



# 2013 C&I MEMBER SATISFACTION



7/16/2013

Vermont Electric Cooperative

Survey Results Prepared by:

NRECA  
**MARKET  
RESEARCH  
SERVICES**

**Vermont Electric Cooperative**  
C&I Report Summary  
Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>Background</b> .....	2
<b>Objectives</b> .....	2
<b>Methodology/Analysis</b> .....	3
<b>Key Findings</b>	
Overall Satisfaction .....	4
Performance Quality Attributes .....	5
Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts.....	6
Member Service.....	7
Cost.....	11
Electric Service .....	13
Bills and Payment Options .....	15
Communication .....	16
Social Responsibility.....	19
Commercial Member Characteristics .....	22
Verbatim Comments .....	23
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. Key Driver/Factor Explanation.....	24
B. Verbatim Responses.....	27
C. Questionnaire.....	33

# 2013 C&I Member Satisfaction

## VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following are the top-line findings for the study's main objectives based on the results of a phone survey of 100 C&I members of Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) conducted in May and June of 2013:

- Overall satisfaction among C&I members is very good. The mean rating is 8.86 on a 10-point scale and 70% give ratings of “9” or “10”. This is the highest mean rating VEC has received from C&I members yet, and is significantly higher than each of the studies conducted before 2011.
- The 23 performance attributes evaluated also receive very positive ratings. Nine have mean ratings above 4.50 on a 5-point scale, which can be considered excellent. The highest mean ratings are in regards to the employees, customer service, electric service, billing and communication. In addition, the mean ratings on three attributes have significantly improved from the 2012 study: *delivering good value for the money, communicating with members and keeping them informed and keeping longer outages to a minimum.*
- The strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is **Member Service**. This is an area in which VEC is evaluated very positively, with mean ratings near or above 4.50 and many significant improvements from past studies. Few C&I members had reason to contact VEC in the past year (36%) and those who did so give very positive evaluations of the contact. In fact, 44% evaluate their contact as “much better than expected”, which is significantly higher than past studies. On the other hand, the perceived value of having a VEC account representative has decreased significantly.
- The second-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is **Cost**. As is typical, this area receives lower ratings. However, the mean ratings for *charging reasonable rates* and *monthly service fees* have improved significantly from the 2009 study. *Delivering good value for the money* and *helping customers keep bills low* have improved significantly from more recent studies. Six in ten C&I members say they are not aware of how their rates compare to other electric utilities in the area, while 25% feel they are higher. More than half (56%) say that electricity is their single biggest utility cost.
- **Electric Service** is the final key driver of satisfaction. Ratings in this area are at the “excellent” level, with approximately nine in ten members giving positive ratings for the reliability of service, power restoration, minimizing outages, and providing consistent voltage. All of these attributes have improved significantly from past studies. Longer outages is the power supply issue of most concern to many C&I members, and 52% say it is absolutely necessary to have power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## BACKGROUND

Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) is a consumer-owned electric distribution cooperative headquartered in Johnson, Vermont with service centers in Grand Isle, Newport, and Richford. VEC currently serves 3,600 commercial/industrial members and approximately 34,000 residential members in 74 communities. The co-op has more than 2,800 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 previously conducted C&I member satisfaction studies, with the most recent survey completed in 2012. 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.

## OBJECTIVES

This commercial and industrial member survey addresses but is not limited to the following informational objectives:

- **Overall Performance:** Assess how satisfied C&I members are with VEC.
- **Performance Quality Attributes:** Evaluate C&I member perceptions of service quality on a variety of attributes (e.g., rates, billing, outages, customer service, etc.).
- **Performance Quality Trends:** Compare the results to past studies to identify trends.
- **Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts:** Derive the key drivers of overall satisfaction and to what degree consumer needs are being met to help VEC prioritize any improvement efforts.
- **Other:** Explore other areas of specific interest to the co-op, including members' perception of the value of having an account representative, power delivery requirements, and the impact of power outages.
- **Member Characteristics and Segmentation:** Provide business characteristics of the C&I membership base and identify differences in attitudes between segments.

## METHODOLOGY

Telephone surveying was again 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. On average, the telephone interviews lasted approximately 11 minutes.

Calls were completed with 100 commercial and industrial members of VEC between May 28 and June 11, 2013. Of those contacted, 33 declined to participate, resulting in a response rate of 76%. Additionally, 49 of the phone numbers attempted were disconnected. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the sample is plus or minus 9.5 percentage points. This means that a result of 50% in the survey may be between 40.5% and 59.5% if the entire list of 1,667 C&I members provided were to be interviewed.

## ANALYSIS

The graphics presented in this report are based on data collected from the current study and tracking results from eight studies conducted between 2005 and 2012.

Differences between member segments, such as differences by business type or annual sales, 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.

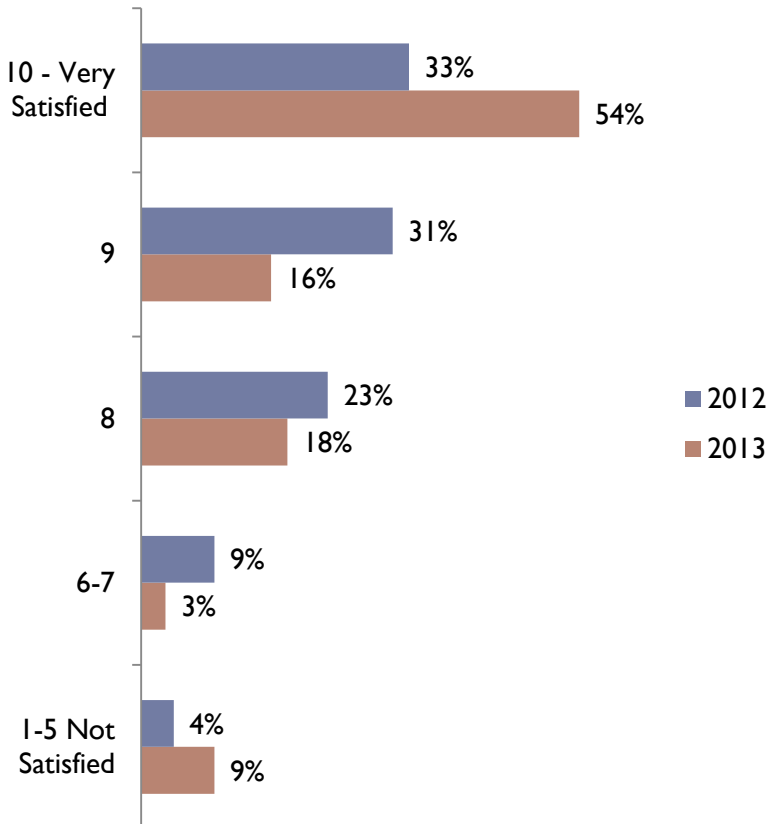
It is important to note that many of the C&I member segments are very small (fewer than 30 respondents), so tests for significant differences among these segments are not valid.

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

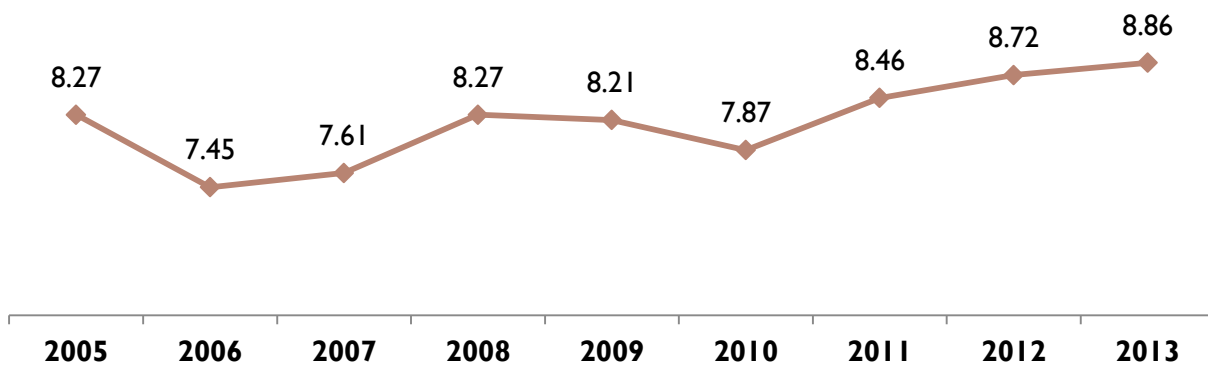
### Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction among C&I members is very good. The mean overall satisfaction rating is 8.86 on a 10-point scale and 70% give ratings of “9” or “10”.



The mean satisfaction rating in 2013 is not significantly different from the 2011 and 2012 studies, but is significantly higher than each of the studies conducted before 2011.

Mean Ratings by Year



## Performance Quality Attributes

C&I members were asked to evaluate 23 performance quality attributes related to member service, electric service, communication, billing, and cost. On all but two 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 nine attributes are above 4.50, which can be considered excellent. Ninety percent or more rate each of the following attributes positively (rating of “4” or “5”):

- Having professional employees (4.72)
- The courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to inquiries or problems (4.69)
- Keeping longer power outages to a minimum (4.64)
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed (4.63)
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers (4.62)
- The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (4.62)
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (4.59)
- The overall customer service provided (4.57)
- The restoration of power after an outage (4.57)

The attributes on which VEC is rated least well by C&I members are *charging reasonable rates* (49% rating “4” or “5”) and *the monthly service fees* (50%). Although these are areas that are often rated lower in satisfaction research, the mean ratings are well below the 3.75 threshold that indicates a need for improvement in members’ perceptions.

The mean ratings for most of the attributes are not significantly different from the 2012 study. The following three have improved significantly:

- *Delivering good value for the money*
- *Communicating with members and keeping them informed*
- *Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum*

In addition to mean ratings not decreasing significantly since 2012, there have been no significant decreases since any of the previous studies.

## Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts

The key drivers of overall satisfaction among VEC's C&I members are member service, cost, and electric service. Going forward, these are the areas that VEC should focus on most.

