Vermont Electric Cooperative
Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Results

PREPARED BY:
NRECA MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES
June, 2011
# Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Report Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following are the top-line findings for the study’s main objectives based on the results of a telephone survey of 375 randomly selected residential members of Vermont Electric Cooperative conducted in June of 2011. The main conclusions are highlighted below, followed by the key findings and a detailed graphic representation of the results for all survey questions.

♦ One of the most notable conclusions in this study is that overall satisfaction has not changed significantly compared to past studies and is significantly higher than it was in the 2006 study. In addition, most of the performance attributes are rated positively and all have significantly improved or are consistent with the 2010 study. This is always good news following a very recent rate increase.

♦ Often when a study follows an increase in cost, members’ perception of their electric rates becomes the strongest driver of overall satisfaction. Although Cost is not the strongest driver of overall satisfaction among VEC members, it is the second-strongest and it is by far the strongest driver of the value members feel they receive for the money. As is typical in satisfaction research, the rates and fees are evaluated least positively. However, ratings for the monthly service fees and charging reasonable rates are higher than in past studies; in fact, charging reasonable rates is rated significantly higher in 2011 than in any of the past studies except 2010. Verbatim comments from members include those who say simply that their bills are “too high”, but also those who are looking to VEC to work with them when they are having difficulty paying on time and those who are frustrated with surcharges.

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I got a disconnection notice and I sent the payment in within two days before the due date.

My wife was so upset that they had a surcharge for paying the bill with a credit card that we went back to paying by check.

I am having a rough time. I am trying to get on disability and I feel you should get a break on the rates or on the timing of the bill.

They sound like they encourage us to go paperless, but then they charge us for it. If you call in to pay your bill with your debit card there is a charge for that on your next bill. If they want us to go paperless, they should not charge us.
Resolving any issues or problems is the strongest driver of overall satisfaction. VEC is doing well in this area, with a mean rating significantly higher than most of the previous studies and slightly higher than the Co-op Norms. In addition, the two attributes related to VEC employees are evaluated highest in this study and members who have contacted the cooperative with a problem or issue generally have had a good experience. The possible sticking points are when members contact the co-op regarding an outage or a high bill, as several verbatim comments indicate.

My only complaint is that the line is busy when you call in for outages, and I would like to know more about the outage, how long it will be, etc. I have elderly neighbors and I feel responsible for them during outages.

I have complained to them numerous times about our bill. We are only here in the summer, and our bill averages over $100 a month. They have not been helpful.

I just wish we could get a live person when we call to report an outage. We could find out more that way.

I am elderly and they are good about calling me if they are going to turn off my power. They do the best they can at getting at the outages quickly.

Members have strong opinions about renewable energy and nuclear power, but they are not all on the same page. While members continue to feel it is important for VEC to provide environmentally-friendly green power, support of wind power has declined. Furthermore, there are about as many members for nuclear power as are against it.

I would love to be able to pay more to get the renewable power, but we are retired and can’t afford it. Our electric is already around $150 a month.

The power companies have to very aggressively address having renewable energy and nuclear power plants. It is important for the environment and it is important for the country.

They are crazy for shutting down Vermont Yankee. We need that nuclear power. It is clean and cheap. It is just the tree huggers that are doing that. I am also for any kind of the renewable energy sources for electricity.

I like all renewable energy, but not wind towers. I don’t want the towers on the mountaintops.
BACKGROUND

Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) is a consumer-owned electric distribution cooperative headquartered in Johnson, Vermont. VEC currently serves approximately 34,000 members in 74 communities with more than 2,700 miles of distribution line over 2,000 square miles in northern Vermont (Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans Counties).

VEC has regularly conducted residential member satisfaction studies, with the most recent completed in 2010. The results of tracking surveys provide value in two ways: by demonstrating when results remain consistent and by indicating where there has been significant change over time. The co-op has experienced some recent events that are likely to have an impact on members' attitudes and satisfaction:

- Rates were raised by 2.13% on January 1, 2011. This is lower than increases that have been implemented by other electric companies in the area.

- With continued unemployment and high gas prices, the area served by VEC continues to be impacted by the national economic recession.

- A wind storm in December 2010 caused 12,500 members to be out of power. Additionally, a wet spring in 2011 along with flooding has affected the area, especially those working in agriculture or other outdoor industry.

- In November 2010, VEC began work on a new switching station. Additionally, the co-op has been working on informing members about transmission upgrades and its association with Kingdom Community Wind project.
OBJECTIVES

This residential member survey addresses but is not limited to the following informational objectives:

- **Overall Satisfaction**: Assess how satisfied residential members are with Vermont Electric Cooperative.
- **Performance Quality Attributes**: Evaluate residential member perceptions of member service and electric service quality on a variety of attributes (e.g., rates, billing, outages, problem resolution, etc.).
- **Performance Quality Trends and Benchmarks**: Compare the results to past studies to identify trends and benchmark the results against co-ops nationwide using NRECA's Co-Op Norms Database.
- **Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts**: Determine the key drivers of overall satisfaction and to what degree member needs are being met to help the co-op prioritize any improvement efforts.
- **Member Identity**: Determine the proportion of members who identify themselves as member-owners, member-customers, or just customers of the co-op and their propensity to participate in co-op activities.
- **Renewable Energy**: Explore member perceptions of renewable energy sources, including how much they would be willing to pay for green power. Also, explore perceptions of generating electricity using nuclear power.
- **Internet and Communications**: Explore members’ willingness to use online service such as an online newsletter, online outage center, or eBill and their readership of the Co-op Life newsletter.
- **Member Demographics and Segmentation**: Provide demographics of the membership base and identify differences in attitudes between segments.

METHODOLOGY

Telephone surveying was used as the data collection technique. Interviewers were thoroughly trained on telephone interviewing techniques and on the questionnaire prior to initiating the survey. During this training, the survey instrument was reviewed to ensure that all surveys
would be completed in the same manner. A 5% validation re-call was conducted to verify the
data collection input. On average, the telephone interviews lasted approximately 12 minutes.

Calls were completed with 375 residential members of Vermont Electric with sampling done
proportionate to connect date and district. The member surveys were conducted between June
13 and June 25, 2011. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample
is plus or minus 5.1 percentage points. This means that a result of 50% in the survey may be
between 44.9% and 55.1% if the entire membership were to be interviewed.

ANALYSIS

The graphics presented in this report are based on data collected from the current study and
tracking results from seven studies conducted between 2003 and 2010. Comparisons are
also made to results from similar studies conducted by 49 co-ops among more than 19,000
residential members across the nation between January 2007 and April 2011. These “Co-op
Norms” are not taken from the universe of all cooperatives; rather these are co-ops who value,
monitor and measure the satisfaction of their members and therefore represent higher
performing co-ops, not all co-ops.

Sub-segments within each group are also identified on graphs and in the notes under each
graph. Differences between member segments, such as differences by age or service tenure,
are pointed out and characterized as being either statistically significant or not. When the term
“significant” is used, this refers to the certainty of a difference, not the magnitude or size of the
difference. Significance is measured at the 95% confidence level, meaning that 95% of the
time or more this difference will occur; the difference is likely not a matter of chance due to
sampling.

When evaluating the mean ratings in this report, on a 5-point scale a mean of 4.50 or above
should be considered “excellent” and a mean between 4.00 and 4.49 is considered “good”.
Means below 4.00 may be cause for concern and those below 3.75 indicate problems and a
need for improvement.
KEY FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with VEC among residential members is good. The mean overall satisfaction rating is 8.12 on a 10-point scale and almost half give ratings of “9” or “10”.

- The mean overall satisfaction rating is identical to the 2010 study and does not differ significantly for most of the studies prior to 2010. The exception is the 2006 study when the mean overall satisfaction rating was significantly lower (7.79). The 2011 mean rating is lower than the Co-op Norms (8.56).

- Member segments that give significantly higher ratings than their counterparts for their overall satisfaction include those in smaller households, retired members, and those paying lower monthly electric bills.

- Residential members in District 19 are most satisfied, significantly more satisfied than those in District 12.

Performance Quality Attributes

Members were asked to evaluate 22 performance quality attributes related to member service, image, electric service, communication, billing and cost. On 18 of the attributes measured, the mean ratings are approximately 4.00 or higher, a “good” rating on a 5-point scale. Additionally, mean ratings for seven of the attributes meet or exceed 4.50 which can be considered excellent.

- VEC is rated positively on many of the attributes, with the highest mean ratings for the following. Approximately nine in ten or more members rate each of these attributes positively (rating of “4” or “5”).
  - Having highly-trained, professional employees (4.62)
  - Courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to members’ inquiries or problems (4.60)
  - Having convenient payment options (4.60)
Overall customer service provided (4.59)
The accuracy of meter reading and billing (4.56)
Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (4.56)
Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (4.50)

The attributes on which VEC is rated least well are the monthly service fees (53% rating “4” or “5”) and charging reasonable rates (59%). With mean ratings below 3.75, this may be cause for concern. However, it should be noted that these are areas that are typically rated lower in cooperative satisfaction research, especially when there has been a recent rate increase.

Performance Quality Trends and Benchmarks

Mean ratings and top two-box ratings on all but five of the comparable performance attributes have improved significantly since 2010. None of the attributes are significantly lower than in any of the past studies.

The 2011 mean ratings are significantly higher than 2010 for the following attributes:

- Overall customer service provided
- Speed and efficiency of responding to customers
- Resolving any issues or problems
- Having highly-trained, professional employees
- Courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to members’ inquiries or problems
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed
- Operating with concern for the environment
- Supporting the local community
- Having consumers’ best interests at heart
- Reliability of service and frequency of interruptions
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum
- Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum
- The restoration of power after an outage
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts
- The accuracy of meter reading and billing
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills
- Having convenient payment options

- Additionally, mean ratings for three of these attributes are significantly higher in 2011 than in any of the previous studies. These are: the overall customer service provided, providing accurate and easy to understand bills, and having convenient payment options.

- VEC is rated higher than the Co-op Norms on about as many attributes as they are rated lower than the Norms, although some of the differences are very small (difference of 0.05 or less). However, the attributes with the biggest gaps are generally for those where VEC is rated lower than the Norms. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>VEC Mean Rating</th>
<th>Co-op Norms Mean Rating</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the local community</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering good value for the money</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability of service and frequency of interruptions</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of power after an outage</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly service fees</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating with concern for the environment</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Attributes that are rated higher than the Co-op Norms by at least 0.10 are: providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts and having convenient payment options.
Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts

The key drivers of overall satisfaction among residential members are Resolving Issues/Problems, Cost, Accuracy of Meter Reading and Billing, Member Service, Electric Service, and Social Responsibility. Going forward, these are the areas that VEC should focus on most.

