

String trimmers and related lawn and garden equipment have been by far the most numerous entries, along with chainsaws, a pressure washer, log splitters, and several e-bikes.

Comments from entrants about battery-powered technology have been overwhelmingly positive, with many members citing the convenience avoiding gasoline, the relative quiet of battery-powered equipment, and the fact the tools are generally lighter than gas-powered equivalents.

Entering an item easy. Visit <https://vermontelectric.coop/chargeitup-program>

NOTICE: FLEXIBLE LOAD PILOT

Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) is launching a new pilot program designed to reduce the infrastructure impacts of electrification loads, such as electric vehicle (EV) charging. The 18-month "Support Your Local Grid" pilot will begin on January 20, 2025. By leveraging advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) data and a grid-aware distributed energy resource management system (DERMS), the pilot aims to optimize EV charging, reducing the strain on distribution transformers and deferring costly infrastructure upgrades. Members participating in the "Support Your Local Grid" pilot are compensated for enabling grid-aware EV management during peak demand times. The pilot seeks to lower costs and significantly increase the development of distributed energy resources as called for under Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard (RES).

For more information, please contact support@vermontelectric.coop

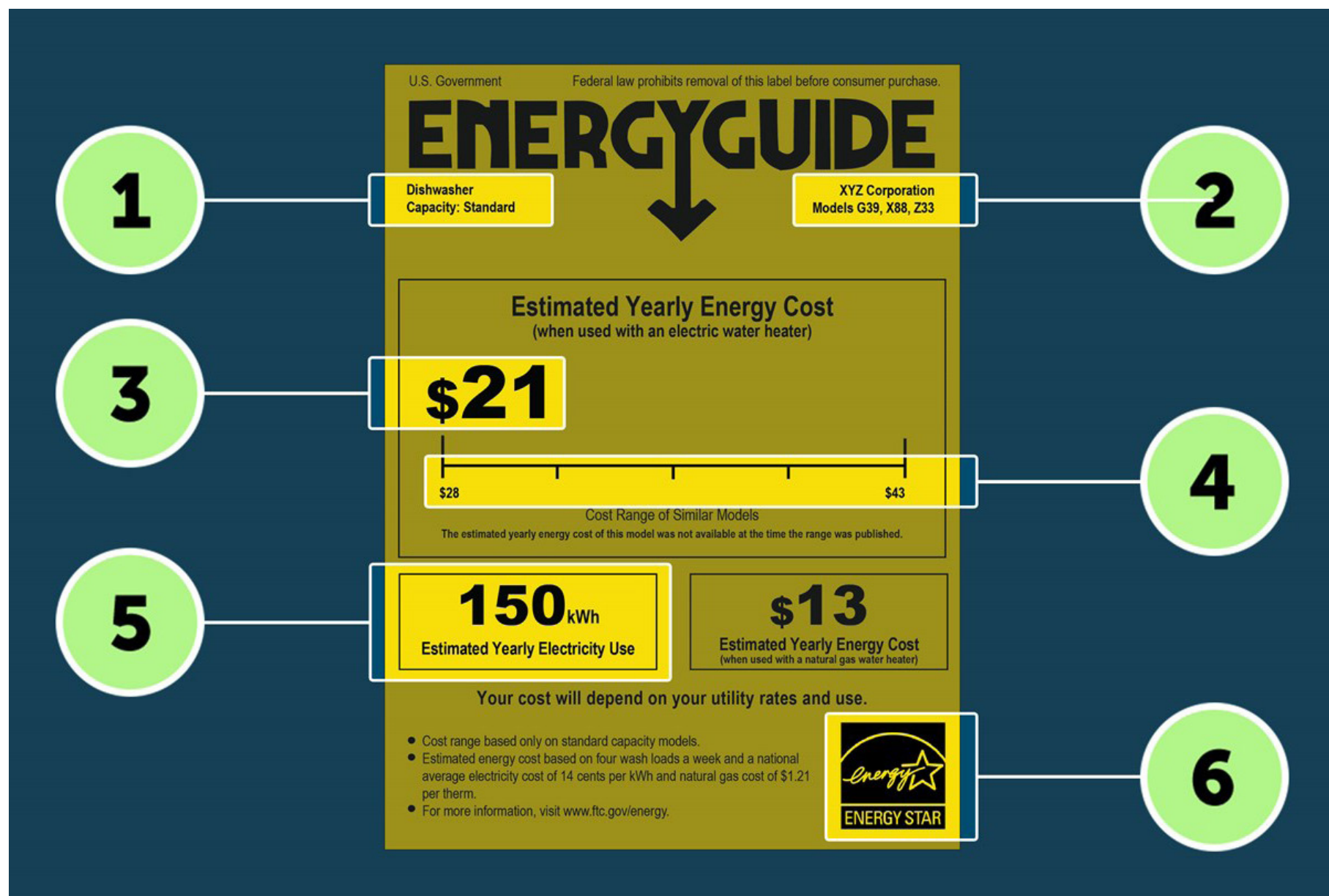
How to read the Energy Guide label

Efficiency
Vermont

If you've shopped for appliances recently, you've probably noticed the big yellow sticker on the side of the box. That's the Energy Guide label (not to be confused with the ENERGY STAR® logo). It appears on all sorts of appliances, from refrigerators and ovens to AC units and televisions.

What is the Energy Guide label?

The Energy Guide label is a federal standard that gives transparency to consumers about how much it costs to run the appliance. The idea is simple: give shoppers the information they need to choose which appliance is right for them. Even if an appliance costs more up front, it might cost less to operate because it's more energy efficient. Likewise, a cheaper appliance might cost you more in the long run because it's more expensive to run every year.