Regression analysis was used to determine the key drivers of overall satisfaction. The scores are to be interpreted relative to each other. For example, since *member service* has a score of 0.50 and *cost* has a score of 0.22, we can say that C&I members' perception of the customer service they receive has more than twice the impact on their overall performance evaluation as perceptions of the rates and fees they pay. Attributes and factors not shown below are not significant drivers of overall satisfaction. More information on how the factors were formed and importance scores derived can be found in Appendix A.

# Overall Satisfaction

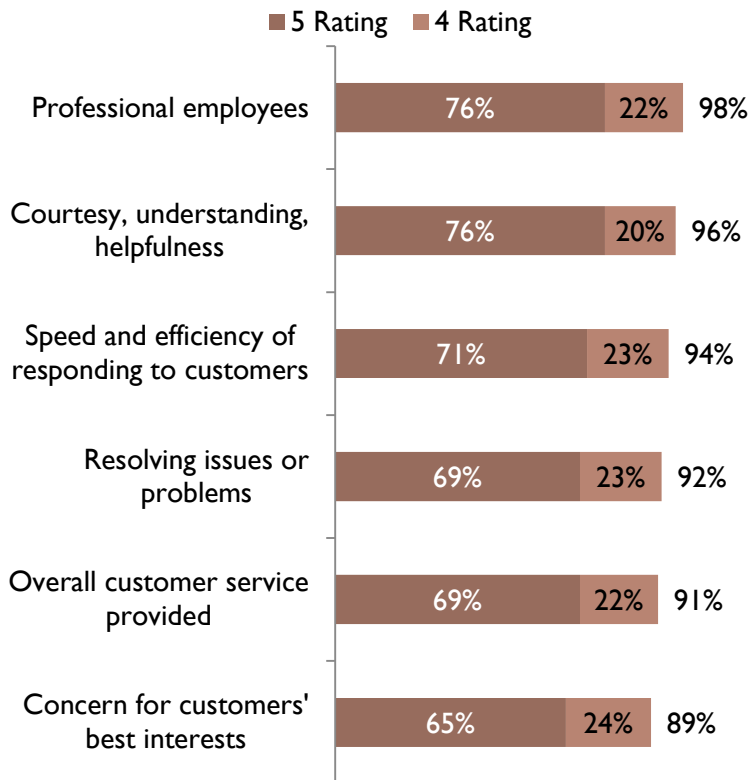
Member Service	Cost	Electric Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Courtesy, understanding, helpfulness of employees to inquiries or problems</li> <li>•Overall customer service provided</li> <li>•Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests</li> <li>•Resolving any issues or problems</li> <li>•Speed and efficiency of responding to customers</li> <li>•Having professional employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The monthly service fees</li> <li>•Charging reasonable rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reliability of service and frequency of interruptions</li> <li>•Keeping longer outages to a minimum</li> <li>•Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum</li> <li>•Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts</li> <li>•The restoration of power after an outage</li> </ul>
0.50	0.22	0.21



## Member Service

“Member Service” is the strongest key driver of overall satisfaction. This is an area in which VEC is doing well. Approximately nine in ten or more give high ratings for the attributes involving employees and member service.

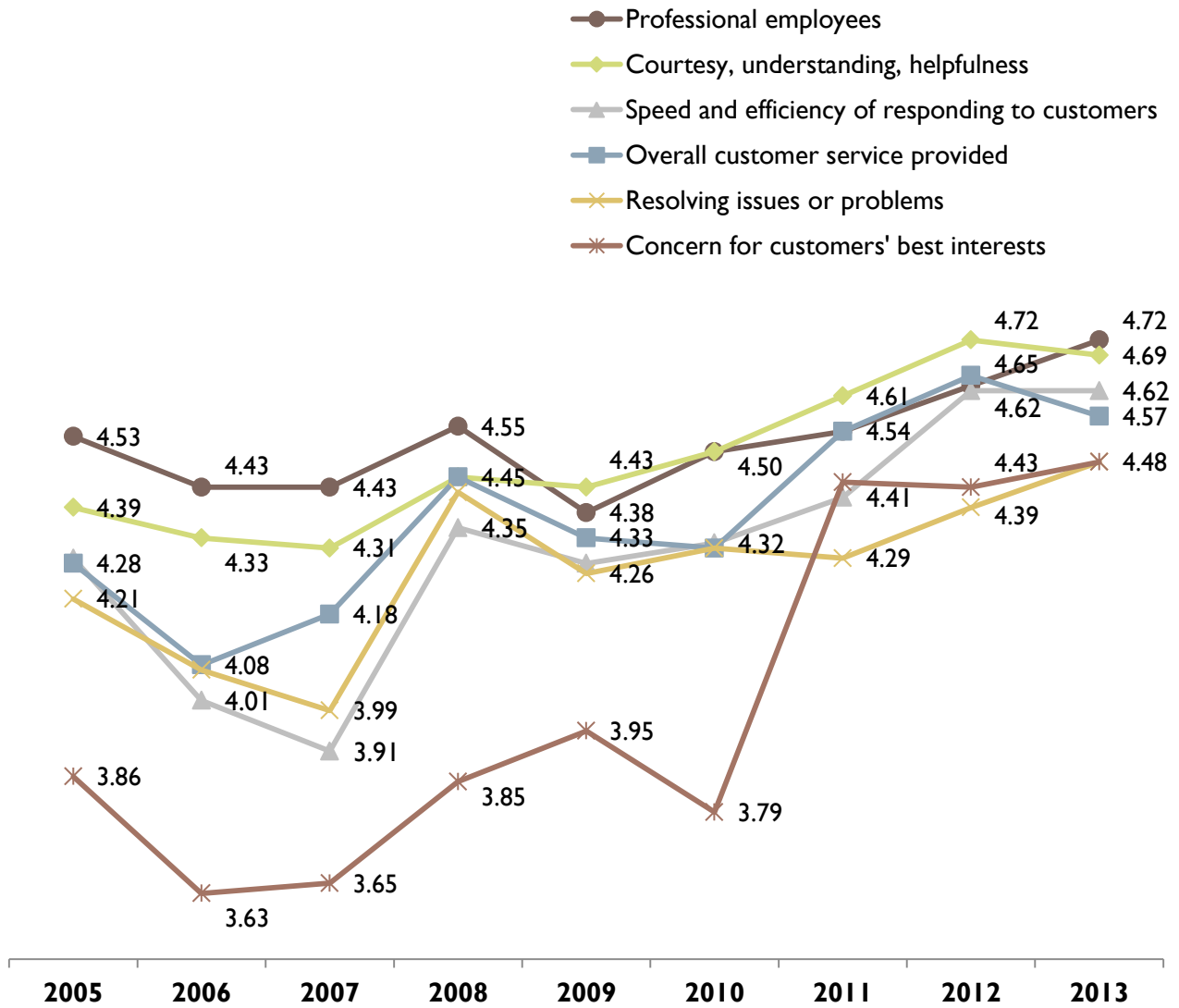
### Top Two Box Ratings



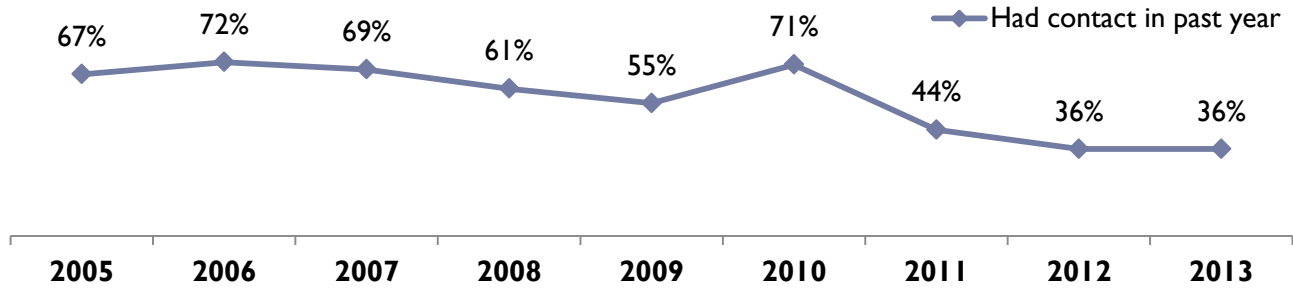
This key driver includes the two highest rated attributes in the study. Nearly all of the members give high ratings for the co-op's employees being *professional* as well as *courteous, understanding and helpful*.

Further, mean ratings for all of the attributes are significantly higher than most of the studies conducted in 2011 and earlier.

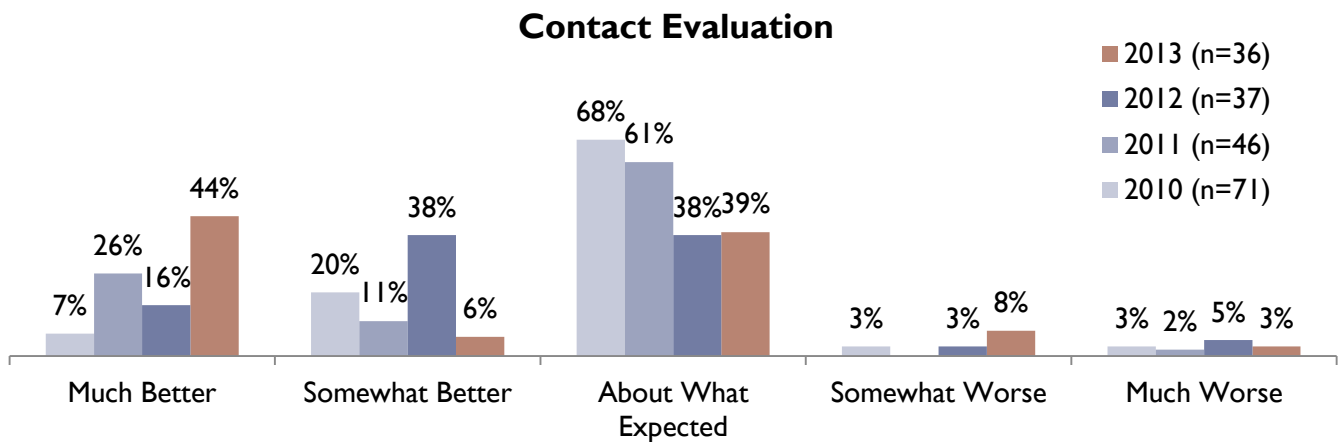
### Mean Ratings by Year



Thirty-six percent of the C&I members indicate they have contacted VEC over the past year. This is significantly less contact than in studies before 2011. Contact was most often initiated regarding an outage.



