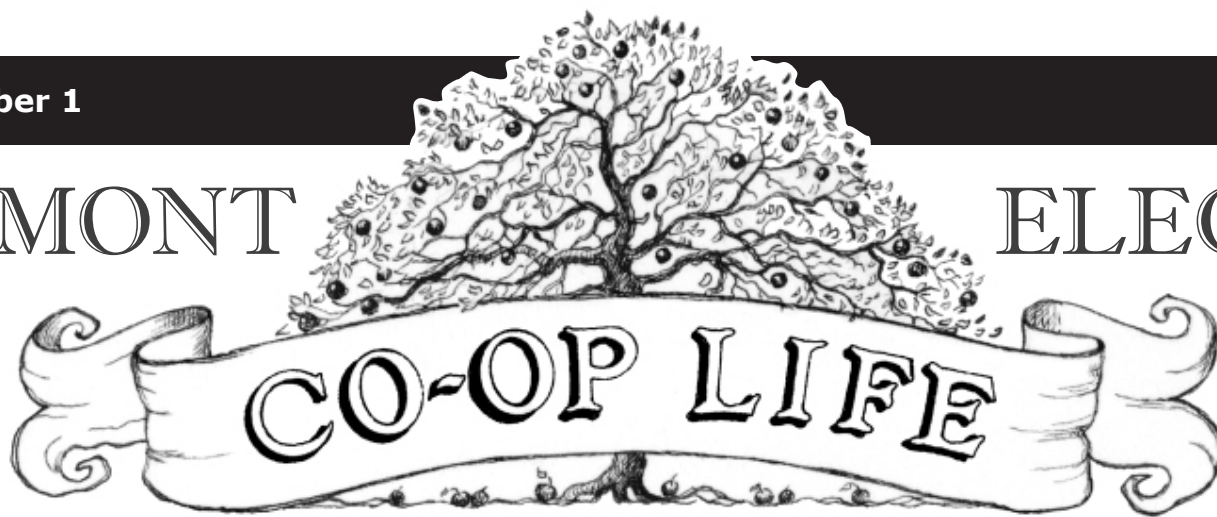


VERMONT

ELECTRIC



VEC Reliability & Resiliency

By Rebecca Towne

In January, winter storms Finn and Gerri brought significant damage to Vermont, taking down trees, power poles/lines and blowing away roofs. This comes after six months of intense, devastating weather including historic flooding in July and four rounds of wet heavy snow in December. We are so thankful for our resilient and patient members as we worked to restore power as safely and quickly as possible after each incident.

Climate change has brought more frequent, damaging inclement weather, and we know our members rely on power for comfort, light, heat, connectivity and increasingly transportation. Our mission has been reliability since our start in the 1930s. Now that mission is more important than ever and also more challenging to deliver on. Here is how we're working to deliver on our commitment to reliability today and into the future.

Strong Resilient Infrastructure: Improving Reliability

Our 2,400-plus miles of line serving over 40,000 locations requires ongoing proactive maintenance and improvement. We continue to invest more to meet the needs of our quickly evolving future.

Vegetation management. While they are beautiful, trees are the biggest contributor to outages when weather hits. We spend millions annually to trim trees in our rights-of-way and find ways to do that ever-more efficiently. This continues to be a foundational strategy to maintain reliability.

Hardening the grid. This involves moving lines out of the woods, closer to roads to increase speed of repairs, burying lines where feasible and adding more durable "tree wire" or using close-arm construction in cases where going underground is not feasible. The less exposure that we have to trees or weather, the more resilient the lines become and the lower cost to maintain over the years.

Increasing redundancy. Automated sensors and switches in the field allow us to quickly identify faults, then re-route power from another source when possible. We continue to add automated redundancy that can reduce the number of members impacted by an outage.

Battery storage: In certain scenarios, batteries can provide resiliency, particularly when paired with on-site generation like solar. It's still expensive, yet we are embracing early opportunities and expect more to come. A microgrid we've co-developed with

Craftsbury Outdoor Center and the offer of incentives for homeowners to install battery backup are two examples of this increasingly important strategy.

When the Power goes Out: Faster Restoration

When the lights do go out, our team jumps to respond. While the blue trucks and field workers are the most visible part of our storm operation, it takes a huge team of people including many behind the scenes taking calls, dispatching crews, communicating with members, and supporting software systems and logistics. We are always working to restore power faster using some of the following strategies.

- **State-of-the-art technology.** These digital systems help us efficiently deploy crews by understanding the electric connectivity and tracking hundreds of issues for resolution. The more efficient we can be with our organization, the faster we can get the right crews to the right spot and start working on restoration. In January we had hundreds of outages impacting over 20,000 people. Some of those outages had multiple issues to be fixed, especially broken poles and downed wire.