Choose the right appliance for you

Understanding the Energy Guide label can empower you to shop smartly for your next appliance. The label is universal, so no matter where you plan to buy the appliance, you can rest assured that you're getting consistent information. Every household is different, and the Energy Guide label can help you find the right appliance for your unique needs and priorities.

Six elements of the Energy Guide label

There are six key elements of the Energy Guide label:

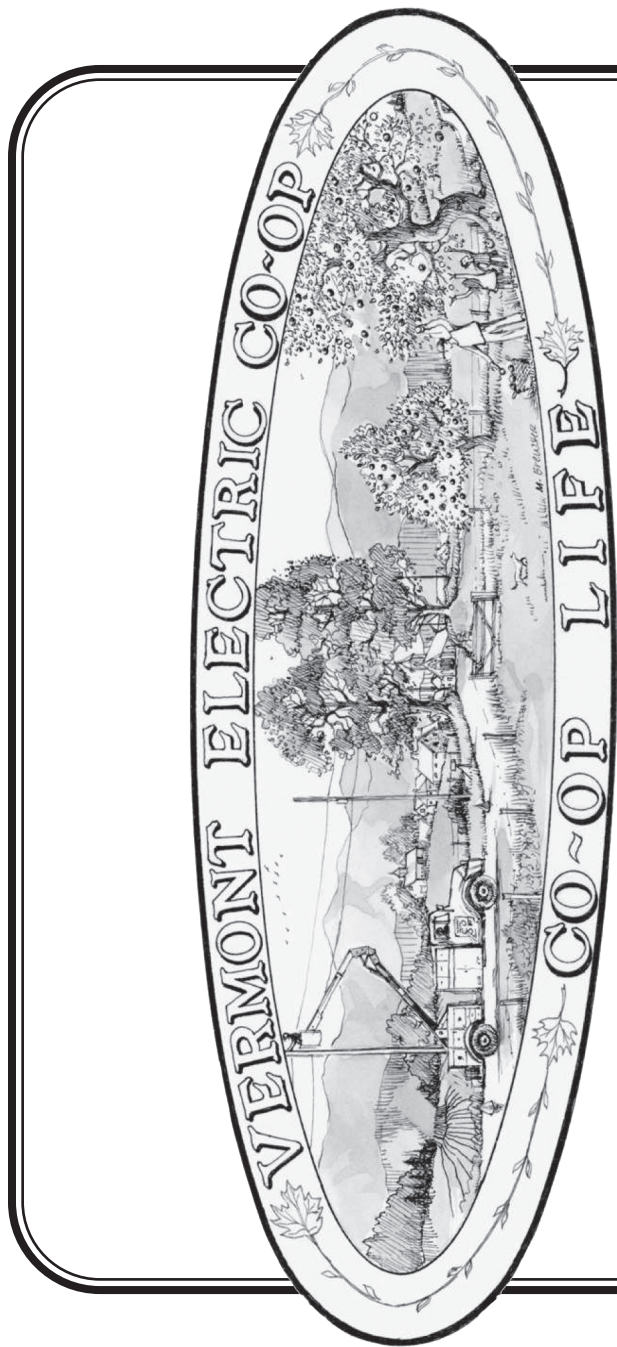
- 1. Key features.** If you're comparing models of the same type of appliance (say, window AC units), the key features should match. Apples to apples.
- 2. Make, model, and size of the appliance.**
- 3. Estimated annual operating cost.** This can be a little misleading, because the estimated annual operating cost is calculated based on the nationwide average cost of electricity. If you live somewhere with lower electricity rates, your annual operating cost will be lower. Also, the more you use the appliance, the more electricity you consume, and the more money you'll spend every year.
- 4. Range of operating costs for similar models.** This is a scale showing the range of prices for appliances with the same key features.

5. Estimated annual electrical usage. This is calculated based on the average electrical usage, so your usage will vary depending on your household's needs. For example, if you need to do a load of laundry every day, your electrical usage will be higher than someone who does a load of laundry once a week. This impacts the annual operating cost, too.

6. ENERGY STAR logo. If the appliance meets the Environmental Protection Agency's voluntary standards for high efficiency, you'll see the ENERGY STAR logo on the yellow Energy Guide label. Products that earn the ENERGY STAR label are independently certified to meet strict energy efficiency standards, so you can be sure your appliance is more efficient than average.

What's the difference between the Energy Guide label and ENERGY STAR logo?

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) created the Energy Guide label to protect consumers. It's like the nutrition labels you see on food. Meanwhile, ENERGY STAR is a certification created by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Appliances that are more efficient than the federal standard and meet the EPA's higher, voluntary standards can get the ENERGY STAR designation. Often, you'll see the ENERGY STAR logo on the bottom right corner of the Energy Guide label. The most efficient appliances of all are called ENERGY STAR Most Efficient.



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VEC Utility Designer Jordan Doyon has been using this Ford F150 Lightning electric pickup truck for his daily work with the co-op for almost a year. His is one of four F150 Lightnings VEC has been testing in the field. On page 2, Jordan and two other VEC employees who have used these trucks in various conditions, reflect on their experience with this new technology.



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Inside Fall 2024 Co-op Life

CEO Update	p. 1
Innovation Webinar: Helping the Co-op Save Money Through Flexible Load Management.....	p. 1
Putting F150 Lightnings Through the Paces	p. 2
Utility Scale Battery Will Help VEC Shave Peaks, Soak up Renewable Energy	p. 3
Storm Preparation: Here are a Few Tips	p. 3
Giving Season is Almost Here	p. 3
Weatherization Assistance Program (WRAP).....	p. 4
About VEC's Service Quality and Reliability Plan	p. 4
VEC's Community Solar Program	p. 4
All About the VEC Electric Bill	p. 5
VEC Has Used Vehicles for Sale	p. 6
Efficiency Vermont: How to Read the Energy Guide label	p. 7

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