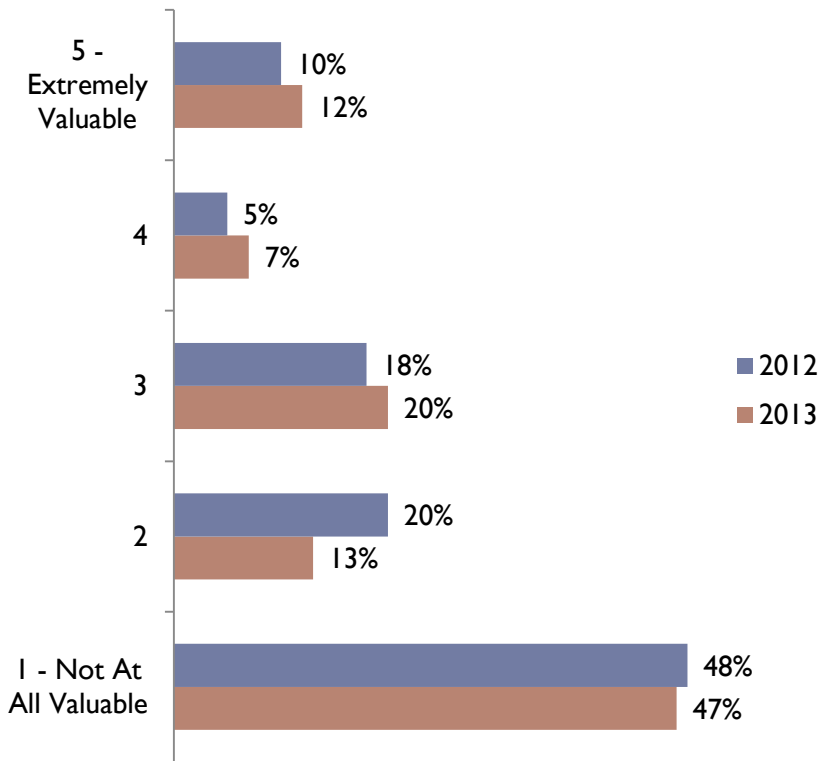
Almost all of those who contacted the co-op in the past year say their expectations were met or exceeded. More than four in ten indicate their contact was much better than expected, which is significantly higher than past studies.



Forty-two percent of those who contacted VEC did so to report or get information on an outage and more than half report their issue was resolved with just one contact.

Reason for Most Recent Contact	% of Those Who Contacted	Number of Contacts	% of Those Who Contacted
Outage	42%	1	56%
Business related	14%	2	9%
Bill question	8%	3-4	12%
Issue with payment	8%	5+	24%

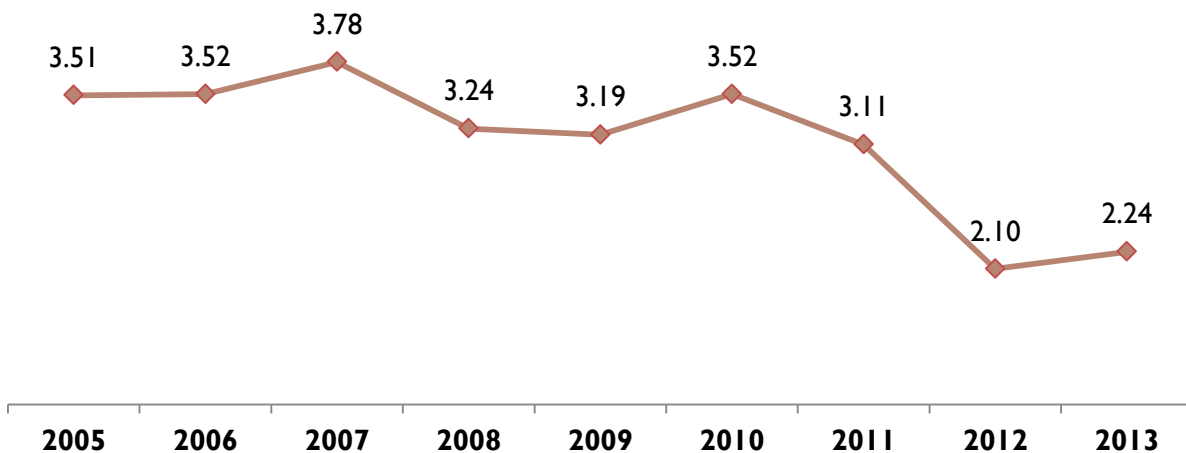
### Value of Having VEC Account Rep



Approximately one-fifth say that it is valuable to their business to have an account representative from VEC (rating of “4” or “5”).

Perceived value has decreased significantly since 2011 and previous studies.

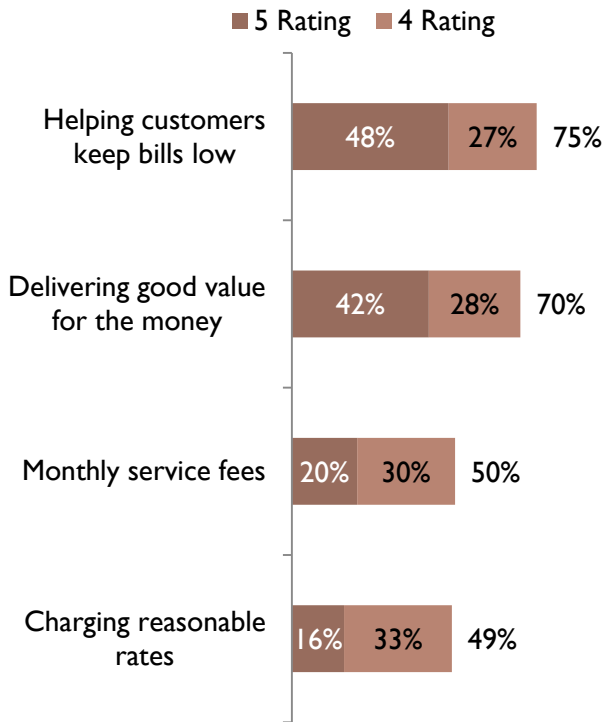
### Mean Value Rating by Year



## Cost

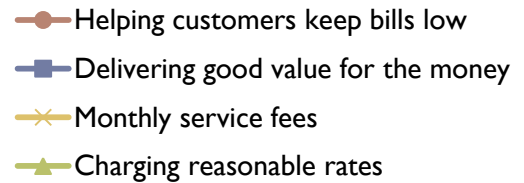
The second-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is Cost.

### Top Two Box Ratings

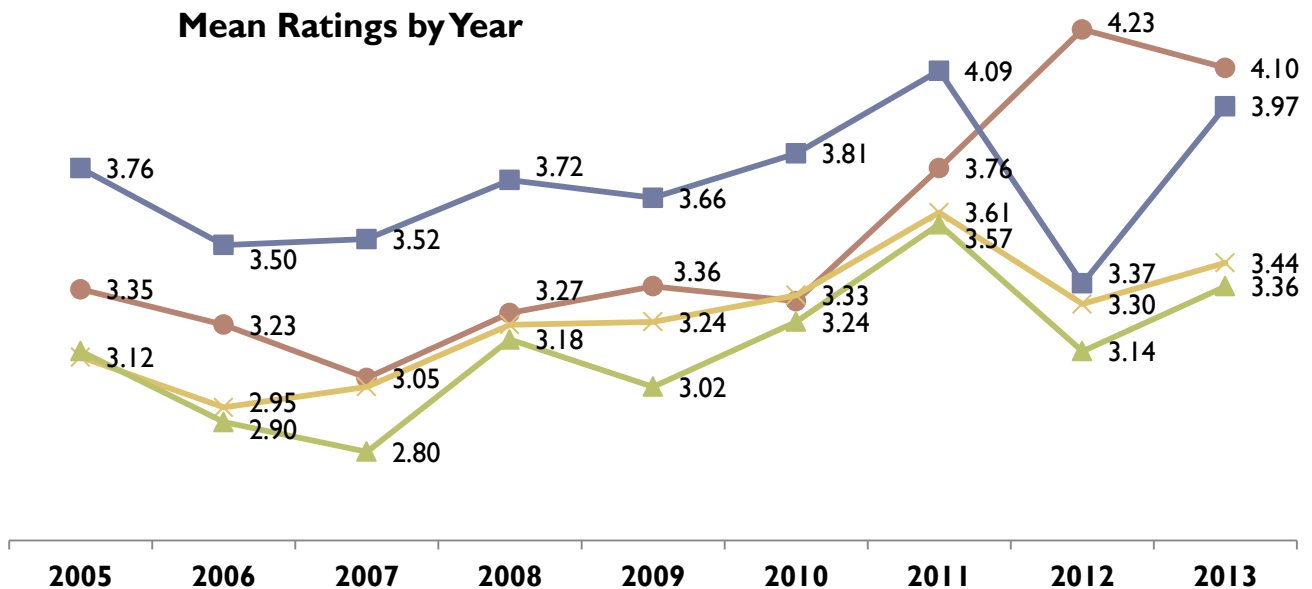


Although this is the area that includes the two lowest rated attributes in the study – *charging reasonable rates* and *the monthly service fees* – both have improved significantly since 2007. However, mean ratings are well below the 4.0 “good” threshold.

Evaluation of *delivering good value for the money* is significantly higher than the 2012 study. In addition, the mean rating for *helping customers keep bills as low as possible* is significantly higher than all studies conducted before 2011.