- **Storm roles.** All VEC employees have a role when storms hit. We spend hours training and planning before the winter and prior to each predicted storm, so

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Transportation, Heating, Mowing and More: VEC's Got Incentives

Just a reminder: VEC has a robust and varied set of incentives for the purchase of electricity-powered appliances and other devices. About 6,000 VEC members have taken advantage of incentives since the co-op began offering them in 2017.

VEC's incentive program, known as the Energy Transformation Program, is designed to benefit the entire co-op membership over time - not just those who take advantage of the program - because VEC calibrates the incentives to pay for themselves through additional electric sales. VEC offers incentives for the purchase of:

- **Electric vehicles:** For plug-in electric vehicles, \$250 bill credit for purchases (new or used) and \$50/year for leases; for all-electric vehicles, \$500 bill credit for purchases (new or used) and \$100/year for leases.

- **Level II EV chargers:** We offer a free charger to members with electric vehicles. It must be installed by the participant and enrolled in VEC's communications platform so that VEC can request that it not charge when the co-op is anticipating peak electric demand. That helps shift usage to times when electricity is cleaner and less expensive.

- **Public/workplace/multi-family charging stations:** \$500 bill credit per connection.

- **Heat pumps:** For ducted, air-to-water, and ground source heat pumps as well as heat pump water heaters, a joint incentive is available through Efficiency Vermont; a \$150 per unit thermal efficiency credit is available if the system was installed in a building that meets thermal efficiency criteria.

- **Pellet stoves:** A joint incentive with Efficiency Vermont is available through participating retailers, plus another \$150 if the unit is installed in a building that meets thermal efficiency criteria.

- **Other machinery:** residential lawn mowers, \$50 bill credit; commercial-scale mowers and electric forklifts, \$1,000 bill credit.

- **Heat pump pool heaters:** \$600 bill credit for units that meet efficiency criteria.

- **Induction cooktops:** \$100 bill credit. (Portable induction cooktops do not qualify.)

VEC also offers custom incentive opportunities for members who want to replace fossil fuel equipment and reduce carbon emissions, through electric service upgrades or line-extensions. These projects often serve commercial facilities like sawmills or sugaring operations, for instance.

In each of the past seven years, VEC has exceeded its goals for the Energy Transformation Program and helped eliminate the consumption of over 13 million gallons of fossil fuel. That's the equivalent of taking about 23,500 cars off the road for a year.

VEC's incentives can be combined with other available incentives and tax credits. For more information about tax credits for electric vehicles, heat pumps, panel upgrades and more, visit <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator>.

For more information about the Energy Transformation program, please visit www.vermontelectric.coop/energy-transformation-program.



Storms Finn and Gerri Test the Co-op



Vermont experienced two back-to-back windstorms in January that caused major damage and a high number of power outages in VEC territory and elsewhere. The first, Storm Finn, hit overnight Tuesday into Wednesday January 10, causing significant damage to VEC's system in just a few hours. Restoration began after winds died down on Wednesday and crews were able to restore a fair bit of the system, only to be set back by a second storm that struck three days later. This one, Storm Gerri, blew in on January 13 and left further destruction in its path. (Photos here are just a small sampling of images of damage, assessment, and restoration from both storms.)

"These storms were very strong, with wind gusts in some areas exceeding 75 mph for an extended period of time," said Chief Operating Officer Peter Rossi. He said there were hundreds of trees down, including extremely large ones, that put dozens of spans of wire on the ground and breaking over 60 poles. Many of the broken poles were in the rights-of-way and required specialized off-road pole setting equipment.

"The damage was not consistent, however, across our territory," he said. "Some areas such as eastern Lamoille County saw very little wind while areas in western Lamoille and Chittenden counties experienced two very significant events. We were also contending with other elements such as rain, sleet, snow, and freezing temperatures" he noted.

In addition to our 28 VEC Line workers and approximately two dozen VEC (and ex-VEC) field support personnel and mechanics, a total number of 90 additional line workers and other personnel came to assist restorations. They included municipal utilities from the Massachusetts towns of Groveland, Holden, Littleton, Middleton and Sterling. Other support came from Vermont

utilities Washington Electric Co-op, Burlington Electric Department, and additional municipal departments from Enosburg, Morrisville, Orleans, Stowe, Swanton. We also had private contractors Riggs Distler, JCR, Grattan Line, and Charles Curtis. Line workers were supported by approximately 40 Tree Clearing personnel from TTS, Trees LLC, and H. Bros and several Traffic Crews from ADA and Green Mountain Flagging. There were almost 170 individuals throughout the event working in the field which doesn't count the almost 60 employees providing Control Center support, management, logistics, safety, and other activities. It truly was an all-hands on deck event.