Resolving Issues and Problems/Member Service
- The strongest driver of overall satisfaction is resolving any issues or problems.

Similarly, another driver of overall satisfaction is the Member Service factor, which includes the courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems; the speed and efficiency of responding to customers; overall customer service provided; and having consumers’ best interests at heart. The mean ratings for all five attributes are above the “good” threshold of 4.00, significantly higher than the 2010 study, and consistent with the Co-op Norms. Continued good work in this area will have the strongest effect on overall satisfaction.

- The proportion of members who report having contacted VEC in the past year (54%) does not differ significantly from the 2010 study but is significantly lower than in 2008. The most common reason for contact is outages.
o One-third of those who contacted the co-op say their expectations were exceeded. Overall satisfaction with the cooperative declines quickly as contact evaluations become less positive. Those who evaluate their contact as having been “much better than expected” are actually much more satisfied than those who did not contact the co-op at all. Members who contacted the co-op because of high bill evaluate their contact least positively while those who made contact about a question/concern about their bill or to inquire about tree trimming evaluate their contact most positively.

Cost/Accuracy of Meter Reading and Billing

- The monthly service fees, charging reasonable rates, helping customers keep bills as low as possible, having consumers’ best interests at heart, and providing accurate and easy to understand bills make up the Cost factor, the next driver of overall satisfaction. This is the area in which VEC has the most room for improvement, which is not surprising due to increasing rates along with a struggling economy. The mean ratings are below 4.00 on three of the five attributes and are lower than the Co-op Norms on two of the attributes. However, ratings for the monthly service fees and charging reasonable rates have improved significantly since 2006. A related attribute, the accuracy of meter reading and billing, is another driver of overall satisfaction and an area in which VEC is evaluated very positively.

o As in past studies, most of the members are not aware of how their rates compare to other electric companies in the region or feel they are higher. Approximately one-quarter believe their rates are lower (7%) or about the same (20%).

o A regression analysis was also conducted to determine the key drivers of value. It was found that six factors or attributes are significant drivers of value: cost, resolving any issues or problems, electric service, communicating with members and keeping them informed, member service, and social responsibility. So, while the perception of rates and costs has the greatest impact on the value members
feel they receive, it is not the only factor that enters into the “value equation” among members of VEC.

Electric Service

- The Electric Service factor – keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum, the reliability of service and frequency of interruptions, the restoration of power after an outage, keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum, and the speed and efficiency of responding to customers – is the next driver of overall satisfaction. This is another area in which VEC has been doing well but there is room for improvement. Mean ratings for all of the attributes are above 4.00 and are significantly higher than in 2010, but are lower than the Co-op Norms for minimizing longer outages, reliability of service, and restoring power.

Social Responsibility

- The final driver of overall satisfaction is the Social Responsibility factor (operating with concern for the environment, supporting the local community, having consumers’ best interests at heart, and helping customers keep bills as low as possible). This is another area in which VEC is doing well, with three of the four attributes rated above 4.00 and significantly higher than in 2010. However, there is some room for improvement: environmental concern and community support are rated lower than the Co-op Norms and helping customers keep bills as low as possible is rated below 4.00.

- For more information on how the factors were formed and key drivers of satisfaction were derived, see the appendix.

Member Identity

Member identity has increased significantly since the 2005 study, the first year in which member identity was tested. However, it is lower than the Co-op Norms. One-third say they view themselves as member-owners or both member-owners and customers of the cooperative, as opposed to being a customer only.
Those with member identity give more positive evaluations than do those who view themselves as “customers” on almost all of the 22 performance attributes with 12 of the differences being statistically significant. Overall satisfaction is also significantly higher among “members” than “customers”.

In addition to evaluating the performance attributes more positively, those with member identity are significantly more likely to vote in elections, attend annual meetings, and read the quarterly newsletter *Co-op Life*.

Fully three in ten members say they have voted in a co-op election in the past three years, 9% spoke with a Director, and 2% attended an annual meeting. Two-thirds of the members did not participate in any of these activities.

**Renewable Energy**

Members continue to feel it is important for the cooperative to provide environmentally friendly green power, especially solar, hydro, and wind power. Additionally, half say they are willing to pay an additional amount to get green power. However, the perceived importance of power from wind has significantly declined since 2010.

Four in ten say they would not be willing to pay anything additional on their electric bills to get green power, but 35% say they would be willing to pay an additional $10 to $20 more per month.

Approximately four in ten support the use of electricity generated in part by nuclear power, while nearly the same proportion are against it. As in the 2010 study, members are either entirely for (“5” rating) or against (“1”) using nuclear power, or are unsure about how they feel (“3”). There are very few who are in the “gray area”, giving a rating of “4” or “2”. The proportion of members indicating they are entirely against the use of nuclear power has increased significantly. In the verbatim comments, some members indicate wanting to know more about nuclear power before expressing an opinion.
Internet and Communications

Approximately three-quarters of VEC’s residential members report they have Internet access, either at home or work or both places. Of those with Internet access, approximately one-third indicate a likelihood of using online services such as reviewing and/or paying their electric bills online and one-quarter are aware of VEC’s online outage center.

- The majority of those with Internet access at home have a higher speed access such as cable, satellite, or DSL service.

- Members with Internet access are most interested in reviewing and/or paying their electric bills online through eBill, followed by reading the quarterly newsletter as an e-newsletter. One-third of all the members, regardless of Internet access, indicate an interest in receiving important information from the co-op by cell phone text message or voice mail.

- Thirty-five percent report they always read the quarterly newsletter, Co-op Life. An additional 29% say they usually read it. Among those who read at least some of the newsletter, 21% say they read all of it and 39% read most of it.

Member Demographics and Segmentation

More than half of the residential members are employed full-time (46%) or part-time (10%), Two-thirds live alone or with one other person, 45% have an annual household income over $50,000, and 66% have been served by the co-op for 10 years or more. This is generally consistent with previous studies.

- Although not all the differences are statistically significant, those paying lower monthly electric bills, retired members, and females tend to evaluate VEC more positively than do their counterparts.

- Although few of the differences are statistically significant, those in District 17 tend to be most positive while those in District 12 give the lowest ratings. Members in District
17 are also the most likely to identify themselves as members of the co-op while those in District 12 are the most likely to have experienced an outage in the past year.

Verbatim Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, members were given the opportunity to share any comments, concerns, or questions they had. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents offered input and most of the comments were positive or neutral.

- Among those who commented, the following table provides a breakdown of the subjects mentioned and the number of comments that were positive, negative, or neutral:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Topic</th>
<th>Total Comments</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations/Engineers – Blinks, outages, tree trimming, AMI/AMR</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates/Fees</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Services/Marketing – Resolving issues, customer service reps</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems With Bills</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Power</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter/Information</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency/ Energy Audits</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Board</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- As would be expected, the majority of comments about rates and fees are negative rather than positive, but some are neutral, including comments about the co-op keeping rates down or as low as possible. Comments about electric service are split between being positive and negative.
- Overall Satisfaction
- Elements of Satisfaction
- Key Drivers of Satisfaction and Value
Please consider all your experiences to date with Vermont Electric. Using a 10-point scale on which 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied,” how satisfied are you with Vermont Electric Cooperative?

- Overall satisfaction among Vermont Electric Cooperative’s members is good with a mean satisfaction rating of 8.12 and almost half giving ratings of “9” (21%) or “10 – very satisfied” (26%). Just one-tenth give a rating of “5” or less, indicating they are not satisfied.

- VEC’s mean satisfaction rating is lower than the Co-op Norms (8.56).

- Members’ overall satisfaction has not changed significantly from recent studies. It is significantly higher than in the 2006 study.
Please consider all your experiences to date with Vermont Electric. Using a 10-point scale on which 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied,” how satisfied are you with Vermont Electric Cooperative?

- Member segments that differ the most in their ratings of overall satisfaction are graphed above.

- Members living alone or with one other person, retired members, and those with lower monthly electric bills are significantly more satisfied with VEC than their individual counterparts.

- Additionally, members in District 19 (8.41) are most satisfied, significantly more satisfied than members in District 12 (7.71).
Approximately nine in ten or more members evaluate VEC positively (ratings of “4” or “5” on a 5-point scale) on the five attributes related to member service.

- Additionally, more than half give excellent ratings (rating of “5”) on these attributes.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- All of the mean ratings for the member service performance attributes have increased significantly since the 2010 study. Additionally, *the overall customer service provided* is rated significantly higher in 2011 than in any of the previous studies.

- The mean ratings among VEC members are consistent with the Co-op Norms for all the member service-related attributes.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- Vermont Electric is also evaluated well in this area, with more than eight in ten giving positive ratings on all of the attributes.
- Approximately half or more rate the co-op as excellent (“5”) on these attributes.
- Note that almost half of the respondents chose not to evaluate the co-op on the environment and community attributes.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- Mean ratings for these four attributes are significantly higher than in 2010.
- The co-op is evaluated very similar to the Co-op Norms for communicating with members and keeping them informed and having consumers’ best interests at heart, but lower for operating with concern for the environment and supporting the local community.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- More than eight in ten members give positive ratings for five of the six electric service performance attributes.
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages is rated lower, but still positively, with seven in ten giving top two-box ratings.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- Evaluations for VEC’s electric service have improved significantly since 2010 with the differences being significant for all the attributes except keeping members informed on the status of outages.

- Comparisons to the Co-op Norms are mixed. Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum, keeping members informed on the status of outages, and providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts are rated higher by VEC members.

- Conversely, the other three attributes are rated lower.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- Vermont Electric Cooperative receives high ratings for their billings; approximately nine in ten give positive ratings and two-thirds rate the co-op as being excellent on having **convenient payment options**, the accuracy of **meter reading and billing**, and providing **accurate and easy to understand bills**.

- Evaluations of the **monthly service fees** and **charging reasonable rates** are lower, which is typical in member satisfaction surveys.
On a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following?

- Ratings have also increased for all of the billing and cost attributes with differences being statistically significant for the three attributes related to billing.

- Additionally, ratings have increased significantly since 2009 for delivering good value for the money, helping customers keep bills as low as possible, and charging reasonable rates.