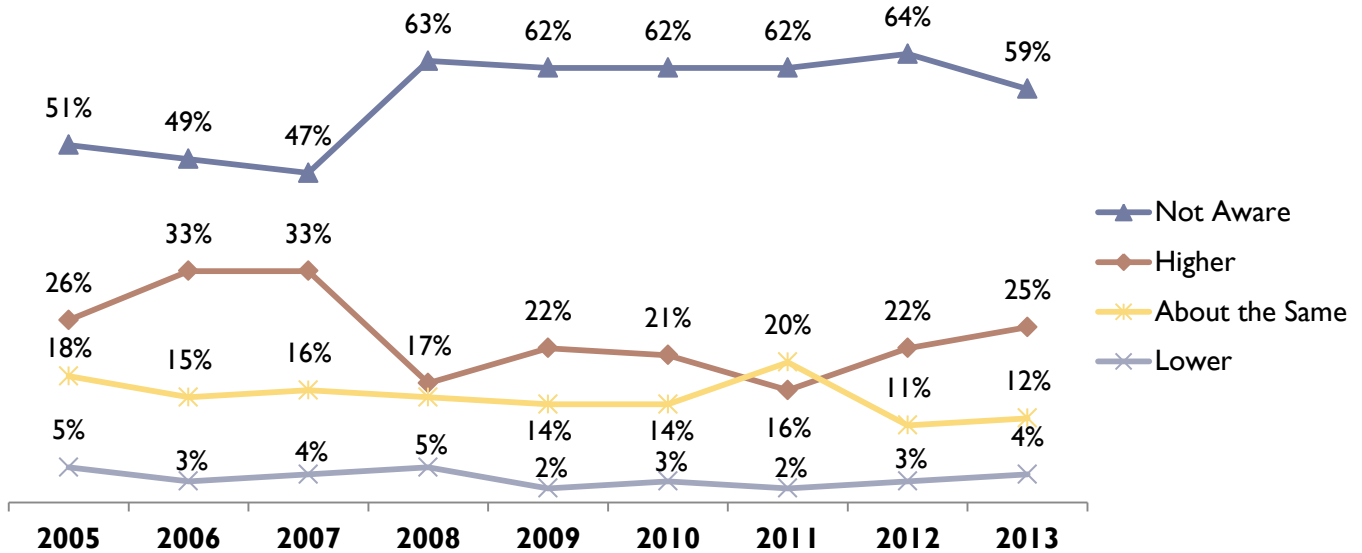


### Mean Ratings by Year



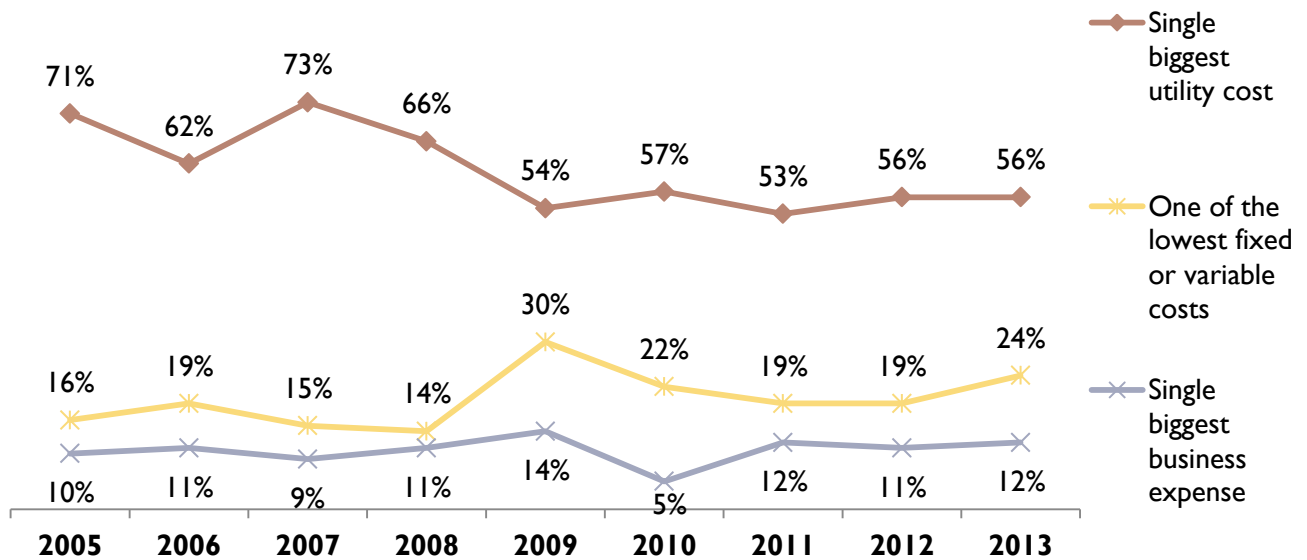
The majority of C&I members are not aware of how their rates compare to other electric utilities in the area (59%). One-quarter believe their rates are higher while few think their rates are lower.

### Vermont Electric's Rates Compared to Other Electric Companies



Fifty-six percent indicate that their electric costs are their single biggest utility cost and an additional 12% say it's their single biggest business expense.

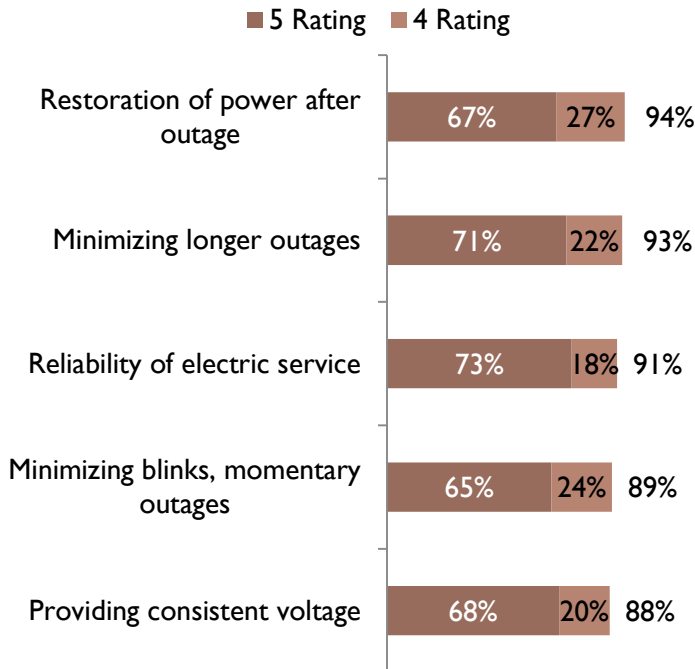
### Electric Power Costs Are...



## Electric Service

The final key driver of overall satisfaction is “Electric Service”. This is another area in which VEC receives high ratings and should keep up the good work.

### Top Two Box Ratings

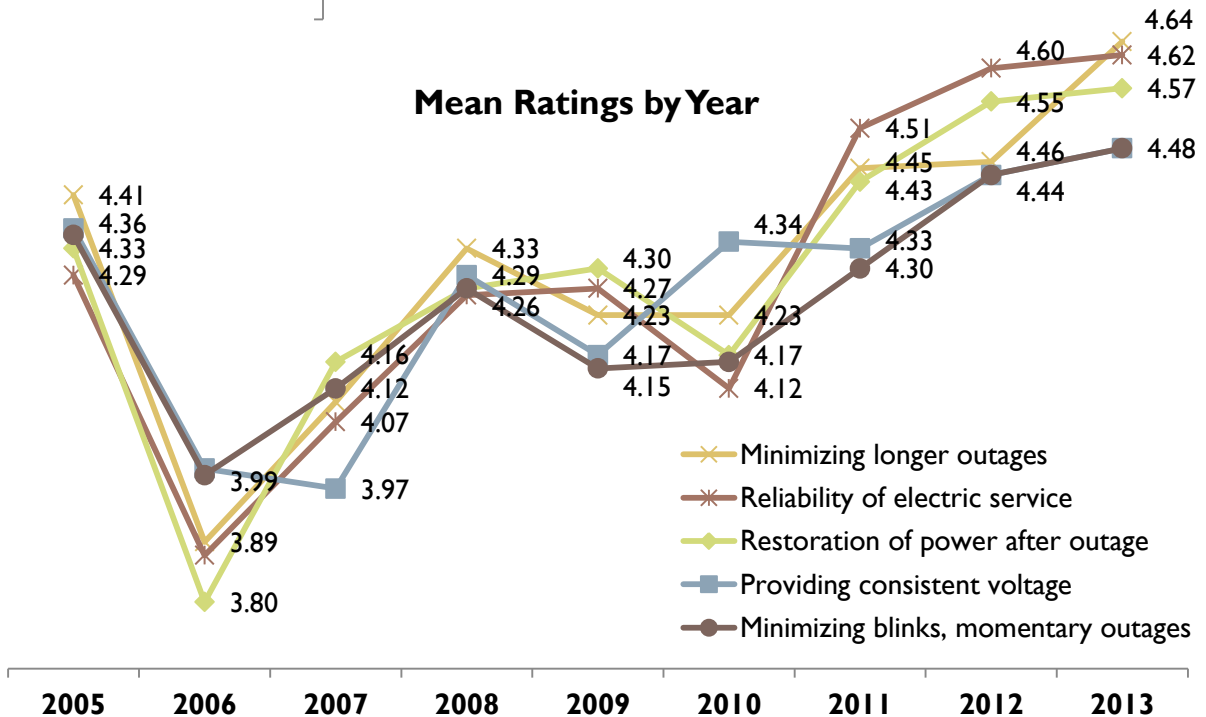


Approximately nine in ten members or more give positive ratings for the five attributes making up the Electric Service factor. These attributes have mean ratings near or above 4.50.

Ratings have increased significantly since 2012 for *keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum*.