When our team is working 16-hour days, they need to be well-fueled to keep up the hard work. A huge shout-out to local restaurants and individuals who provide a 6 a.m. breakfast, bag lunches, and dinner after long, cold days in the field.

Storm Facts

Broken poles (46 from Storm Finn and 15 from Storm Gerri):

61

Meters restored by conclusion of both storms:

29,708

Maximum number of members without power at one time during the events:

9,451



New Jay Peak Heating Project Brings Big Benefits to the Region

Jay Peak Resort has been running an innovative, hybrid space-and-water heating system for a few months now and initial indications are that the effort is helping the resort save significant energy costs and reduce carbon emissions.

The new system can toggle back and forth between fuels, either propane or electricity, based on a variety of metrics, at any given time.

"The resort is very pleased with the first month of electric boiler operation," said Andy Stenger, Director of Facilities and Resort Services at Jay. "So far we've lowered our propane consumption by 37,000 gallons and reduced our carbon emissions by 175 tons," he said. "We are very excited to see what the next few months of operations will yield."

The system's software "picks and chooses when it's most efficient to run either propane or electricity," said Dave Lahar, VEC's Key Accounts Manager. He noted that consuming electricity selectively in re-



Representatives from Jay Peak Resort VEC and others gathered in September to mark the start of the new thermal boiler project at the resort. Photo courtesy Jay Peak Resort.

sponse to certain signals enables the boiler to receive significantly cheaper and cleaner electricity while improving the efficiency of the local grid.

"Initial indications are very promising that the system is working as intended, based on the early data we've seen," Lahar said.

Jay Peak Resort – which is one of VEC's largest commercial members – is expected to reduce pro-

pane consumption from the Tramside area, including the Hotel Jay and the Pumphouse waterpark, by 60 percent, or 450,000 gallons per year. The resulting 2,500-ton annual reduction in CO2 emissions is substantial and will make a meaningful contribution to Vermont's and VEC's carbon reduction goals.

The system also leverages the value of the electric grid. For instance, the new electrical load will mitigate some of the current electric system congestion problems in the constrained Sheffield Highgate Export Interface (SHEI) area. In the SHEI there are times when there is too much generation and not enough demand. This causes some renewable resources, such as Kingdom Community Wind, to be curtailed.

"We're really excited about the wide range of benefits this project brings to the region," said Lahar. "We expect to learn a lot – and perhaps, if it continues to prove a successful model, it can be replicated in other parts of our service territory."

Seeking Candidates for Board of Directors



Are you interested in making a direct contribution to an affordable and clean energy future? VEC is accepting petitions from eligible candidates for four board of directors' seats that are up for election in May.

"VEC board members have a broad range of perspectives and backgrounds, care deeply about the community, and enjoy learning about and influencing energy issues," said Rebecca Towne, VEC's chief executive officer. "If this describes you – and you have a passion for safe, reliable and affordable electricity, then consider running for the VEC board this year."

In order to run for the board, a candidate must be a VEC member and may not be employed by the cooperative. Candidates must have a principal residence within VEC service territory and in the district or zone they are running to represent. Directors are elected to serve four-year terms. The board generally meets in the afternoon on the last Tuesday of each month, either at VEC's main office in Johnson or virtually via teleconference.

Directors receive a stipend and mileage reimbursement for attending meetings and have training opportunities to learn more about energy issues and the cooperative utility model. Below is a list of the seats that are open in 2024 and the towns they represent:

District 2: Coventry, Derby, Newport City (Partial 1 year term to fill current vacancy).

District 7: Alburgh, Grand Isle, Isle LaMotte, North Hero, South Hero

East Zone At-large: Albany, Averill, Averys Gore, Barton, Bloomfield, Brighton, Brownington, Brunswick, Canaan, Charleston, Coventry, Craftsbury, Derby, Ferdinand, Glover, Greensboro, Guildhall, Holland, Irasburg, Jay, Lemington, Lewis, Lowell, Lyndon, Maidstone, Morgan, Newark, Newport City, Newport Town, Norton, Sheffield, Sutton, Troy, Warners Grant, Warren Gore, Westfield, Westmore, Wheelock

West Zone At-large: Alburgh, Bakersfield, Belvidere, Berkshire, Bolton, Cambridge, Eden, Enosburg, Essex, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Franklin, Georgia, Grand Isle, Highgate, Hinesburg, Huntington, HydePark, Isle LaMotte, Jericho, Johnson, Milton, Montgomery, Morristown, North Hero, Richford, Richmond, Sheldon, Shelburne, South Hero, Starksboro, Stowe, St. Albans Town, St. George, Swanton, Underhill, Waterville, Westford, Williston.