- Vermont Electric Cooperative is rated higher than the Co-op Norms on having convenient options, but lower for delivering good value for the money, the monthly service fees, and charging reasonable rates.
Compared to other electric companies, would you say Vermont Electric’s rates are higher, lower, about the same or you aren’t aware?

- Half of the members surveyed are not aware of how their electric rates compare to other companies.
- Approximately one-quarter feel their electric rates are higher, one-fifth feel they are about the same, and 7% say they are lower than other electric companies.
- This does not differ significantly from the 2010 study.
- Those paying higher monthly electric bills and those in Districts 12 and 17 are significantly more likely than their counterparts to believe they pay higher rates.
Regression analysis was used to determine the key drivers of overall satisfaction. The results indicate that there are six factors or attributes that drive overall satisfaction with the cooperative among residential members, as shown in the above figure: Resolving Issues/Problems, Cost, Accuracy of Meter Reading and Billing, Member Service, Electric Service, and Social Responsibility.

The scores are to be interpreted relative to each other. For example, since resolving any issues or problems has a score of 0.51 and electric service has a score of 0.24, we can say that members’ perceptions of how well their problems are resolved is twice as important to overall satisfaction as their perceptions of reliability and outages. Attributes and factors not shown above are not significant drivers of overall satisfaction.

More information on how the factors were formed and importance scores derived can be found in the appendix.
Regression analysis was also used to determine the key drivers of perceived value for the money. The results indicate that there are also six attributes/factors that drive value among Vermont Electric residential members, as shown in the above figure.

The scores are to be interpreted relative to each other. For example, since Cost has a score of 0.58 and electric service has a score of 0.15, we can say that member perceptions of cost are almost four times as important to the value they feel they receive for their money as their perceptions of the electric service provided.

Attributes and factors not shown above are not significant drivers of value.
- Member Identity
- Cooperative Commitment
Do you view yourself as a member-owner or as a customer of your electric cooperative, or both?

- One-third of the responding members identify themselves as either a member-owner of the co-op or as both a member-owner and a customer, as opposed to being a customer only.

- Although the proportion with member identity has not changed significantly since 2010, it has increased significantly since first tested in 2005.

- Overall member identity is much lower than the Co-op Norms (52%).
Do you view yourself as a member-owner or as a customer of your electric cooperative, or both?

- Member segments that differ the most in the percentage with member identity are graphed above. However, none of the differences are statistically significant.

- Those in District 17 are most likely to view themselves as a member of VEC, significantly more likely than members in District 16 (42% vs. 27%).
Those with member identity give higher ratings on all of the 22 co-op performance attributes tested in this study with 12 of the differences being statistically significant.

The attributes with the greatest significant differences between the “member” and “customer” mean ratings are graphed above, with the largest gaps for delivering good value for the money and charging reasonable rates.

Additionally, “members” are significantly more satisfied overall than “customers” with VEC.
Concerning Vermont Electric Cooperative, have you done any of the following in the past three years?

- One-third report having participated in at least one of the tested co-op activities in the past three years. Members are most likely to have voted in a co-op election (30%) followed by speaking with a Board Director or Trustee (9%) and attending an annual meeting (2%).

- Those with member identity, longer-tenured members, retired members, and males are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to have participated in at least one of these activities in the past three years.
Evaluation of Relationship With Director

Asked of those who have spoken with a Board Director in the past three years

- Of the 30 members who indicate they have interacted with a Board Director/Trustee in the past three years, eight in ten evaluate their relationship as good (23%) or excellent (57%).

- The mean rating is higher than in 2010, although the sample size is too small to test for statistical significance.
Contact With the Co-op
In the past year, did you contact Vermont Electric Cooperative for any reason? If yes, what were the reasons for any calls or visits you made?

- Fifty-four percent indicate they have contacted Vermont Electric over the past year. This is consistent with the 2010 study, but significantly less contact than in most of the studies prior to 2009.

- Members who live in District 12 are most likely to report having contacted the co-op in the past year, significantly more likely than those in Districts 16 or 17.

- Members are most likely to have contacted the co-op because of a power outage (58% of those who contacted).
Most of those who contacted Vermont Electric in the past year say their expectations were met or exceeded. One-third indicate their contact was somewhat (21%) or much (11%) better than expected. This does not differ significantly from past studies.

VEC members are more likely than those in the Co-op Norms to say their contact was somewhat better than expected, but less likely to say it was much better.

Those who did not contact Vermont Electric in the past year are significantly more satisfied overall than those who did contact the co-op. It is interesting to note that when the contact is much better than expected, overall satisfaction is higher than those who did not contact the co-op at all. Not surprisingly, the few who evaluate their contact as worse than expected are least satisfied.

Those making contact because of a high bill evaluate their contact least positively.
- Renewable Energy
- Alternative Energy Sources
On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 means “extremely important,” how important is it to you for Vermont Electric to provide environmentally friendly “green power” from the following renewable energy sources?

- More than three-quarters place high importance on VEC using solar or hydro to provide environmentally friendly green power. Fewer place importance on gas methane and bio-mass.

- Members who are currently employed place significantly higher importance on wind, solar, and bio-mass than do those who are retired. Members with lower monthly electric bills place significantly higher importance on hydro, gas methane, and bio-mass than do those with higher bills. Females place significantly higher importance on wind and solar than do males.
On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 means “extremely important,” how important is it to you for Vermont Electric to provide environmentally friendly “green power” from the following renewable energy sources?

- The importance of gas methane and bio-mass has increased significantly since 2009 but the importance of wind has decreased significantly since 2010.
Amount Willing to Pay Extra to Receive Green Power

If electricity from renewable energy sources were not available at the same rates you are paying now, how much more would you be willing to pay, if anything, to get this green power?

- Half of the members indicate they are willing to pay an additional amount to receive green power, with most of this group willing to pay $10 or more per month.
- Member segments willing to pay an additional amount include those more satisfied with VEC overall, those paying lower electric bills, and more affluent members.
How do you feel about Vermont Electric distributing electricity generated in part by nuclear power? Please rate your opinion of this on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you are “entirely against” nuclear power and 5 means you are “entirely for” it.

- Thirty-eight percent of the members are in favor of VEC distributing electricity generated by nuclear power (giving a rating of “4” or “5”), while 43% are opposed (giving a rating of “1” or “2”).

- Although the mean rating in 2011 does not differ significantly from the rating in 2010, the proportion of members saying they are entirely opposed (“1” rating) has increased significantly.

- Those paying lower electric bills, those living with at least one other person, more affluent members, and males are significantly more likely than their counterparts to be in favor of generation using nuclear power.
- Internet
- Communications
Do you have Internet access either at home or at work? If yes, is your Internet access at home dial-up or a higher speed form of access such as cable, satellite, or DSL service?

- Approximately three-quarters of VEC's members have Internet access at home (70%) and/or work (33%). Of those with home Internet access, 83% have a higher speed access such as cable, satellite, or DSL.

- This is generally consistent with the 2010 study.

- Newer members, those paying higher monthly electric bills, those living in larger households, those who work full- or part-time, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to have Internet access.

- Members in Districts 12 and 17 are significantly more likely than those in Districts 16 or 19 to have Internet access while those in District 17 are most likely to have higher speed access, significantly more likely than those in District 16.
Likelihood of Participating in Online Services

Asked of those with Internet access (Text message/Voice asked of all) “Definitely” and “Probably” Will Graphed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Definitely Will</th>
<th>Probably Will</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review/pay bills online thru eBill</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read &quot;Co-op Life&quot; as an e-newsletter</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive important info from VEC by cell phone text message or voice mail</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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</table>

In the future, would you say you would definitely or probably, might or might not, or you probably or definitely would not use the following services from VEC?

- Member interest in receiving important information from VEC by text message or voice mail has increased significantly since 2010. Conversely, interest in reading Co-op Life as an e-newsletter has declined significantly.

- Newer members, those working full- or part-time, and those living in larger households are significantly more interested in reviewing and paying their electric bills online than are their individual counterparts. These member segments along with more affluent members are also significantly more interested in receiving important information from the co-op by text message or voice mail.

NRECA MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES
Are you aware that VEC has an outage center online through a link on their website that provides up-to-date outage information as outages occur? If aware, have you used the outage center? If yes, using a 5-point scale where 1 means “not at all valuable” and 5 means “very valuable”, how valuable did you find the outage center to be?

- Identical to the 2010 study, approximately one-quarter of VEC’s residential members who have Internet access are aware of the co-op’s online outage center, with 37% of this group having used it. Two-thirds of those who have used it found it to have some value.

- Awareness of the co-op’s online outage center is highest in District 16 and lowest in Districts 17 and 19 (28% vs. 20%).
How often do you read the quarterly newsletter called “Co-op Life”? How much of it do you usually read?

- Nearly two-thirds of the residential members report they always (35%) or usually (29%) read VEC’s quarterly newsletter Co-op Life.

- Among those who read at least some of the newsletter, six in ten indicate they read all (21%) or most (39%) of it.

- Those with member identity, longer-tenured members, those living alone or with one other person, and retired members are significantly more likely than their counterparts to say they always read the co-op newsletter.
Length of *Co-op Life*

Asking of those who read at least some of *Co-op Life*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too short</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too long</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About right</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel that the length of “Co-op Life” is too short, too long, or about right?

- Fully eight in ten think the length of *Co-op Life* is about right. Just 7% think it is too long and 1% think it is too short.
How would you prefer to receive news about what is going on at VEC? How would you prefer to receive critical or time sensitive information from VEC?

- Residential members most often prefer receiving VEC news and critical/time sensitive information via the newsletter.

- However, members are less likely to prefer the newsletter and more likely to prefer e-mail, mail, or telephone for critical or time sensitive information.

- Newer members, those currently employed, those living in larger households, more affluent members, and those in Districts 12 and 17 are significantly more likely to prefer e-mail than are their counterparts.
Residential Member Characteristics
What is your current employment status?

- Forty-six percent of VEC’s residential members work full-time and an additional 10% work part-time. Just over one-third are retired. This does not differ significantly from the 2010 study.

- Compared to the Co-op Norms, VEC members are much less likely to be retired and more likely to work full-time.
How many people live in your household including yourself?

- Approximately half of the members live with one other person while 19% live alone. Conversely, approximately one-fifth live in a larger household of four or more people.

- This does not differ significantly from any of the previous studies and is consistent with the Co-op Norms.
Into which of the following categories does your annual household income fall before taxes?