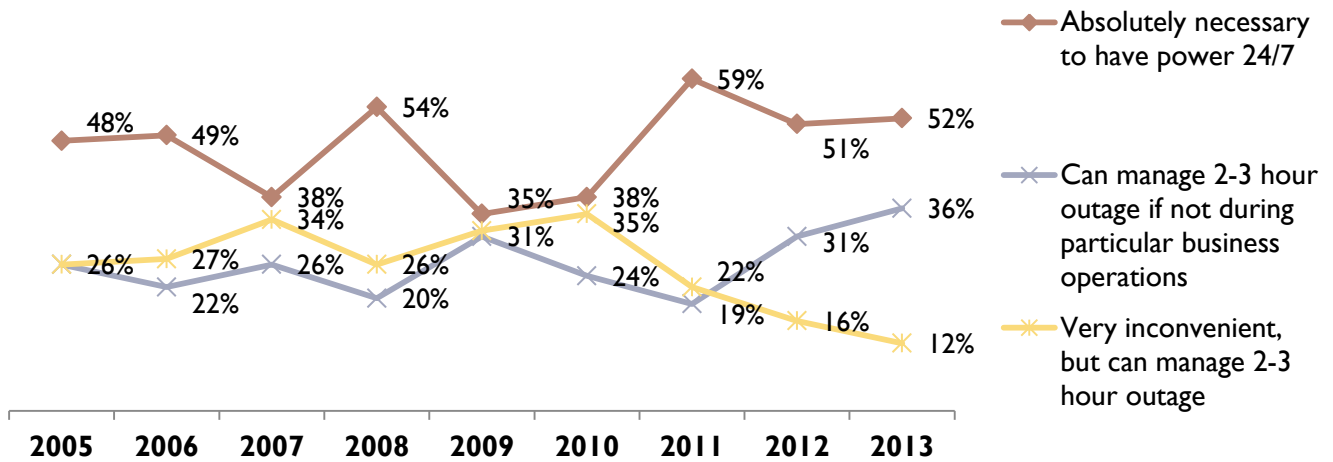
The other attributes are also rated significantly higher in 2013 than in many of the studies before 2011.

### Mean Ratings by Year



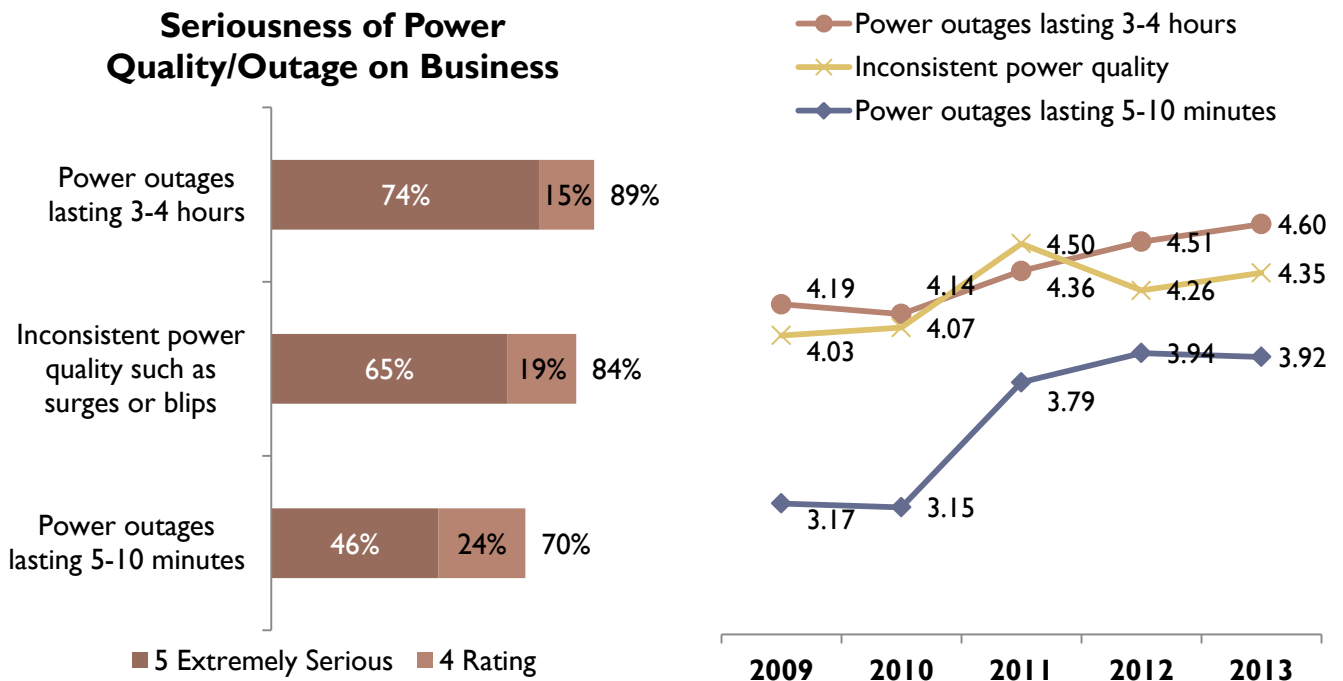
Half of the responding members indicate that it's absolutely necessary for their business to have power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is consistent with 2012 and significantly higher than 2010.

### Electric Power Delivery Requirements



Almost nine in ten say that power outages lasting 3-4 hours have a serious impact on their business. The mean rating for the seriousness of inconsistent power quality has not changed significantly in recent years, while the seriousness of power outages – both 3-4 hour and 5-10 minute outages – has increased since 2010.

### Seriousness of Power Quality/Outage on Business

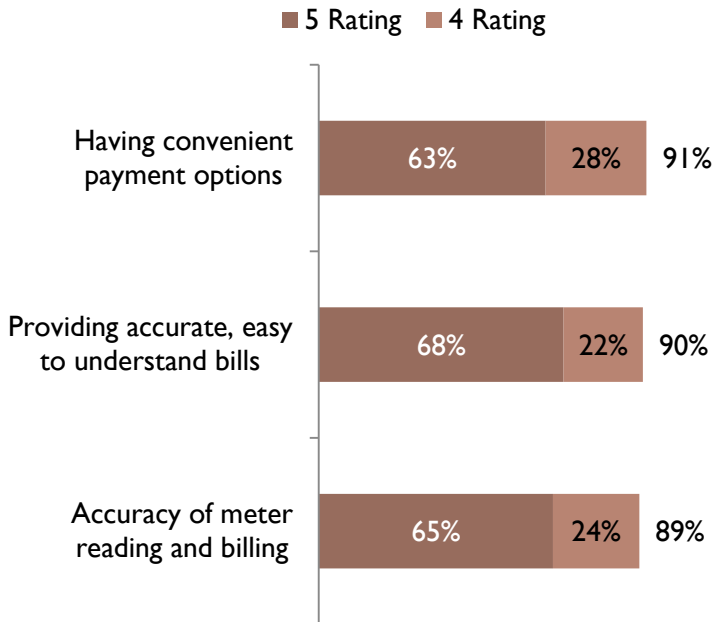




## Bills and Payment Options

The attributes related to billing, meter reading, and payment options are not key drivers of overall satisfaction among C&I members. VEC receives excellent ratings in these areas.

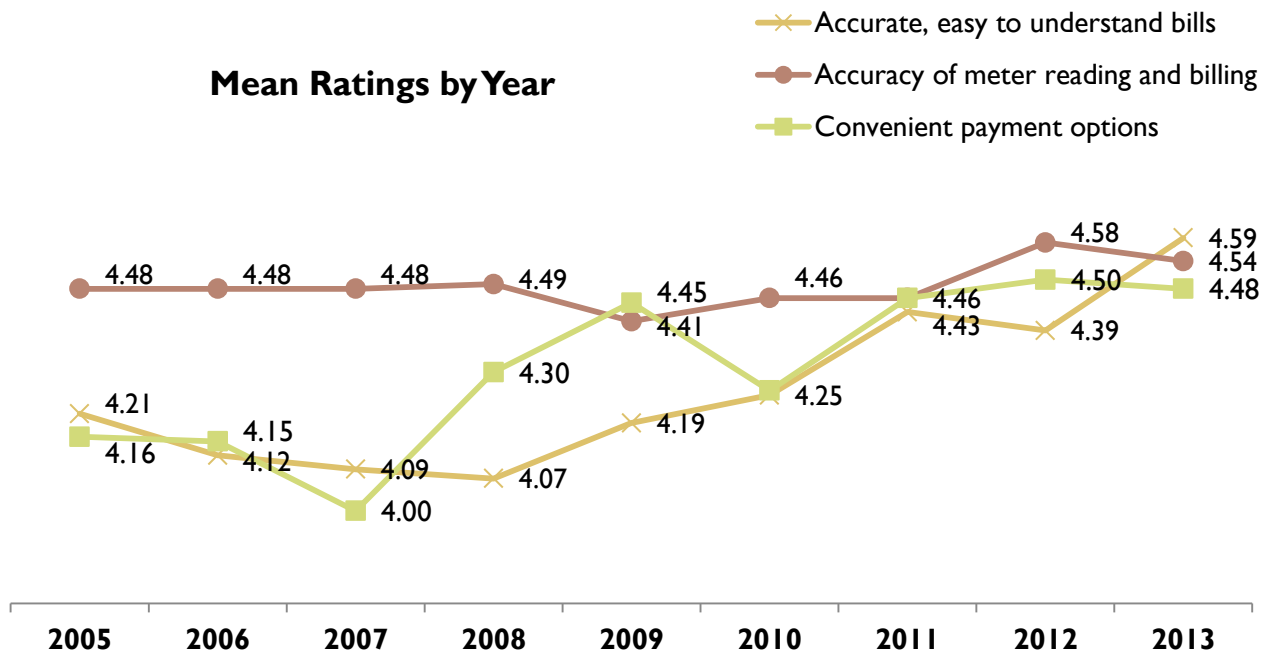
### Top Two Box Ratings



Mean ratings are approximately 4.50 or higher and nine in ten C&I members give positive ratings.

Mean ratings have not changed significantly since 2012, but *providing accurate and easy to understand bills* is rated significantly higher in 2013 than in 2010 and *having convenient payment options* has improved significantly since 2007.