VEC welcomes a diversity of ideas and experience. To learn more or request application materials visit vermontelectric.coop/board-candidate-information or email support@vermontelectric.coop or call 800-832-2667.

VEC's Board of Directors: An Overview

VEC is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors that represent the membership. The board has fiduciary responsibility for setting broad policy in accordance with statute and the co-op bylaws in determining the overall operation and direction of the co-op.

Among other things, the board reviews and approves the co-op's financial management, and related retirement of member capital, when it's financially feasible. The board reviews and approves the annual operational plan and conducts longer term, high level, multiyear planning. The board is also responsible for the hiring and oversight of VEC's chief executive officer and for reporting the past year's progress at VEC's Annual Meeting of the Membership.

Board members also bring questions and concerns from VEC members to the full board and staff when necessary.

Jody Dunklee on Board Service: "A Unique Opportunity to be Part of the Solution"



Jody Dunklee

Jody Dunklee of Fairfax has served on the Board of Directors since 2019 and represents West Zone at Large towns. (Alburgh, Bakersfield, Belvidere, Berkshire, Bolton, Cambridge, Eden, Enosburg, Essex, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Franklin, Georgia, Grand Isle, Highgate, Hinesburg, Huntington, HydePark, Isle LaMotte, Jericho, Johnson, Milton, Montgomery, Morristown, North Hero, Richford, Richmond, Sheldon, Shelburne, South Hero, Starksboro, Stowe, St. Albans Town, St. George, Swanton, Underhill, Waterville, Westford, Williston.)

Below, Jody, whose seat is up for election in 2027, offers some thoughts on serving on the VEC Board.

What made you want to serve on the VEC Board of Directors?

After working in engineering for many years, I became interested in how we use energy and how it can be done in a sustainable way. I place a lot of value on the natural world, and believe that technology is not only a tool to enable us to life more comfortably, but also a critical path to living in harmony with nature in the modern world. Technology in the energy sector is evolving quickly to meet this need - it is an interesting time! When I saw the request for director candidates at VEC, I knew right away it was something I wanted to be involved in. It wrapped up all these interests into something tangible and actionable, that I knew would be a valuable learning experience, while also serving a need in our community.

What's been rewarding about being on the board?

I am most proud of our commitment to source emissions-free power to the VEC membership as of 2023, and 100 percent renewable by 2030. Vermont is a leader in the country in the clean energy transition and it is exciting to be a

part of. There is a lot of work to do and considerations to take into account, but as board members, we set that vision on behalf of the members. I also love that VEC is a non-profit, cooperative business. In addition to the community-centered operating principles, VEC does not make money from the members. Rates are only used to cover operating costs and infrastructure, and the rest is returned to members at the end of the year, provided the co-op is in a strong enough financial position.

What are the challenges?

Balancing the need to innovate and transition to clean energy while also keeping rates low.

What would you advise to anyone considering running?

I would encourage people from all backgrounds to consider serving on the VEC board. Diverse viewpoints are important for problem solving, and more representative of the membership. I would also advise that, unless you are already involved in the utility sector, there is a lot of learning in the first couple of years. There are many opportunities for formal courses and you will also learn from attending meetings, but new directors should also plan to dedicate time to learning about the areas of the business they are not familiar with. As a director, you will have to have high-level understanding in many aspects. Serving on the Board has been a great experience and gratifying work. Electricity is so important to our daily lives - this is a unique opportunity to be a part of the solution for the VEC community, and for future generations.

Save the Date
Mark your calendars now
VEC Annual Meeting will take place May 11
at Smugglers Notch Resort
Stay tuned for more info!

Notice of Proposed Rate Change and Public Hearing

On November 14, 2023, Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc. (VEC) filed with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) a request for a revenue increase of \$7,388,362 to be effective on January 1, 2024. This represents an 8.76% increase over existing rates. VEC proposes that the increase be equally applied to all members through a flat increase across all rate classes. The PUC had opened a formal investigation, and the rate increase went into effect on a temporary basis starting on January 1, 2024. The increase will show as a surcharge on your bill until the completion of the investigation. If the rate request is not approved by the PUC, VEC will apply a credit to members' bills.

The need for this increase is driven by (1) general costs to run the cooperative (interest expenses, labor costs, postage increases, property taxes), (2) purchasing and distributing electricity (more expensive market rates, contract escalations, necessary infrastructure investments), and (3) reduced revenues due to weather and increased net-metering. Despite the need for consequential rate increases for 2023 and 2024, VEC's ten-year average increase including this year's recommended increase remains low at 2.22% per year, as we have tried to balance frugality with our mission to deliver safe and reliable service to our members.

A chart is attached (at right) showing the present and proposed rates for each rate schedule.