- One-fifth report an annual household income of $25,000 or less while 27% report a household income above $75,000. Just over one-third chose not to answer.

- This is similar to the Co-op Norms and does not differ significantly from past studies.
How long have you received your electric service from Vermont Electric Cooperative?

- Very similar to the 2010 study, 37% have been served by Vermont Electric Cooperative for 20 years or more while 6% are newer members, served for two years or less.

- This is a somewhat longer-tenured membership than in the Co-op Norms.
What is your average monthly electric bill?

- Almost half of the respondents report an average monthly electric bill of $100 or less and 35% pay between $101 and $150. Conversely, 16% pay more than $150.

- This does not differ significantly from the 2010 study and is similar to the Co-op Norms.
- Key Driver/Factor Explanation
EXPLANATION OF FACTOR AND KEY DRIVER ANALYSES

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to reduce the many service attributes rated in the survey to a core set of issues. This analysis shows how members unconsciously think about or group the many different performance attributes. Five factors were found and named Electric Service, Cost, Member Service, Bills and Payment Options, and Social Responsibility.

The performance quality attributes that make up each factor are listed below in order of the performance attribute most related to the factor down to the attribute least related to the factor.

Electric Service Factor

- Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum
- The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions
- The restoration of power after an outage
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers

Cost Factor

- The monthly service fees
- Charging reasonable rates
- Helping customers keep bills as low as possible
- Having consumers’ best interests at heart
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills

Member Service Factor

- The courtesy, understanding, and helpfulness of employees to inquiries or problems
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers
- The overall customer service provided
- Having consumers’ best interests at heart
Bills and Payment Options Factor

- Having convenient payment options
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills
- The overall customer service provided

Social Responsibility Factor

- Operating with concern for the environment
- Supporting the local community
- Having consumers’ best interests at heart
- Helping customers keep bills as low as possible

The following attributes are not included in the factors found because they are not highly correlated with other attributes:

- Resolving any issues or problems
- Having highly-trained, professional employees
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts
- The accuracy of meter reading and billing

Key Driver Analysis

To help determine where expectations are and are not being met for co-op members, we calculate importance scores for the factors and attributes. The importance scores were derived using the beta scores from a regression of the factors and attributes on overall satisfaction. What we are looking for is significance. If a factor or attribute is positively significant, it has a positive relationship with satisfaction. If the factor/attribute receives a high rating, overall satisfaction/loyalty also receives a high rating. That is, the more a factor or attribute influences overall satisfaction, the higher its importance score. Factors and attributes that are found to be significant in the regression are labeled as key drivers of overall satisfaction and shown in the figure.
A separate analysis was done to find the key drivers of value among residential members of Vermont Electric Cooperative. Rather than regressing the factors and attributes on overall satisfaction, they were regressed on the attribute “delivering good value for the money”. The key drivers of value are shown in a separate figure.
Verbatim Responses
VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE VERBATIM RESPONSES

Using a 10-point scale where 10 is "Very Satisfied" and 1 is "Very Dissatisfied," how satisfied overall would you say you are with Vermont Electric Cooperative? Please explain your response.

“10” Rating – Very Satisfied

I have had no problems. (21 mentions)
I am very satisfied. (3 mentions)
I am very happy with them. (2 mentions)
They are good at responding to outages. (2 mentions)

Because of all of the things that we have gone through, like take payments over the phone, and they are very nice. I find them friendly and easy to talk to.

Anytime I call for an outage, they are there to repair it. They even have a hotline set up to give us information on massive outages.

Compared to the old company they bought, they are actually very good.

Every time I've had to deal with them, I have been very happy with them.

For all of the above reasons, the reliability of service and frequency of interruptions, the courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems, the restoration of power after an outage, the accuracy of meter reading and billing, and the speed and efficiency of responding to customers.

I am completely satisfied with the service we get during ice storms and so forth.

I am familiar with the Board of Directors. They are doing very well by the consumers.

I am happy for the service.

I am very satisfied. We are very seldom without power.

I appreciated it when they took notice of electricity because my husband is on oxygen.

I do not have any complaint. I have nothing to compare it to, but I am efficient in the way I use my electric.

I don't really have a reason not to rate them high. When I don't have power, they get right on it.

I had no outage this last winter.

I have always had electricity, so I am satisfied.

I have always had good luck with them.
I have been very satisfied with the service and the response. I have been very pleased.

I have never had any problems with them. If there is an outage, they are very helpful. They tell us when it will be back on. They are very reliable and patient.

I have never had any problems. They have been very good.

I have no complaints.

I have no complaints. They tell us when the power is going to be off.

I have no problems and their rates are fine. They send me information about saving electricity and on appliances.

I have no problems. Everything is great.

I have no problems. I have power.

I have not had any bad experiences.

I know the company and it’s a good company and they've been good to us.

I have never had any problems. They have been here from within a couple of hours after we call.

I have never had to call for a problem.

I never have any issues with power coming back on. It is usually weather related.

I never have to worry about the switch on.

I wish the rates were lower. The pole outside that holds the meter along with the service drop is very old. I am concerned because of the way it tilts.

If I ever have questions, they are helpful.

It is A+ on everything.

I've never had any problem. Once I needed to call them and they came out very quickly.

Our power rarely goes out. They have worked hard to clear brush and keep the power on.

The lack of outages.

The outages are repaired quickly.

The only problem I have is when I pay my bill online every third month or so it doesn't have my information.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“10” Rating – Very Satisfied
(continued)

The only problem I’ve had is my bill was really high, but they helped me out as much as they could. Every time we get an outage, they get the power back on immediately.

The rates and service are acceptable.

The service is good.

The service is good. They fix outages quickly as possible.

The service is pretty good. I go along with what they provide.

The service is reliable; the people are courteous, helpful and knowledgeable.

They always take my call, listen to the concern, and get the problem fixed.

They are prompt when the power goes off.

They are very fast, efficient, speedy and helpful. And I like it that when the power went out, they give us a message on the status.

They are very polite.

They are very respectful and have very fast service.

They do get the power back as soon as possible. They are real quick in responding.

They have always been reliable, and get here as fast as they can.

They have always been responsive and I like the way they do business. They decided not to buy power from the nuclear plant in Vernon, which I am very much in favor of.

They have always been there when we needed them.

They have always been very prompt and there is no problem with getting the power back on.

They have been pretty busy here keeping the power going.

They have excellent service. I have made no calls.

They have provided good service over the years. I do wish it was cheaper. There are just two of us.

They keep you updated when you have a problem, and they are always real friendly.

They restore power quickly. The bill is a little high, but so is everyone else’s.

They seem to be very efficient. They get on the power outages quickly.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“10” Rating – Very Satisfied
(continued)

They take care of problems real quickly.
We have few outages and they repair outages quickly.
We have had no problems whatsoever. They have been right there for us.
We have never had any problems when we have been here, and are seldom without electricity.
We have very reliable electricity. If there is an outage they get on it as quickly as possible. The storms make it hard for them, but they do it quickly.
We live in the mountains and we've had power outages, and as soon as we call they fix it.
We seldom have outages. A few years ago I needed more power. They ran new lines and it turned out well.
We seldom lose our power and when we do they get it on quickly.
We've had good service and no problems so far.
When I hear about other electric companies, I think we pay a pretty low rate.
Whenever I call they are very responsive.

“9” Rating
I have no problems. (14 mentions)
No one is perfect. (5 mentions)
We have good service. (5 mentions)
I am satisfied with them. (3 mentions)
We are only there in summer. (3 mentions)
Basically the power is on and there are not too many outages.
Everything is fine except when I call in on an outage the call doesn't go through.
Everything seems to run smoothly.
I do not have a lot of problems. We purchased a generator.
I feel you do a good job.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“9” Rating
(continued)

I feel pretty small company and they try their best. We do have a lot of outages and days at a time, but it is definitely getting better.

I have good service, and they take care of problems quickly.

I have not had problems they could not fix in a short time.

I never had any problems when we built the house.

I never really have had any big problems.

If there is an outage they fix it right away.

It gets more and more expensive. Otherwise, they are great. We have few outages.

It is good, but it is not perfect. We have some outages.

It is mostly reliable.

My last bill may have crossed. The last bill was paid, but it doesn't show on the bill.

No one is perfect. I cannot give a ‘10’. I am a satisfied customer.

Nobody is perfect. They do a very good job.

Sometimes we have outages.

The cost is high.

The price could be lower.

The rates are little higher.

The rates are okay.

The reliability pleases me.

The service has been good. It is not totally perfect yet.

The service is always great and they have been cutting the limbs along the power lines.

They always get the electric on right away.

They are always here when we need them.

They are good to work with when building a new house.
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons

“9” Rating
(continued)

They are good with restoring outages.
They are reliable, and give us the best they can with whatever conditions they need to work in.
They are responsive, and are working hard to keep the lines functional.
They are very reliable. They try to come quickly and I appreciate that.
They do an excellent job, and they get the power back on as quickly as possible.
They have been very good keeping the trees trimmed.
They have given us excellent service and we have never had any billing issues. We have an outside yard light and the next day they came right out, they have excellent service.
They have good responses.
They should have a 9.4 because '10' is too perfect.
Things are good.
This is looking over the life span of service, and at one time there were frequent power outages, but now it is getting better.
Too expensive.
We always have power at the camp.
We are pleased with the co-op.
We had some billing issues that they took care of well.
We hardly have any power outages, and they are prompt when we contact them.
We like the co-op and are pleased with the service.
We like the co-op and we have no problems.
We only have problems when there are storms.
We use solar panels for some of our power.

“8” Rating

Nobody is perfect. (5 mentions)

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
The rates are too high. (4 mentions)

We have a lot of outages. (3 mentions)

I am quite satisfied with the co-op. (3 mentions)

We have good service. (3 mentions)

We haven't had many problems. (2 mentions)

I think they have been doing a good job. (2 mentions)

The service is okay. (2 mentions)

I don't always agree with the rate increases. (2 mentions)

All in all they are very good. We just can't get any information whenever there is an outage. We can't get any feedback. It's an automated thing and it doesn't tell us anything.

Because of the charges when they send someone to the door for disconnects. Some people have troubles occasionally and I was on the phone paying the bill when a lady came to the door. I still had to pay the $45 charge.

Because of the cost. The bills keep going up. I understand, but as a senior citizen money is tight.

Due to the outages. When we call them they are pretty nice and they have good customer service.