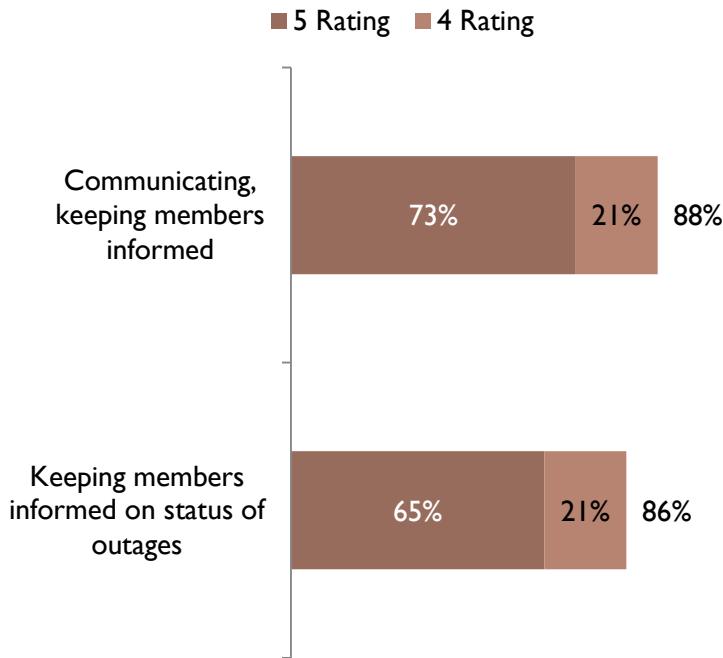
### Mean Ratings by Year



## Communication

Members also give very high ratings for VEC’s communications in general and communications about outages specifically.

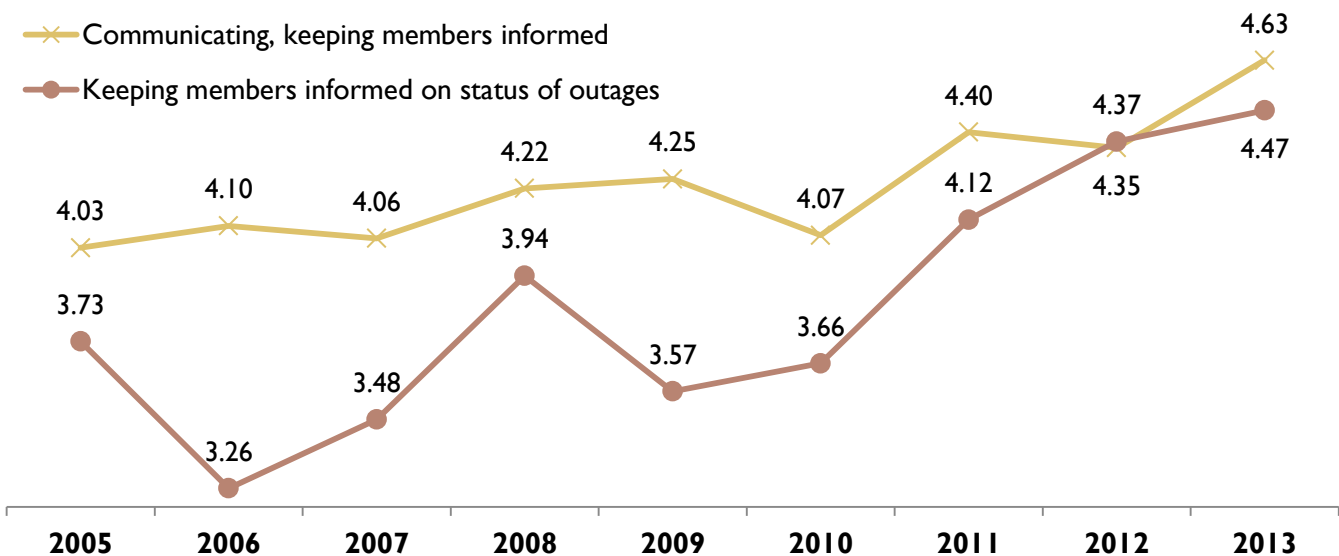
### Top Two Box Ratings



This is another area in which VEC has improved over past studies. The mean rating for *communicating with members and keeping them informed* is significantly higher than all past studies.

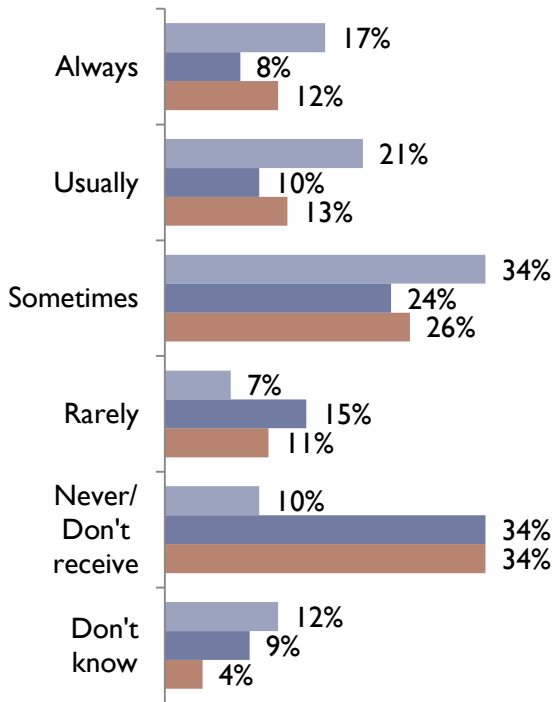
The mean rating for *keeping members informed on the status of outages* is significantly higher than studies conducted in 2011 and earlier.

### Mean Ratings by Year

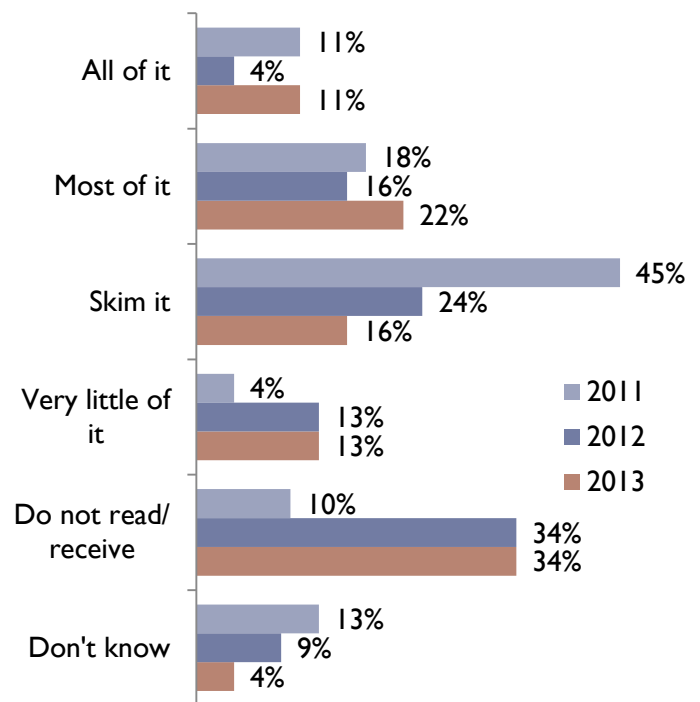


One-quarter say they always or usually read VEC's newsletter *Co-op Life*. One-third say they read all or most of the newsletter. However, one-third say they never read the newsletter or don't receive it, which is significantly more than in 2011. Approximately half feel that the length of the newsletter is about right.

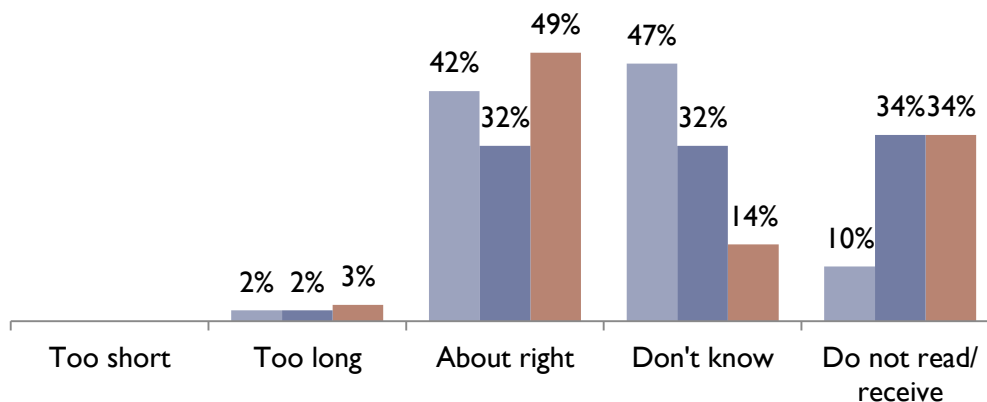
### How Often Read *Co-op Life*



### How Thoroughly Read *Co-op Life*

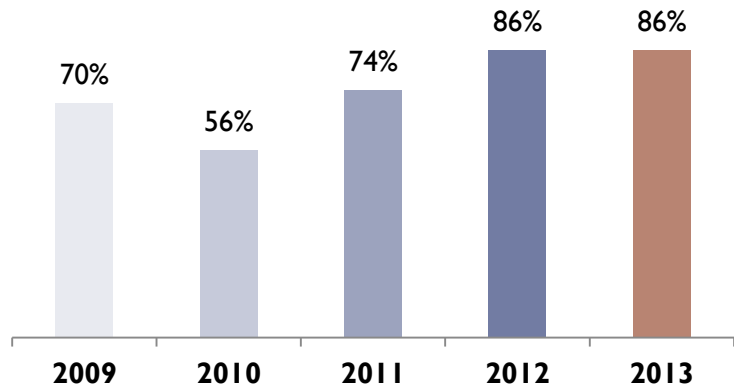


### Length of *Co-op Life*

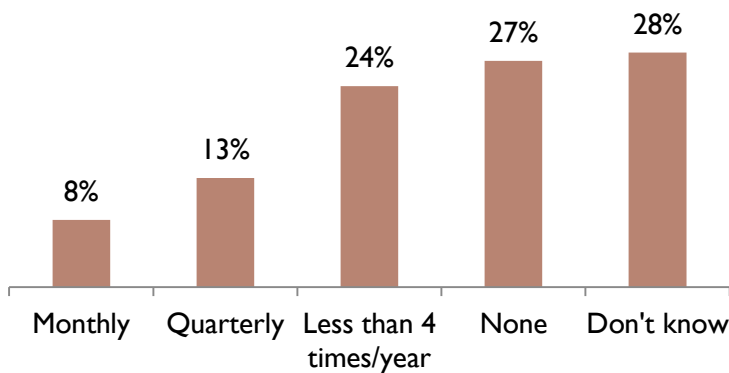


Almost all of the respondents have Internet access either at home and/or work. Eighty-six percent have high-speed Internet at home, as opposed to dial-up access. High speed Internet access has increased significantly since the 2010 study.