Any interested person may examine the rate increase filing via ePUC at: <https://epuc.vermont.gov>. The Case No. is 23-3943-TF. The filing is also available at the Vermont Electric Cooperative office during normal business hours. Comments regarding the rate filing may be submitted to the Public Utility Commission by via mail at 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2701, via email at puc.clerk@vermont.gov, or via ePUC at <https://epuc.vermont.gov> filed into Case No. 23-3943-TF.

In addition, the PUC will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, commencing at 7:00 P.M., utilizing Go To Meeting video conference with a telephone call-in option. The Public Hearing will commence immediately following the public information session, but no earlier than 7:00 P.M. A public information session will begin at 6:30 P.M. hosted by the Vermont Department of Public Service where Vermont Electric Cooperative will describe the change in rates and be able to answer questions.

Participants and members of the public may access the public hearing online at <https://meet.goto.com/713726277> or call in by telephone using the following information: phone number: +1 (571) 317-3116; access code: 713-726-277. Participants may wish to download the GoToMeeting software application in advance of the hearing at <https://meet.goto.com/install>. Guidance on how to join the meeting and system requirements may be found at

<https://www.gotomeeting.com/meeting/online-meeting-support>.

VEC welcomes your input as well. Please send your questions or comments on the proposed rates to Rebecca Towne, Chief Executive Officer, or Caroline Mashia, Chief Financial Officer, Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc., 42 Wescom Road, Johnson, Vermont 05656 or at rtowne@vermontelectric.coop or cmashia@vermontelectric.coop.

Vermont Electric Cooperative			
Current and Proposed Rates			
		Current	Proposed
Residential (Service Classification #1)	Customer Charge	19.63	21.35
	1st 100 KWH	0.09946	0.10817
	Over 100 KWH	0.20076	0.21835
	Additional Meter Charge	6.39	6.95
	All Additional Meter kWh	0.20076	0.21835
Residential - Time of Use (Service Classification #1.1)	Customer Charge	19.63	21.35
	On Peak KWH	0.22548	0.24523
	Off Peak KWH	0.16262	0.17687
Residential TOU Pilot (Service Classification #1.2)	Customer Charge	19.63	21.35
	On Peak KWH	0.36477	0.39672
	Mid Peak KWH	0.19417	0.21118
	Off Peak KWH	0.13444	0.14622
Small General Non-Demand Billing (Service Classification #2)	Customer Charge	20.80	22.62
	All KWH	0.18048	0.19629
	Farm Residence Credit	(8.09)	(8.80)
Small General - Time of Use Non-Demand Billing (Service Classification #2.1)	Customer Charge	26.80	29.15
	On Peak KWH	0.19978	0.21728
	Off Peak KWH	0.13690	0.14889
Small General TOU Pilot (Service Classification #2.2)	Customer Charge	20.80	22.62
	On Peak KWH	0.33763	0.36721
	Mid Peak KWH	0.18813	0.20461
	Off Peak KWH	0.13587	0.14777
Large General Demand Billing (Service Classification #2)	Customer Charge	34.69	37.73
	All KWH	0.10330	0.11235
	All KW	23.79	25.87
	Farm Residence Credit	(8.09)	(8.80)
Large General - Time of Use Demand Billing (Service Classification #2.1)	Customer Charge	53.55	58.24
	All KWH	0.10330	0.11235
	On Peak KW	27.73	30.16
	Off Peak KW	20.02	21.77
Large General TOU Pilot (Service Classification #2.3)	Customer Charge	34.69	37.73
	On Peak KWH	0.33763	0.36721
	Mid Peak KWH	0.18813	0.20461
	Off Peak KWH	0.13587	0.14777
Industrial (Service Classification #3)	Customer Charge	264.92	288.13
	All KWH	0.10249	0.11147
	All KW - Firm	22.65	24.63
	All KW - Interruptible	18.60	20.23
Industrial Subtransmission - Firm (Service Classification #3)	Customer Charge	264.92	288.13
	All KWH - Firm	0.10227	0.11123
	KW - Firm	13.72	14.92
Industrial Subtransmission - Interruptible (Service Classification #3)	Customer Charge	264.92	288.13
	All KWH - Interruptible	0.09560	0.10397
	KW - Interruptible	9.66	10.51
Lighting (Service Classification #4)	1,000 Lumens	8.84	9.61
	4,000 Lumens	20.13	21.89
	8,000 Lumens MV	20.23	22.00
	20,000 Lumens MV	35.04	38.11
	8,000 Lumens HPS	16.22	17.64
	24,000 Lumens HPS	34.40	37.41
	20 LED	13.99	15.22
	40 LED	25.34	27.56
Specific Use Dynamic Pricing (Service Classification #5)	Customer Charge	264.92	288.13
	Renewable Energy	0.01623	0.01765
	Variable T&D		
	Fixed T&D		
	Capacity, Regulation		

For more information about VEC rates, please visit vermontelectric.coop/rates-and-tariffs

Add up the Incentives for Electric Vehicles - You Might be Surprised at the Math

Are you considering the purchase of an electric vehicle? It might be more affordable than you think.