I am not happy with the outages. The feed comes over a mountain range and it is a bad spot.

I am pretty much satisfied and never had to deal with any problems.

I am satisfied with most things. They took over another utility and they have done a good job with that.

I am very satisfied with the people, but the power goes out a lot and we have a lot of brownouts, which affects the computers.

I do not believe it is a '10'.

I do not consider them a '10' or nothing less than an '8'.

I do not think they are aggressive enough looking at alternative energy such as solar.

I give them the benefit of the doubt with a field I am not familiar with. I appreciate the guys climbing the poles at night when their families are out. The crews are above average.

I have had a couple of incidents where it took a long time to get the problem fixed. They weren't very cooperative, as it was all automated, whereas you couldn't talk to a real person.
I have never had any problems.

I have no complaints, but my daughter's bills are high, like $200 a month.

I have not had a whole lot of trouble with them, only a few outages that took a little long I feel.

I haven't had any problems with them. The price is troubling.

I just wish the prices were lower.

I never had any real problems and they are nice people.

I realize the complexity of their grid, as so much of their power lines are exposed to the wind. I have found it necessary to install a big generator.

I recently called them to change my billing address and I could not get through. They asked me to leave a voice mail and I did. They did not get back to me and two weeks later I did the whole thing over again.

I would like the lines underground.

In this day and age it's difficult to be a '5' in all areas. I think they are a '4' in comparison to other companies.

It is the only company I have access to, but they are fair and try to do their best.

It seems that rates are getting higher and higher.

It takes a little longer to get the power back after an outage.

It works for me.

Over all the years it has not been good, but it is very good now.

Sometimes the power is out and it takes awhile to get here, and usually it is a transformer that just needs the RIO to push a breaker back in.

The electric is really high.

The electric rates have gone up dramatically despite the fact that people are trying to reduce energy by bulbs, etc.

The issue is communication. We should be told when we call in to report an outage how long it will be, etc.

The outages and living in the country it takes longer to get the power back on.

The rates are comparable.
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“8” Rating
(continued)

The rates have gone up.
The service and customers are great, but rates should come down.
There are not many outages.
There is always room for improvement.
There is not a whole lot of data to go with, but there was an incident about the scheduled outage and they did not advise us, so that damaged our furnace. We should have turned the breaker off and were not advised of that.
They always have good service.
They are aggressive about the trimming of lines. Prior to three years ago we had a lot of outages.
They are always good at getting the power on.
They disconnected my power for some work, and it was reconnected correctly.
They do fairly good job on everything.
They do well. We haven't had any trouble.
They provide good service. The rates are going up.
They seem fairly reliable.
They seem to take care of problems quickly and outages are slim.
They try really hard to do a good job.
We are happy with the service. The price is always unusual.
We are only there in the summer.
We are still waiting for a power pole to be put in. We have been waiting for it to be done for three weeks.
We are there only in the summer months.
We do lose power during storms. Maybe they are not clearing the lines well enough.
We don't have any issues. It is a lot higher than some.
We don't have very many outages.
We had very few outages and they don't last too long.
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“8” Rating
(continued)

We have a lot of power outages and I think they do the best they can.

We have a lot of trees that go down, but the service is good.

We have always been happy with our service. I work at the public utilities. I feel they could better inform the customers.

We have had a lot of outages, but they are quick to respond.

We have not been without power for an extended time.

We have one pole that runs a portion of the farm and it seems like due to storms it has kicked out the main breaker. They were very responsive in getting here and getting the power back on.

We have some outages, but the rest is fine.

We like the people and the service is good.

We used to have a lot of outages, but not so much now.

We wait quite awhile to have our power restored. Sometimes we have surges in the electricity.

When I did need them they were here. They charged a little extra and the rates were a little high.

When it is good it is good, and when it is bad it is bad. They try but we are out of power on a continued basis.

When the power goes out it comes back on relatively quick. They are pretty reliable about questions.

“7” Rating

We have a lot of outages. (7 mentions)

I think my bill is too high. (4 mentions)

Because of the price increase. People are making less money today.

I don't rate people high.

I don't think they maintain their lines so well and that's why we have so many outages. We can lose power on even a calm day. They should be more proactive and trim and maintain around the trees to eliminate the outages. The cost would be less. They wouldn't have the cost of sending the guys out.

I have no issues.

It seems like the power rates are higher than other companies.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
“7” Rating
(continued)

I think that the guys who respond to the outages are great and they should get paid more! The system needs to have some upgrades. I was disappointed they voted to go with Vermont Yankee, but when the Board got together they didn’t do that.

I think the people I deal with are good. We have a lot of outages and I see that some of the tree clearing could be better. The prices are high.

I would not put them as excellent because I am on the Canadian border so am at a dead end. I am not high on the list to reach in case of trouble.

I’m fairly pleased with them and there is always room for improvement.

Inconsistencies of service, It seems like we have a lot of power outages.

It is good in summer time and poor in the winter.

The bills are really high and I don’t know why. They sent a meter, but I don’t understand it.

The bills keep going up. I wonder why my bill is over $100. No one is ever here.

The power outages seem kind of unnecessary, due to not keeping the lines clear.

The rates are too high, and for the amount of power I use I am getting charged too much. Otherwise, everything else is fine.

The rates have been going up and up.

Their linemen are paid too much.

There is always room for improvement.

They have had timely response in the last three months. I am satisfied.

They respond to requests, but I just do not feel they respond in a timely fashion.

We had a power interruption for over three days. My husband was gone, I was pregnant, and I had quite a hardship because of no generator.

We had one bad outage several years ago. The service is okay now.

We have had a lot of interruptions because the lines haven’t been kept clear.

We have some long outages, but the service is good.

We haven’t had any problems.

When the power is out it takes too long to get it fixed.
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons
(continued)

“6” Rating
The prices are too high. (3 mentions)
Cost increases.
I am not totally happy with the Board members.
I had the meter changed and the rates went up dramatically. I am very dissatisfied.
I try to estimate from the first until now and it is a little bit average right now.
I would say because of the rates being higher compared with other local companies, the number of outages, and the speed of getting the power back on.
It is a monopoly, as we don't really have a choice. They are just there for us.
It is too expensive. Their salaries are too high.
The bill got so high, and there was no explanation for it. They shut my power off. The bill shot up for one month and I couldn't keep up with it.
The outages last too long.
The time it takes for restoration. One time it was out for 18 hours.
There are some outages and my electricity was shut off once.
They are very expensive.
They miscommunicated on the deposit.
We go without power quite a bit. My dad has a breathing machine and without power he cannot sleep because he cannot breathe.

“5” Rating
I am not too happy with the rate increases. (4 mentions)
I am against the wind towers they are sponsoring.
I did have an issue two years ago. The electric water heater burned out and I called the company. They were slow to respond and it resulted in two very high bills. They could have saved me money had they responded, like $900, which was very significant.
I don't understand why their billing and costs are higher here than a lot of other places.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons

“5” Rating
(continued)

I had a power surge and I didn't get anything out of them. I lost a lot of appliances.

I think because my bill is too high. I've had a couple of people come out to find out why that is and I never seem to get an accurate answer.

I think the one thing I am most dissatisfied with is that there have been rate increases in three years. Vermont's rates are double the average.

I think they are getting better than they used to be with power outages. Also, when talking with other people they are too high.

I'm concerned that my winter bills run $200 and that's high. Overall, I would say my rates are too high.

My light bill is really high compared to the first few years we were here.

My past experiences have been mediocre; sometimes they show up, sometimes they don't. The customer service has been sporadic.

Tell your bookkeeping staff I am trying to get disability money and would appreciate some help in understanding my situation. I am trying to pay, but it is slow and I am having a rough time and need help on this problem.

The rates are too high. The bills are high. They say we have high usage.

They are average. There is not any utility company that is going to be excellent.

They are very high and I don't feel I should pay for other homes to be redone for this.

They come quickly when I call.

They have problems.

We constantly lose power.

We have a lot of outages and I am always last to get the power back. We have a lot of trees and they need more manpower to get things working.

We have a lot of outages and they are high.

“4” Rating

We have a lot of outages. (2 mentions)

Because of their prices. The reason they are expensive is because they are a small company and are spread out. They would be better off merging.
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons

“4” Rating
(continued)

1. For a long time the estimates were way wrong. 2. I have been very unhappy about the decision to cut off from Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power without consulting the members. There weren’t any flyers sent out ahead of time about that. I felt that they should be making a business decision and an ideological decision. 3. Two years back I had solar panels to supplement power from the grid and got the strong impression that they were not encouraging it, but just tolerating.

I feel the rates are high. They made blunders in electric purchases. Management decisions have not been good.

I think my light bill has gone up outrageously over the past six months and there is no reason. I haven't been happy with my bills.

It is too expensive.

The bill is outrageous. Even with new appliances, which are Energy Star, the bill is still way too high. There are just two people living in the home. I feel that is out of range.

The rates are too high. More important, the bill stays the same even when I am gone all month. If no one is here the bill should only be $30. It is still $120 a month like usual. When I call them, they have some excuse.

“3” Rating

I have had nothing but issues with them; they have easements on my property; they cut my apple trees down; they spray when I’ve asked them not to. They dropped a tree on the line and it pulled the line out of my house and they have never called me back.

I was not able to make the bill payment. An employee came around and insisted I pay that day although a payment was sent in already. I was not pleased with the confrontation. I have a previous good record of paying the bill.

I would like to be self sufficient with a windmill. The outages are bad.

They over charge, as we are paying three times or more than what we used to.

We live in a mobile home and have complained constantly about our high bill, and they have done nothing about it.

“2” Rating

Because of the rate increases, charges, and other costs for doing other service that other companies would not charge for.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Overall Satisfaction Rating Reasons (continued)

“1” Rating – Not At All Satisfied

A lot of the bills are a lot more than they are supposed to be.

The rates are outrageous. They have too many employees in the office.

The rates are too high.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

*In order to present comments in their entirety, verbatim responses may appear under more than one heading. The portion of the comment pertaining to the section is in black, while portions covered under other areas are colored in gray.*

**Overall Satisfaction – Positive Responses**

I am very satisfied. (4 mentions)

We are fine with the co-op. (2 mentions)

I am very happy with the company and have been for 30 years. They have improved and adjusted to change, which I appreciate.

I am very happy with them. They work hard to restore power as quickly as they can. I am on the river and even public service comes over and helps them with outages. Like everyone though, I wish the bills were lower.