### Has High Speed Internet at Home



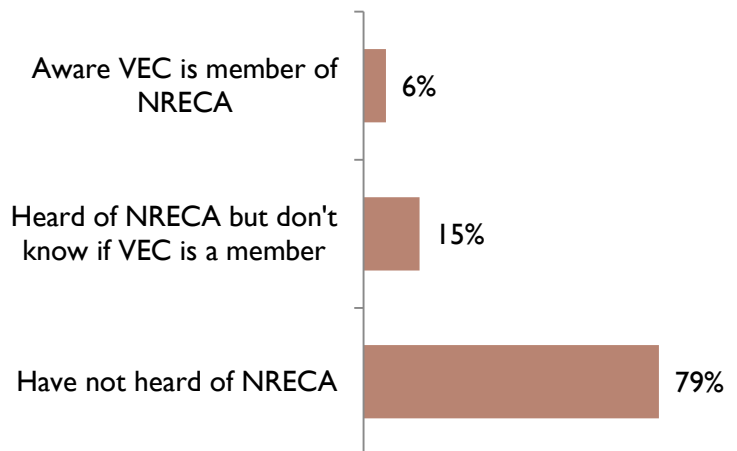
### How Often Prefer E-mail Communication



Twenty-one percent indicate they would like e-mail communication from VEC on a quarterly or monthly basis, while 27% say they do not want e-mail communication.

One-fifth of the C&I members say they have heard of NRECA, including 6% who are aware that VEC is a member of NRECA.

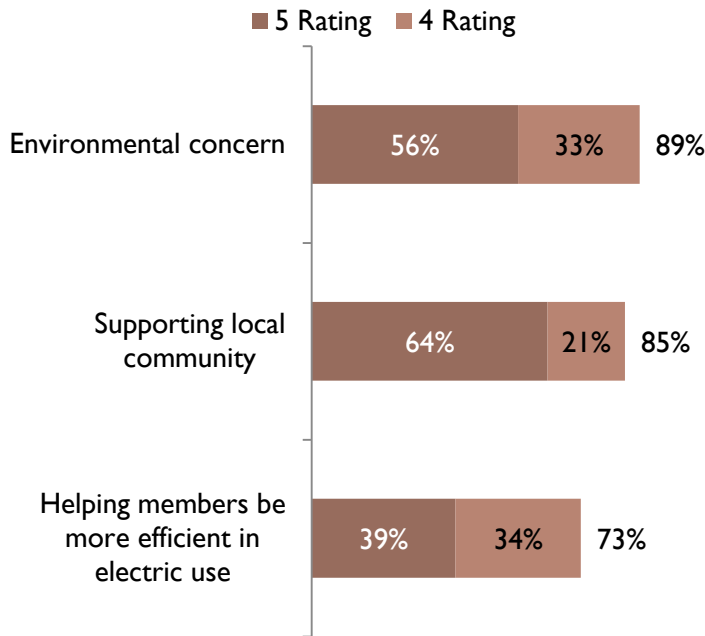
### Awareness of NRECA



## Social Responsibility

C&I members also give positive ratings for VEC’s environmental concern, community support, and help with energy efficiency.

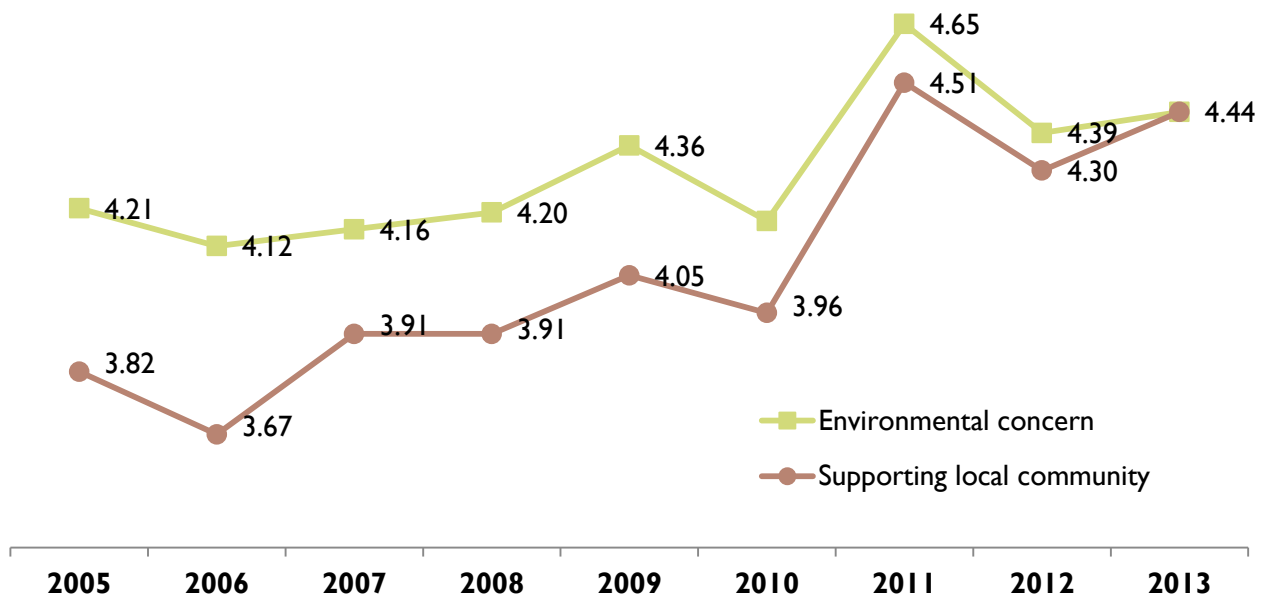
### Top Two Box Ratings



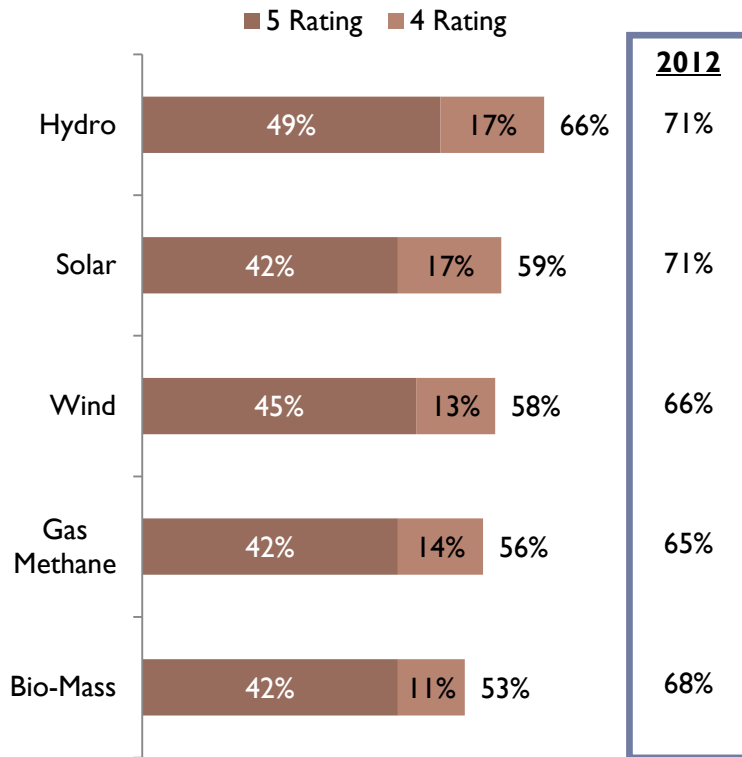
Mean ratings for *operating with concern for the environment* and *supporting the local community* are consistent with 2012 and significantly higher than 2010.

This is the first year that members have evaluated *helping members to be more efficient in their use of electricity*.

### Mean Ratings by Year



### Importance of Using Green Power

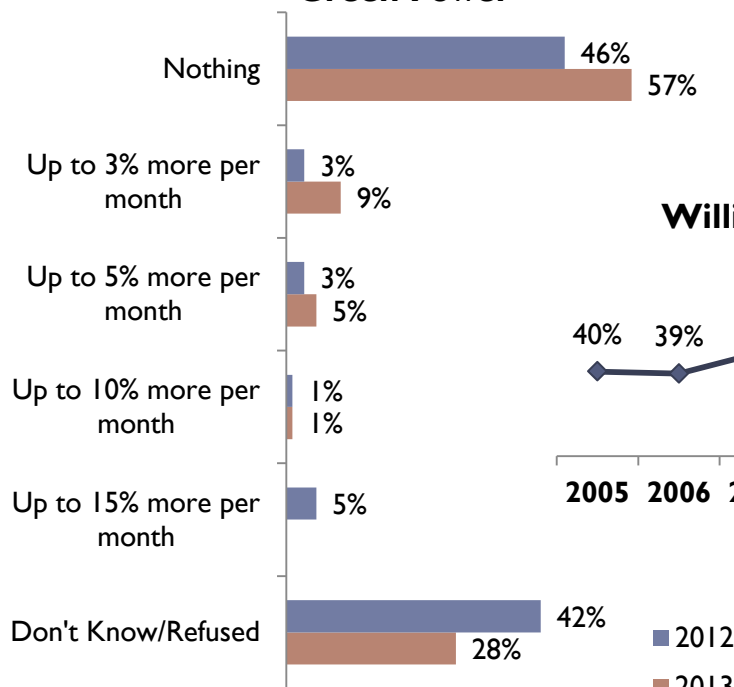


Two-thirds of the C&I members give high ratings for the importance of VEC providing green power from hydro. More than half feel green power from solar, bio-mass, wind, and/or gas methane is important.