More and more Vermonters are going electric. The number of electric vehicle incentives given by VEC has grown about 30 percent each year, with about 180 given in 2023. These incentives pay for themselves through new electric sales and help members to make the switch.

Besides VEC's incentives, there are state and federal incentives, too. These incentives can be stacked to bring down the upfront cost of purchasing a used or new EV. Many of these incentives have income and vehicle model requirements, so it's important to look into the details of whether you are eligible and whether the vehicle you are interested in qualifies.

And, as time goes by, more and more pre-owned EVs are on the market as well.

At right are examples of how incentives (including VEC's \$500 income-eligible bonus added to our standard incentives of \$500 for an all-electric vehicle and \$250 for a plug-in hybrid) can be combined to bring what many might consider an expensive ride into an affordable range.

For incentive eligibility details and specific income requirements, please visit these links:

Used EV tax credit: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/used-clean-vehicle-credit>

New EV tax credit: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/credits-for-new-clean-vehicles-purchased-in-2023-or-after>

MileageSmart Program: <https://www.mileagesmartvt.org/>

If you have questions about electric vehicles and incentives, please contact us at support@vermontelectric.coop or 1-800-832-2667.

All-Electric Vehicle			
	(new)		(used)
Purchase price	\$40,000	Purchase price	\$25,000
Federal tax credit	-\$7,500	Federal tax credit	-\$4,000
State incentive	-\$5,000	State Mileage Smart Program	-\$5,000
VEC bill credit	-\$1,000	VEC bill credit	-\$1,000
Final cost	\$26,500	Final cost	\$15,000

Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle			
	(new)		(used)
Purchase price	\$40,000	Purchase price	\$25,000
Federal tax credit	-\$3,750	Federal tax credit	-\$4,000
State incentive	-\$3,000	State Mileage Smart Program	-\$5,000
VEC bill credit	-\$750	VEC bill credit	-\$750
Final cost	\$32,500	Final cost	\$15,250

Keep an Eye Out

A new version of VEC's online portal SmartHub is out! The new user interface puts member usage and payment details front-and-center for fast, easy access, and the simplified menu structure makes navigating the site easier. (If you have not yet signed up for SmartHub, you can do so here: <https://vermontelectric.coop/smarthub>)

There is a A New Option for Financing Home Efficiency Improvements

Do you want to weatherize your home wonder how to pay for it?

The newly-created Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP) may be able to help. WRAP is intended to assist both homeowners and renters in Vermont in pursuing home weatherization projects by allowing them to pay for the cost over time through a low-interest monthly charge on their utility bill.

WRAP assists with projects like insulation and air sealing as well as heat pumps, electric water heaters and advanced wood heating systems.

The program is intended to be cashflow positive for the customer meaning that the expected annual savings from reduced energy bills when the weatherization measures are installed should exceed the annual WRAP charge on your utility bill by at least 10 percent. It is important to note, however, that

these savings are not guaranteed because factors such as future energy prices and changes in consumer behavior regarding energy use can vary.

VEC members interested in WRAP should contact Efficiency Vermont. They will work with you on completing a home energy audit to identify potential weatherization measures, evaluate your project for rebates and incentives they offer, and estimate potential energy savings. If your project is approved and you decide to move forward, they will connect you with an approved contractor.

After the project is completed, you will receive a monthly bill from VEC that includes the WRAP charge until the project has been paid back over several years.

To learn more, please contact Efficiency Vermont at 1-888-921-5990.

CEO update: Continued from page 1

we are ready. This preparation came in handy during the storm right after Thanksgiving which surprised us all on a Sunday afternoon, and during Finn and Gerri when we had six long intense days of restoration.

- Mutual Aid from neighbor utilities. During storms help from other utilities makes our whole region stronger. Just before Christmas, two VEC crews helped restoration at another Cooperative in northern Maine. In Finn and Gerri, VEC had more than triple our usual crews on the system with support from a dozen different utilities in Vermont and Massachusetts.

Redefining What's Possible: Exploring New Technologies

We also spend a lot of time figuring out how technology can help us do things more safely or cost-effectively from construction to restoration.

Underground cable-in-conduit. Currently underground installation requires

digging an open trench, laying conduit, and then pulling electric cable through the conduit. Emerging technology bonds the cable and the conduit together and uses boring technology to install the line without a trench. This approach has downsides but also the potential to be faster and cost-effective - an exciting possibility we are exploring.