I do appreciate the improvement that they have made.

I have been pretty happy. I come home, put on the switch, and electricity is there. That is a happy thing.

I have been very happy with them. This last winter we had no outages at all, so I was pleased.

I have been very satisfied with them in the past 35 years.

I think the co-op does a great, great job.

I think they are doing a great job. Anytime I have had a problem, I have been very satisfied with the outcome.

I think they are very good as they are.

In the various places I have lived I have always had Vermont Electric and it has always been good. The bills are reasonable and we hardly ever have an outage.

They are a good company.

They are doing fine as far as I am concerned.

They do a great job. I wish they would trim the trees better and eliminate losing the power so often.

They have been good to us.

Vermont Electric Co-op is doing much better than 10 years ago.

We're more than satisfied with the service.
Additional Comments
(continued)

Management/Board – Positive Responses

I have faith in the Board of Directors. They have the knowledge to lead the company.

I think their current management team is doing a wonderful job. They have the right mix on their management team.

Management/Board – Negative Responses

I am extremely opposed to the wind towers they are building. They are putting up two wind towers. This is a very rural, very beautiful place, and I don't want it destroyed by the towers. Now I do wholeheartedly support all the other renewable energy sources you mentioned, and I would gladly pay $20 more a month on my bill for this power if none of it came from wind towers. Our average bill is $95, and I don't think you can beat those rates. I attended the wind tower meeting and was disappointed with the CEO and the Board of Directors members I talked to there.

I don't read the newsletter and I don't vote in elections, because they are going to do what they want anyway. Instead of looking at different ways to generate electricity, they should concentrate on making sure they don't have so many outages. I bet I have 20 outages a year.

Management/Board – Neutral Responses

Be careful about decisions and listen more to customers who own the business.

Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses

I am elderly and they are good about calling me if they are going to turn off my power. They do the best they can at getting at the outages quickly.

I am glad to see their trucks go by when there is an outage. We do have quite a few outages, but it is the nature of the beast in this area. They try their best to restore them. Also they have improved at keeping the power on. They are good at informing us about outages and I am glad they have an 800 number for outages so we don't have to pay toll charges.

I am very happy with them. They work hard to restore power as quickly as they can. I am on the river and even public service comes over and helps them with outages. Like everyone though, I wish the bills were lower.

The guys who are out in the fields who respond to emergencies are great.

I have been very happy with them. This last winter we had no outages at all, so I was pleased.

I have seen a great improvement over the last five years. They have kept the power lines cleaner, in terms of trimming trees, etc., which has helped.
I like the graphs on the electric bill comparing your usage with other months. But then I start complaining about the bill and about rates going up, so maybe the graphs aren't such a good idea. In 11 years, we have had only one outage, so that is really good.

I think they are doing their best with outages, but I still don't like them. Their bills seem high to me. We are gone in the winter, but we do heat our basement by electric heat during those months, and our bill is over $100. I think that is high.

I was glad we had power when others in the area were out. I felt they were doing a good job.

In the last year they have gotten better. I have been with them so many years. I do think they have gotten better with clearing overgrowth around the lines. Overgrowth makes me very uncomfortable.

In the various places I have lived I have always had Vermont Electric and it has always been good. The bills are reasonable and we hardly ever have an outage.

It has gotten better in the last ten years on the number of outages and the length of outages. We sure appreciate that.

My husband was put on oxygen several years ago and I told them and they promised to make repairing outages a priority. I was impressed with them saying that and I have found that they have followed up on that.

Overall I am pleased with the service. I would like to see a reduced rate for higher use residential customers.

Overall I have been very happy with the service they have provided.

The status on outages has improved very much in the last five years.

They are a good company at service, but they are a little high on their rates. But then I think everything is high now a day.

They do a good job of getting electricity back on.

They have been doing a lot of work trimming trees and outages are fewer than they used to be.

They are good at working in the worst weather conditions. They changed our meter over on the worst, snowy day possible. I am surprised they even got through our driveway. But that is the way they are.

They have great service.

This is just for a camp and I am just there in the summer. We never have any outages in the summer, and compared to everything else in this economy, the bill is reasonable, like $30 a month. I just had the one service problem where they didn't connect the power back up right, but they came right out when I called and took care of it.
Additional Comments

Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses
(continued)

We have Vermont Electric for our camp and we have only lost power a couple of times when we have been there. Those were during bad storms so it is understandable. I like nuclear power, but they waited too long here to decide they need a new plant. They should have decided that 20 years ago.

Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses

Get more trees away from the line.

I have had nothing but issues with them; they have easements on my property; they cut my apple trees down; they spray when I’ve asked them not to. They dropped a tree on the line and it pulled the line out of my house and they have never called me back.

I don’t read the newsletter and I don’t vote in elections, because they are going to do what they want anyway. Instead of looking at different ways to generate electricity, they should concentrate on making sure they don’t have so many outages. I bet I have 20 outages a year.

I had them come to see about putting additional power at my home; they came when I wasn’t home and they haven’t come back.

I need a call to talk about meter problems and rates.

I wish the rates were lower. The pole outside the camp that holds the meter along with the service drop is very old. I am concerned because of the way it tilts.

I wish they would do a better job trimming back the bush around the lines. That might help with the outages. Also, there are a lot of seniors up here struggling financially. Renewable energy is okay if it would cut the electric bill, but if it would cost more, I am against it.

I would like to know why there are so many outages.

My only problem is the frequent outages, like 20 a year.

Improve power outages, especially with my dad, because he has a machine for breathing. Some have a direct need, so what if they really need power? Live communication at an outage would help. Some really need this power.

My only complaint is that the line is busy when you call in for outages, and I would like to know more about the outage, how long it will be, etc. I have elderly neighbors and I feel responsible for them during outages.

They do a great job. I wish they would trim the trees better and eliminate losing the power so often.

They need to trim their trees and clear their lines.

Please remind them about the cracked pole in front of my house. Three years ago they marked it and said they would come back and replace it at the end of the summer. They still have not replaced it.

2011 Vermont Electric Cooperative Residential Member Satisfaction Survey Verbatim Responses
Additional Comments
Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses

(continued)

They should do a better job of keeping the trees and brush trimmed around the lines. That is why we have all the outages, and I do have a lot of outages. I wish they had a real person answering the phone for outages rather than a recording. Then we would know what is going on. As you see, my biggest complaint is the number of outages we have each year, like at least eight to ten, and some of them last awhile.

They used to have a store where they sold appliances and I wish they still did. The only annoying thing is that when they are reading the meter we get a buzz on our radio; anyway that is what my wife says is happening.

Tree trimming is needed more frequently.

We have a lot of outages and some of them are for days, but I think they are trying their best. We are really trying to conserve on electricity at our home. We even use a wood boiler to heat the water instead of our electric hot water heater. I don't want the bill to go higher. It is $100 a month now.

We have our own windmill for generating electricity. We can only bank it for 12 months and after that we designate who to sell the excess to. Vermont Electric is very good at facilitating the transfer of this excess power to others. The trouble is we still have outages because we are part of the grid. They are working hard to minimize the outages, but we still have plenty of them.

Work on the power, making it so there are not so many outages. We have an outage closet because there are so many and it is difficult.

Operations/Engineering – Neutral Responses

Concerning the outage notification table, I don't know exactly which town they consider me in. When they list Cambridge, am I a part of that? You really don't know which way the power flows.

They could do some preventative maintenance when they are not having problems, when it won't cost overtime.

Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Positive Responses

Any employee that I have ever dealt with has been professional and great to work with.

I am elderly and they are good about calling me if they are going to turn off my power. They do the best they can at getting at the outages quickly.

I think they are doing a great job. Anytime I have had a problem, I have been very satisfied with the outcome.
Additional Comments
Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Negative Responses (continued)

Just don't go all e-mail. Just keep the newsletters coming. How they keep us informed during an outage is great the way they are doing it. The lady that answers the phone is always the same one. I think she is wonderful and very helpful.

We are just there on the weekends. The employees there are very nice. When I called to complain about a bill, the lady gave me all these wonderful suggestions on what we could do to save on electricity. They even explained how we could get a $50 credit for new appliances. It is way more of a personal company than the one I have in Massachusetts.

Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Negative Responses

Give us information when the power is out.

I just wish we could get a live person when we call to report an outage. We could find out more that way. I really don't like the wind towers. There is one right close to my sister's backyard, and I am not sure if it is the noise or the air pressure, but it makes your body feel strange. I don’t trust those.

I have two general complaints. One is that you never know how long the outages are going to be or if there is a planned one. If you call in you do not get a person and cannot find out anything. In that way, Vermont Electric's service has declined. The other complaint is their high rates. We live right on the line between Central Vermont and Vermont Electric, and Central Vermont's rates are noticeably lower.

I think their rates should be a lot lower and they should care about their customers a little bit more.

I was surprised with my old company that they lifted up the phone right away, but I could not get through at Vermont Co-op. I think they should staff their phones for the call-ins.

They should do a better job of keeping the trees and brush trimmed around the lines. That is why we have all the outages, and I do have a lot of outages. I wish they had a real person answering the phone for outages rather than a recording. Then we know what is going on. As you see, my biggest complaint is the number of outages we have each year, like at least eight to ten, and some of them last awhile.

Not everyone has a touch phone; I can’t call the auto system.

Billing/Finance – Positive Responses

I like the graphs on the electric bill comparing your usage with other months. But then I start complaining about the bill and about rates going up, so maybe the graphs aren't such a good idea. In 11 years, we have had only one outage, so that is really good.
Billing/Finance – Negative Responses

I am having a rough time. I am trying to get on disability and I feel you should get a break on the rates or on the timing of the bill.

I got a disconnection notice and I sent the payment in within two days before the due date.

I have a new digital meter on my wall, and so the job that those who read them, no longer have that job. Since we do not have that anymore we should have a $5 reduction, since people no longer are paid to do that service.

I still have a billing problem. I have asked for a name change and haven't received it yet.

I was not able to make the bill payment. An employee came around and insisted I pay that day although a payment was sent in already. I was not pleased with the confrontation. I have a previous good record of paying the bill. I would like a call about the bill incident.

I would like to talk about an issue on the bill.

When my grandmother and I signed up with them last February, they said the power could not be in my name, but when I checked several months later, the power had been in my name the whole time. It was really confusing when we signed up, like getting the billing straight and trying to understand why the first month's bill was so high. It was $700.

They sound like they encourage us to go paperless, but then they charge us for it. If you call in to pay your bill with your debit card there is a charge for that on your next bill. If they want us to go paperless, they should not charge us. Our house has high usage for electricity, and I think it would be in their interest to perform an audit without charging a hefty fee for such an audit. When I tried to talk to them about this and our high bills, they just said "well, that is the way it is."

Billing/Finance – Neutral Response

My last bill may have crossed in the mail. The last bill was paid, but it doesn't show on the bill.

Rates/Fees – Positive Responses

I am extremely opposed to the wind towers they are building. They are putting up two wind towers. This is a very rural, very beautiful place, and I don't want it destroyed by the towers. Now I do wholeheartedly support all the other renewable energy sources you mentioned, and I would gladly pay $20 more a month on my bill for this power if none of it came from wind towers. Our average bill is $95, and I don't think you can beat those rates. I attended the wind tower meeting and was disappointed with the CEO and the Board of Directors members I talked to there.

In the various places I have lived I have always had Vermont Electric and it has always been good. The bills are reasonable and we hardly ever have an outage.
Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Positive Responses
(continued)

I moved here from Green Mountain Power and everyone was telling me that Vermont Electric was so much higher. Well, our bill has been lower with Vermont Electric. And we use about the same amount of electricity as before.

This is just for a camp and I am just there in the summer. We never have any outages in the summer, and compared to everything else in this economy, the bill is reasonable, like $30 a month. I just had the one service problem where they didn't connect the power back up right, but they came right out when I called and took care of it.

Rates/Fees – Negative Responses

Drop the rates lower.

I am concerned on the billing. I got a $99 bill, then it was $101, and then it dropped to $70.

My wife was so upset that they had a surcharge for paying the bill with a credit card that we went back to paying by check.

I am having a rough time. I am trying to get on disability and I feel you should get a break on the rates or on the timing of the bill.

I am very happy with them. They work hard to restore power as quickly as they can. I am on the river and even public service comes over and helps them with outages. Like everyone though, I wish the bills were lower.

I have complained to them numerous times about our bill. We are only here in the summer, and our bill averages over $100 a month. They have not been helpful. Furthermore, the rates in Florida where I have another home are lower. I don't understand this state. They think they can shut down Vermont Yankee as well as not use wind power and still keep businesses in the state. If the state does these things, electricity is going to cost so much that all the businesses will move over to New York where electricity costs a third as much.

I think the problem that bothers me the most is about cost. This winter was really rough and this is the only place where I walk around in the dark. The cost is too high.

I have two general complaints. One is that you never know how long the outages are going to be or if there is a planned one. If you call in you do not get a person and cannot find out anything. In that way, Vermont Electric's service has declined. The other complaint is their high rates. We live right on the line between Central Vermont and Vermont Electric, and Central Vermont's rates are noticeably lower.

I need a call to talk about meter problems and rates.

I think the rates are too high.

I think their rates should be a lot lower and they should care about their customers a little bit more.
Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

I think they are doing their best with outages, but I still don't like them. Their bills seem high to me. We are gone in the winter, but we do heat our basement by electric heat during those months, and our bill is over $100. I think that is high.

I wish the rates were lower. The pole outside camp that holds the meter along with the service drop is very old. I am concerned because of the way it tilts.

I'd like to see our rates be more competitive with GMP. I'd like them to make more of a commitment to nuclear power.

If the rates could stop going up, it would be great.

If they could bring some of their rates down. And the basic service charge is a bit steep. I have no choice, they are in the same fix as I am.

In the winter time the rates are so much higher and I think that it is because of snow making. I am not sure if that is correct or not.

Lower the rates.

The prices are too high.

They are a good company at service, but they are a little high on their rates. But then I think everything is high now a day.

We had a different company originally here and then Vermont Electric took over. My bill was much lower with the other company. It seems like the rates for Vermont Electric just keep going up. Vermont Electric said they were more cost efficient when they took over, but I haven't seen that.

We have a lot of outages and some of them are for days, but I think they are trying their best. We are really trying to conserve on electricity at our home. We even use a wood boiler to heat the water instead of our electric hot water heater. I don't want the bill to go higher. It is $100 a month now.

Rates/Fees – Neutral Responses

It's hard to compare when you don't know what others charge.

Overall I am pleased with the service. I would like to see a reduced rate for higher use residential customers.

Try to keep the cost down and be energy efficient.

You need to try to keep the prices affordable.
Additional Comments
(continued)

**Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Positive Response**

I am interested in smart grid technology. If it would benefit me to use it off peak I would be willing to entertain that.

**Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Negative Responses**

They sound like they encourage us to go paperless, but then they charge us for it. If you call in to pay your bill with your debit card there is a charge for that on your next bill. If they want us to go paperless, they should not charge us. Our house has high usage for electricity, and I think it would be in their interest to perform an audit without charging a hefty fee for such an audit. When I tried to talk to them about this and our high bills, they just said "well, that is the way it is."

I am concerned about the bulbs. They don't work properly. They have mercury in them. Why is that being introduced? They are hard to dispose of. I am concerned.

**Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Neutral Responses**

Try to keep the cost down and be energy efficient.

I would like to see a rebate program for LED lighting. I think it is coming, but it is coming slowly. I think we need more incentives.

I would like to be one of the people who receive a smart meter.

**Additional Services – Neutral Responses**

I would like to get high speed Internet over my power lines.

They used to have a store where they sold appliances and I wish they still did. The only annoying thing is that when they are reading the meter we get a buzz on our radio, anyway that is what my wife says is happening.

**Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Positive Responses**

Keep on improving their website. They are doing a good job.

Just don't go all e-mail. Just keep the newsletters coming. How they keep us informed during an outage is great the way they are doing it. The lady that answers the phone is always the same one. I think she is wonderful and very helpful.
Additional Comments
(continued)

Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Negative Responses

I don't read the newsletter and I don't vote in elections, because they are going to do what they want anyway. Instead of looking at different ways to generate electricity, they should concentrate on making sure they don't have so many outages. I bet I have 20 outages a year.

I think they should encourage and help the customers set up their renewable energy, like solar or wind. I don't like the big wind towers on the mountains. They hurt the environment and are not good to look at. They should have less politics in the newsletter and more information on how the customers can cut or save on electricity.

Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Neutral Responses

When they are making financial decisions, they should distribute information ahead of time and solicit response from the members.

You need a brief overview of quarterly information and then put an addition to go to this website.

Renewable Energy

The power companies have to very aggressively address having renewable energy and nuclear power plants. It is important for the environment and it is important for the country. Basically it is either these sources of power or wars in the Mideast. Our country doesn't have a choice. And renewable energy doesn't have to be that complicated. As you mentioned, methane gas is an excellent and cheap way to produce electricity. This ridgeline business in Vermont is ridiculous.

I like the GMP solar program. I would like the co-op to do it.

I think wind, sun, and water are the best.

I would like to see more solar.

Our rates are substantial enough already, but I would agree to $20 more a month for that kind of power. I realize how difficult it is in Vermont and New England to establish renewable energy, but I encourage them to go forward with what they are doing with wind power. It is important.

Some farmers are doing methane gas. It would be good if they could sell it locally.

They are crazy for shutting down Vermont Yankee. We need that nuclear power. It is clean and cheap. It is just the tree huggers that are doing that. I am also for any kind of the renewable energy sources for electricity.

We are all for the wind and solar power.
We have our own windmill for generating electricity. We can only bank it for 12 months and after that we designate who to sell the excess to. Vermont Electric is very good at facilitating the transfer of this excess power to others. The trouble is we still have outages because we are part of the grid. They are working hard to minimize the outages, but we still have plenty of them.

I am extremely opposed to the wind towers they are building. They are putting up two wind towers. This is a very rural, very beautiful place, and I don't want it destroyed by the towers. Now I do wholeheartedly support all the other renewable energy sources you mentioned, and I would gladly pay $20 more a month on my bill for this power if none of it came from wind towers. Our average bill is $95, and I don't think you can beat those rates. I attended the wind tower meeting and was disappointed with the CEO and the Board of Directors members I talked to there.

I think they should encourage and help the customers set up their renewable energy, like solar or wind. I don't like the big wind towers on the mountains. They hurt the environment and are not good to look at. They should have less politics in the newsletter and more information on how the customers can cut or save on electricity.

Other than hydro and nuclear, I am against getting electricity from the renewable energy sources, like wind, etc. If these methods require a government subsidy, they should not be used.

I am concerned what the wind power proposal should be. We could be putting solar cells on top of flat roofs ASAP. We should do a retro fit on our house. The company should develop this program and the customer can pay it back on a monthly bill. I am against the wind power.

I just wish we could get a live person when we call to report an outage. We could find out more that way. I really don't like the wind towers. There is one right close to my sister's backyard, and I am not sure if it is the noise or the air pressure, but it makes your body feel strange. I don't trust those.

I want them to stay the hell off of Lowell Mountain with the wind power project.

I like all renewable energy, but not wind towers. I don't want the towers on the mountaintops.

Continue to find the possible kilowatt from hydro that Quebec charges and buy more of it to replace higher costs from other sources.

I think they should look into a program with putting solar panels on all of our houses and that would help them with their higher transmission costs.

I wish they would do a better job trimming back the bush around the lines. That might help with the outages. Also, there are a lot of seniors up here struggling financially. Renewable energy is okay if it would cut the electric bill, but if it would cost more, I am against it.

I would love to be able to pay more to get the renewable power, but we are retired and can't afford it. Our electric is already around $150 a month.

We would like the co-op to buy back the extra solar power or to use the extra power for a family in need.
**Additional Comments**
(continued)

**Nuclear**

I am for nuclear as long as it is a safe underground power plant.

My son lives 10 miles from Vermont Yankee, so I used to be very opposed to nuclear power plants. But I have come to think it is quite safe and we would have a lot of problems with getting electricity in Vermont if it was not for that plant.

Other than hydro and nuclear, I am against getting electricity from the renewable energy sources, like wind, etc. If these methods require a government subsidy, they should not be used.

We need to keep this nuclear power plant.

The power companies have to very aggressively address having renewable energy and nuclear power plants. It is important for the environment and it is important for the country. Basically it is either these sources of power or wars in the Mideast. Our country doesn't have a choice. And renewable energy doesn't have to be that complicated. As you mentioned, methane gas is an excellent and cheap way to produce electricity. This ridgeline business in Vermont is ridiculous.

We have Vermont Electric for our camp and we have only lost power a couple of times when we have been there. Those were during bad storms so it is understandable. I like nuclear power, but they waited too long here to decide they need a new plant. They should have decided that 20 years ago.