Drones for inspection and restoration. We've been successfully experimenting with using drones for proactive line inspections - catching issues before they cause damage. We also plan to try drones for restoration activity, helping field crews identify issues to expedite a critical part of the restoration work.

Finally, to our members: thank you for all you do for your communities, for your kind words during times when we are restoring power, and as always please be in touch with any questions or comments.

2024 Rebates for Your Home



If you're planning on **improving the efficiency of your home or apartment** this year, take a look at these residential offers, including:



Air Sealing and Insulation

- 75% off weatherization project costs, up to \$9,500 (completed by an Efficiency Excellence Network contractor)
- DIY weatherization: \$100 back on select do-it-yourself projects



Heating, Cooling, and Water Heating

- Air-source heat pumps: discounts starting at \$350 + income bonus
- Ground source heat pump: up to \$2,100/ton + \$500 income bonus
- Smart thermostats: \$100 rebate for select ENERGY STAR models
- Water heaters: \$300-\$600 for select heat pump water heaters + \$200 income bonus
- Window air conditioners: \$100 rebate for select ENERGY STAR models
- Wood pellet furnaces & boilers: \$6,000 rebate
- Wood and pellet stoves: \$400 discount at select retailers



Electric Vehicles

- Up to \$6,500 in local incentives and up to a \$7,500 federal tax credit



ENERGY STAR® Appliances

- \$25-\$40 for dehumidifiers
- \$200-\$400 rebate on heat pump clothes dryers
- \$400 for heat pump dryer/washer combination units



Lighting

- \$100 rebate for qualifying LED fixtures for indoor growing.



Income-based Assistance

- Free lighting, appliances, energy consultations, and more — visit efficiencyvermont.com/free-products to see if you are eligible.

Additional rebates may also be available from your electric or gas utility.



Not sure where to start?

Sign up for a **FREE** Virtual Home Energy Visit!
Call **888-921-5990** to learn more

All rebates are subject to availability and eligibility.
Visit www.efficiencyvermont.com/rebates for the most up-to-date information.

Efficiency
Vermont



Important Annual Notice Regarding Herbicide Use in the Maintenance of Electric Utility Rights-of-Way

The Vermont Public Utility Commission has set forth rules under [PUC Rule 3.600](#) pertaining to the use of herbicides in the maintenance of electric utility rights-of-way (ROW). Each spring, herbicide applications may begin on or after April 1st. These rules afford you important rights and duties. Vermont electric utilities maintain electric line rights-of-way with several methods, including the selective use of herbicides on trees and brush. They also encourage low-growing shrubs and trees which will crowd tall-growing species and, thus, minimize the use of herbicides. Methods of herbicide applications may include stump, stem injection, basal, soil, and foliar. **Only electric utility rights-of-way that have tall-growing tree species with the potential of threatening the electric utility system are treated.**

If you reside on or own property in Vermont within 1000’ of an electric utility right-of-way:

1. **Sign up to receive written notification** from your local electric utility of plans to apply herbicide on any ROW within 1000’ of your property or the property where you reside. Check nearby poles for tags identifying the utility and/or pole number, complete the form below and submit it to your local electric utility by mail before February 15th, 2024 to be added to the notification list. If determined to be qualified, you will receive notification from the utility at least 30 days prior to scheduled herbicide application.
2. **You are responsible to make your local electric utility aware** of the location of any potentially affected water supply, and of any other environmentally sensitive area where herbicide application ought to be avoided.
3. **Watch and listen for public service announcements** in newspapers and radio ads noting upcoming herbicide applications.
4. **Check with your local electric utility** regarding the vegetation management cycle near your particular line.
5. **You have the right** to request, in writing, that the utility refrain from applying herbicides in the process of clearing the right-of-way, and the utility may offer alternatives such as herbicide stump treatment or herbicide stem injections.
6. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever at no cost to you if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **distribution lines**, bringing electric service directly to individual customers.
7. **You have the right** to refuse, in writing, the use of herbicides whatsoever by paying a \$30 administration fee if the type of lines in the right-of-way are **transmission lines** or **sub-transmission lines**, bringing electricity to or between substations.

For more details, or to ask additional questions, please contact your local electric utility, or one of the following:

Vermont Electric Co-op 42 Wescom Road Johnson, VT 05656 802-635-2331 or 800-832-2667	Agency of Agriculture Public Health & Ag. Resource Mgmt 116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602 1-802-828-2431	Department of Public Service Consumer Affairs & Public Information 112 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620 1-800-622-4496
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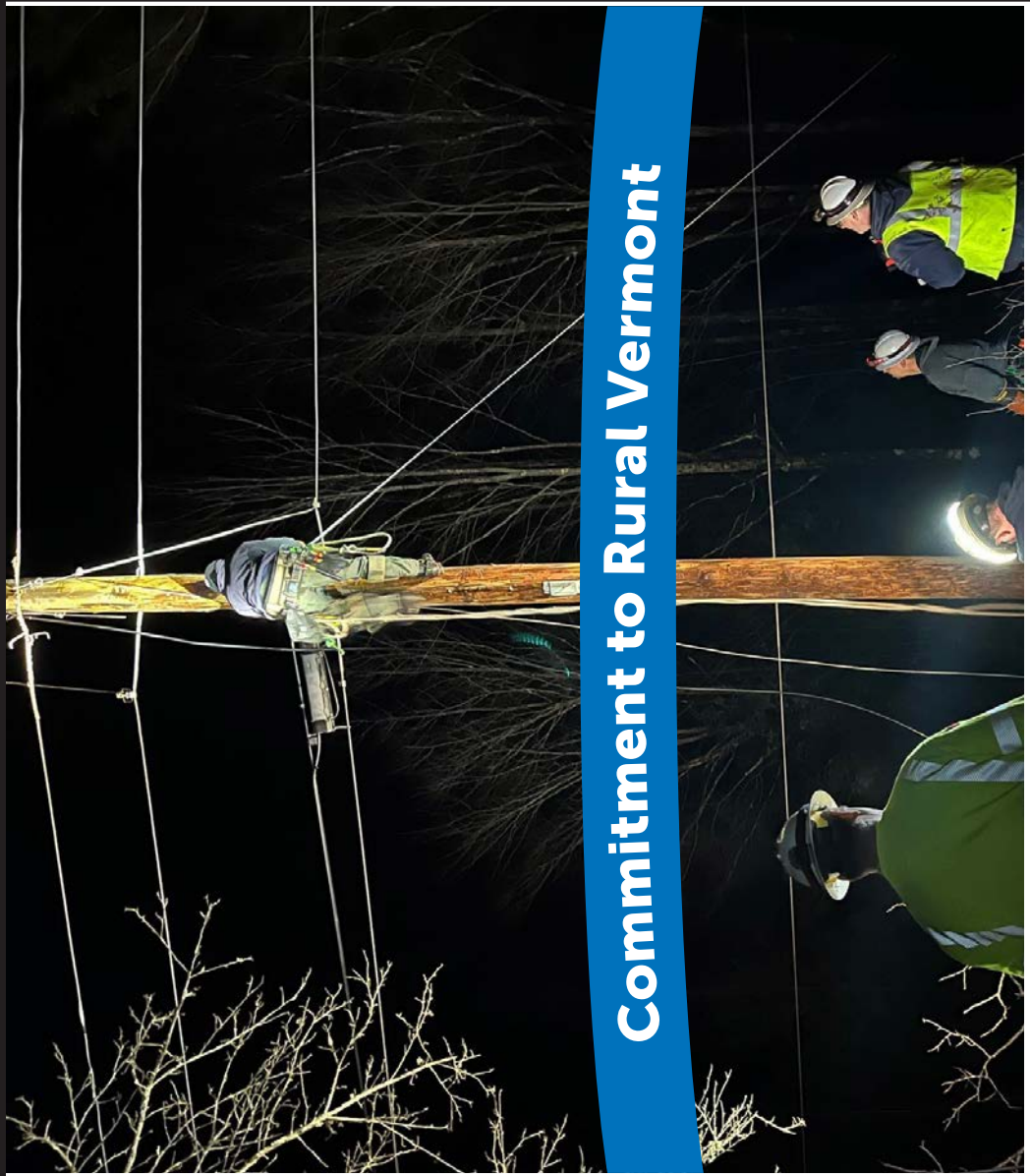
Based on the information above, if you believe you qualify to be notified in advance of pending herbicide applications in the rights-of-way, mail the request below to your local electric company before February 15th, 2024.

Resident/Property Owner Request to be Added to Herbicide Treatment Notification Mailing List	
Name	Town/City of Affected Property
Street Address	Home Phone Number
Town	Work Phone Number
State Zip Code	O.K. to use work number? Yes No (circle one)
Electric Utility Account Number	Best time to contact you
Affected Property: Year-Round Residence Summer Residence Commercial Property Water Supply Organic Farm Land Other (Circle all that apply)	
Line/Pole Identification: Utility Initials	Pole Numbers
Please fill out this request completely to help us determine if you qualify for herbicide treatment notification. MAIL THIS REQUEST TO YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC UTILITY AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE BEFORE FEBRUARY 15TH, 2024	



Winter 2024

Volume 81 Number 1



Commitment to Rural Vermont

Two storms - Finn and Gerri - swept through Vermont during the second week in January causing significant damage to our system, and restorations in many cases took several days. Read more on page 2. Above, crews repair a crossarm on a pole broken by Storm Finn.



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