I am very, very opposed to the nuclear power plants. They are dangerous to people's health.

They are crazy for shutting down Vermont Yankee. We need that nuclear power. It is clean and cheap. It is just the tree huggers that are doing that. I am also for any kind of the renewable energy sources for electricity.

I'd like to see our rates be more competitive with GMP. I'd like them to make more of a commitment to nuclear power.

**Other Comments**

I think it is good that they are doing a survey, to find out what people's needs are.
Questionnaire
INTRODUCTION:
May I please speak with the head of household who has or shares responsibility for reviewing and paying the electric utility bills? Hello, my name is ___________ and I am with NRECA Market Research Services. We are conducting a confidential survey for Vermont Electric Cooperative on the service they provide you. Let me assure you, we are not selling anything. Our survey will take about 11 minutes. May I continue now?

[ ] Yes … Continue [ ] No … When would be a more convenient time for me to call back?
Date to call: ___________ Time to call: ____________

1. How long have you received your electric service from Vermont Electric Cooperative? (tenure1)
   [ ] 1 Less than 1 year [ ] 3 3 to 5 years [ ] 5 10 to 14 years [ ] 7 20 years or more
   [ ] 2 1 to 2 years [ ] 4 6 to 9 years [ ] 6 15 to 19 years [ ] 8 Don’t Know/Refused

Satisfaction and Performance Ratings
2. First, on a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Cooperative’s performance on the following? (Do not randomize.)
   a. the reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (elec_svc) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   b. the courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems (courtesy) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the restoration of power after an outage (restore2) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   d. the accuracy of meter reading and billing (v2) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   e. the speed and efficiency of responding to customers (respond2) 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Now, please consider all your experiences to date with Vermont Electric. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "very dissatisfied" and "10" means "very satisfied," how satisfied are you with Vermont Electric Cooperative? (satis)
   Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Satisfied

4. Now, again on a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following? (Randomize after b.)
   a. the overall customer service they provide (cust_svc) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   b. delivering good value for the money (value) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. resolving any issues or problems (resolve) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   d. having highly-trained, professional employees (htemp) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   e. having consumers’ best interests at heart (best_int) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   f. communicating with you and keeping you informed (communic) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   g. operating with concern for the environment (environ) 1 2 3 4 5 6
   h. supporting the local community (community) 1 2 3 4 5 6
Contact
5. In the past year, did you contact VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE for any reason?  
   [ ]1 Yes   [ ]2 No  Skip to Q.10

6. What was the REASON for the most recent call or visit you made? [Do not read/Check all that apply]  
   ___Reason (specify) ___Don't Know/Refused  (skip to Q9)

7. Did you contact VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE for any other reason? IF SO, what?  
   ___Reason (specify) ___No (skip to Q9) ___Don't Know/Refused

8. Did you contact VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE for any other reason? IF SO, what?  
   ___Reason (specify) ___No (skip to Q9sf) ___Don't Know/Refused

9. Based on your contact with Vermont Electric, was your experience much better, somewhat better, about what you  
   expected, somewhat worse, or much worse than you expected? (cnceval)  
   [ ]1 Much worse   [ ]4 Somewhat worse   [ ]3 As expected   [ ]2 Somewhat better   [ ]1 Much better

Electric Service Performance
10. Now, on a 5-point scale where 1 means “very poor” and 5 means “excellent,” how would you rate Vermont Electric  
    Co-op’s performance on the following …? (randomize)  
    On …  
    Very Poor  Excellent  DK  
    a. Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum (limit_blink) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    b. Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum (limit_outg) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    c. Keeping you informed on the status of outages (outinfo2) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    d. Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (pwr_qal2) 1 2 3 4 5 6

Rates and Fees
11. How would you rate Vermont Electric Co-op’s performance on the following using a 5-point scale where 1 means  
    “very poor” and 5 means “excellent?” (randomize)  
    On …  
    Very Poor  Excellent  DK  
    a. Charging reasonable rates (reasrate) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    b. Their monthly service fees (svcfees) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    c. Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (clearbil) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    d. Having convenient payment options (payoptn) 1 2 3 4 5 6  
    e. Helping customers keep bills as low as possible (v3) 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Compared to other electric companies, would you say Vermont Electric’s rates are higher, lower, about the same or  
    you aren’t aware? (ratecomp)  
    [ ]1 Higher   [ ]2 Lower   [ ]3 About the same   [ ]4 Not aware

Power Supply
13. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 means “extremely important,” how important is it to you  
    for Vermont Electric to provide environmentally friendly “green power” from the following renewable energy  
    sources? (randomize)  
    Not at all  Extremely  DK  
    Important  Important  
    a. Wind 1 2 3 4 5 6 (v11)  
    b. Solar 1 2 3 4 5 6 (v12)  
    c. Hydro 1 2 3 4 5 6 (v13)  
    d. Gas Methane 1 2 3 4 5 6 (v14)  
    e. Bio-mass 1 2 3 4 5 6 (v15)
14. If electricity from renewable energy sources were not available at the same rates you are paying now, how much more would you be willing to pay, if anything, to get this green power? Would you pay … [Stop when respondent agrees] (greenpay)
   [ ] 1 $20 more per month  [ ] 3 $10 more per month  [ ] 5 $3 more, or  [ ] 7 Don’t Know/Refused
   [ ] 2 $15 more per month  [ ] 4 $5 more per month  [ ] 6 Nothing more per month

15. How do you feel about Vermont Electric distributing electricity generated in part by nuclear power? Please rate your opinion of this on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you are “entirely against” nuclear power and 5 means you are “entirely for” it.
   Entirely opposed  1  2  3  4  5  Entirely for

Cooperative Commitment

16. Do you view yourself as a member-owner or as a customer of your electric co-op, or both? (mem_id2)
   [ ] 1 Member/owner  [ ] 2 Customer  [ ] 3 Both  [ ] 4 Don’t Know / Refused

17. Concerning Vermont Electric Cooperative, have you done any of the following in the past 3 years? Did you…
   a. Attend an annual meeting? (anmeet)
      [ ] 1 Yes  [ ] 2 No  [ ] 3 Don’t Know
   b. Vote in a co-op election or on some issue? (voted)
      [ ] 1 Yes  [ ] 2 No  [ ] 3 Don’t Know
   c. Speak with a board director or trustee? (spoken)
      [ ] 1 Yes  [ ] 2 No  [ ] 3 Don’t Know

[If 17c=yes, ask:] Using a 5-point scale on which "1" means very poor and “5” means excellent, how would you rate your relationship with your Director?
   Very poor  1  2  3  4  5 Excellent  (v8)

Communications

19. How would you prefer to receive news about what is going on at VEC?
   [ ] 1 newsletter  [ ] 2 e-mail  [ ] 3 text  [ ] 4 Other (specify) ________________  [ ] 5 don’t know

20. How would you prefer to receive critical or time sensitive information from VEC?
   [ ] 1 newsletter  [ ] 2 e-mail  [ ] 3 text  [ ] 4 Other (specify) ________________  [ ] 5 don’t know

IF E-MAIL OR TEXT to Q19 or Q20: email: _________________________________
   Phone # for texts: _________________________________

21. How often do you read the quarterly newsletter called “Co-op Life”?
   [ ] 1 always  [ ] 2 usually  [ ] 3 sometimes  [ ] 4 rarely  [ ] 5 never/don’t receive it

22. How much of it do you usually read?
   [ ] 1 all of it  [ ] 2 most of it  [ ] 3 skim it  [ ] 4 very little  [ ] 5 not aware of it/don’t receive it

23. Do you feel that the length of Co-op Life is [ ] 1 too short  [ ] 2 too long  [ ] 3 or about right?

24. Do you have Internet access either at home or at work? (has_isp)
   [ ] 1 At home  [ ] 2 At work (Skip to Q28)  [ ] 3 Both at home and work  [ ] 4 Neither (Skip to Q26c)

25. Is your Internet access at home dial-up or a higher speed form of access such as cable, satellite, or DSL service?
   (int_type)
   [ ] 1 Dial-up  [ ] 2 Higher speed access  [ ] 3 Don’t Know

26. Are you aware that VEC has an outage center online through a link on their website that provides up-to-date outage information as outages occur? (If yes) Have you used the outage center?
   [ ] 1 AWARE, NOT USED  [ ] 2 NOT AWARE  (v16)  [ ] 3 AWARE, HAVE USED
27. (IF Q26=HAVE USED, ASK) Using a 5-point scale where 1 means “not at all valuable” and 5 means “very valuable,” how valuable did you find the outage center to be?

Not at all valuable 1 2 3 4 5 Very valuable (homedisp)

28. In the future, would you say you would definitely or probably, might or might not, or you probably or definitely would not use the following services from VEC? (randomize)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Definitely Not</th>
<th>Probably Not</th>
<th>Might or Not</th>
<th>Probably Would</th>
<th>Definitely Would</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Review and pay your monthly electric bill online using VEC’s eBill program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Read “Co-op Life” as an e-newsletter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Receive important information from the co-op (such as the status of outages) by cell phone text messages or voice mails</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEMOGRAPHICS** Thank you for your patience. There are just a few final questions that are used for classification purposes only. This information is completely confidential.

1. How many people live in your household including yourself? (hh_num) 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

2. What is your current employment status? (employmt) [ ] 5 Student
   [ ] 1 Work full-time  [ ] 3 At home full-time family care giver  [ ] 6 Not employed, not looking
   [ ] 2 Work part-time  [ ] 4 Retired  [ ] 7 Not employed but looking

3. What is your average monthly electric bill? (bill3) □ 1 $50 or less  □ 3 $101 - $150  □ 5 $201 to $250
   □ 2 $51 - $100  □ 4 $151 - $200  □ 6 $251 to $300
   □ 7 Over $300

4. Into which of the following categories does your annual household income fall before taxes? (income1)
   □ 1 Less than $15,000.  □ 4 $50,001 to $75,000.  □ 7 $125,001 to $150,000
   □ 2 $15,000 to $25,000  □ 5 $75,001 to $100,000.  □ 8 Over $150,000
   □ 3 $25,001 to $50,000  □ 6 $100,001 to $125,000  □ 9 DK/Refused

5. Pre-coded geographic areas from co-op database/member files: ________________ [DO NOT ASK]

6. [DO NOT ASK] Gender: □ 1 Male. □ 2 Female.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. It is very much appreciated.