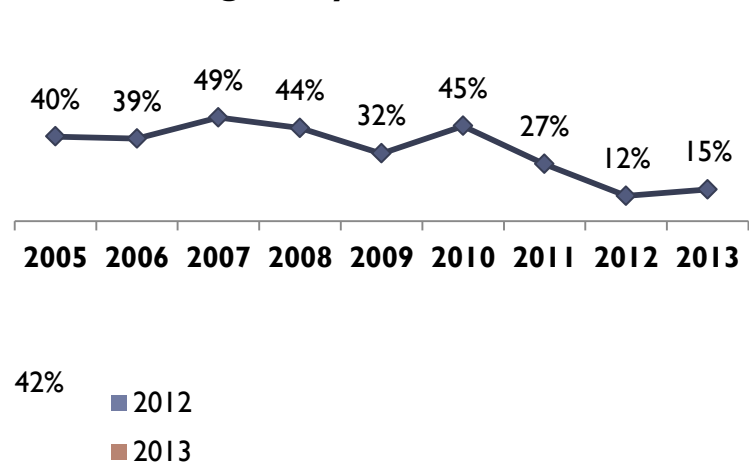
Mean importance has fallen significantly since 2012 for wind and solar power. On the other hand, the perceived importance of gas methane has increased significantly since 2010.

Fewer than one-fifth say they would be willing to pay more to get green power. The proportion of members who are willing to pay something extra every month to get green power is significantly lower than in 2011 and earlier.

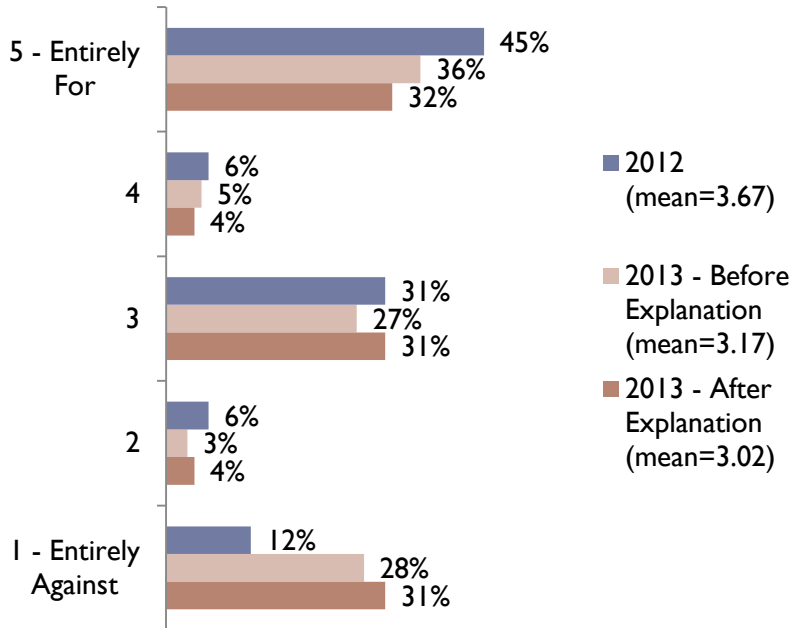
### How Much More Willing to Pay to Get Green Power



### Willing To Pay Additional Amount



### Large-Scale Wind Development on Vermont's Ridgeline

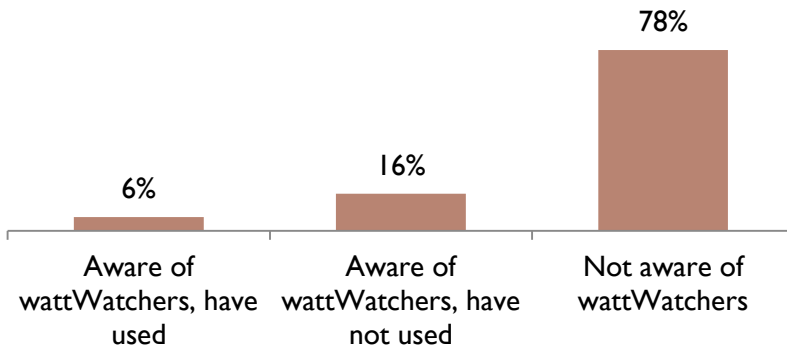


The level of support for large-scale wind development on Vermont's ridgeline has decreased significantly since 2012. Respondents in 2013 were provided further information – that this wind development does not qualify as “green power” for renewable energy credits – and then asked again to rate their level of support. Support is lower after learning this.

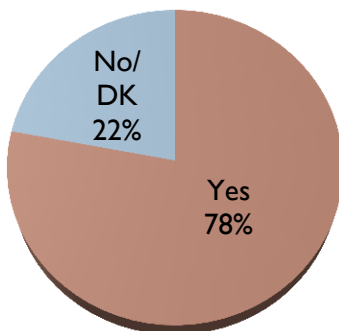
Twenty-two percent are aware that they can view detailed electric use on VEC's website through the wattWatchers program. Six percent have done so.

More than three-quarters have heard of the energy efficiency utility Efficiency Vermont. Among those aware of Efficiency Vermont, two-thirds give high ratings for how beneficial it is for Vermont consumers (rating of “4” or “5”).

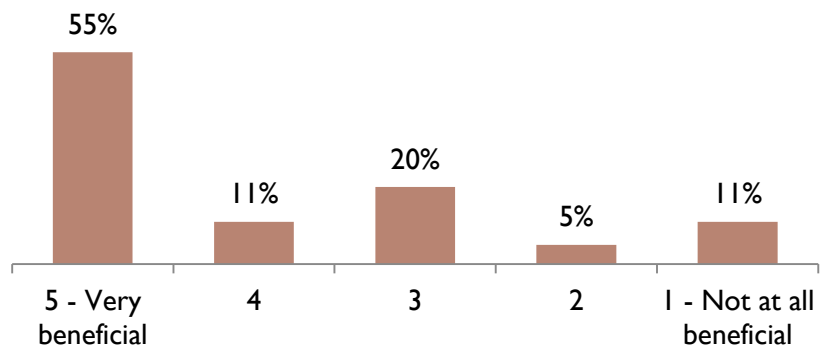
### wattWatchers



### Heard of Efficiency Vermont



### If Yes: How Beneficial for VEC Consumers



## Commercial Member Characteristics

More than half of the members indicate they are a wholesale/retail business (34%) or another service industry (21%). Nineteen percent have annual revenue of \$100,000 or less and approximately half have been served by Vermont Electric Cooperative for 20 years or more.

Commercial members in 2013 are longer-tenured (20 years or more) compared to the 2012 study. Although fewer report revenue of \$100,000 or less compared to 2012, the proportion is about the same as in 2011.

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
<b>Wholesale/Retail</b>	34%	26%	17%	19%	22%
<b>Other Service Industry</b>	21%	28%	28%	26%	19%
<b>Agriculture</b>	18%	15%	11%	22%	7%
<b>Revenue \$100K or Less</b>	19%	41%	17%	27%	21%
<b>Revenue Over \$1 Million</b>	22%	28%	36%	17%	31%
<b>Served Less than 10 Years</b>	29%	28%	21%	49%	45%
<b>Served 20 Yrs or More</b>	48%	32%	60%	30%	33%



## Verbatim Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, C&I members were given the opportunity to share any comments, concerns, or questions they had. Thirty-four percent of the respondents offered input.

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. A full listing of comments can be found in Appendix B.

Subject/Topic	Total # Comments	Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>Rates/Fees</i>	9	0	8	1
<i>Operations/Engineers – blinks, outages, tree trimming, AMI/AMR</i>	7	3	3	1
<i>Member Services/Marketing – resolving issues, customer service reps</i>	7	1	2	4
<i>Renewable Energy</i>	6			
<i>Efficiency Vermont</i>	4	1	1	2
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	3	3	0	0

# Appendix A:

# Key Driver/Factor Explanation

## 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 consumers unconsciously think about or group the many different performance attributes. Five factors were found and named Electric Service, Member Service, Billing and Meter Reading, Cost, 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

- The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions
- Keeping the number of longer power outages to a minimum
- Keeping blinks or momentary outages to a minimum
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts
- The restoration of power after an outage

### Member Service Factor

- The courtesy, understanding, and helpfulness of employees to inquiries and problems
- The overall customer service provided
- Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests
- Resolving any issues or problems
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers
- Having professional employees

### Billing and Meter Reading Factor

- The accuracy of meter reading and billing
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills
- Having convenient payment options

### Cost Factor

- The monthly service fees
- Charging reasonable rates

### Social Responsibility Factor

- Operating with concern for the environment
- Supporting the local community

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

- Communicating with members and keeping them informed
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages
- Helping customers keep bills as low as possible
- Helping members to be more efficient in their use of electricity

## 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 C&I 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.

# Appendix B:

# Verbatim Responses

## 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 satisfied with my experience with them. They have been very good.

Keep the power going until June 2014! We have no problems here. All is well!

No issues and no problems. I have really had so little contact that it is difficult to answer some of the questions. That is why I had to say don't know.

### **Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses**

Keep the power going until June 2014! We have no problems here. All is well!

Ten years ago, when we remodeled, we did use "Efficiency Vermont", but can't really rate it because it has been too long ago. There are two owners and the one always says our best service here is the electric co-op! We do a lot of sandblasting on granite and that takes a lot of electricity. I wish you had called me at home. It would be a totally different survey! Here it has been 13 years since I can remember an outage at all. Thanks for calling.

I notice the employees are friendly, but when they come out I notice they work slowly. They are fast and right on the spot for storm outages.

### **Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses**

Due to Vermont power and grids, my business blows light bulbs and I have to replace ballast.

We live in a lying, deceiving world. Those light bulbs cost more than we paid for the electric to run the other bulbs and we could actually see with the others! Meters are read at the office. They never come out here, but I have a charge for the meter reading. How is that right? I need power or the milkers drop from the cows. No common sense used in anything. The wind farm; how can you have something that is not paying for itself? How do you spend money and not make a profit? Glad you called me!

I notice the employees are friendly, but when they come out I notice they work slowly. They are fast and right on the spot for storm outages.

### **Operations/Engineering – Neutral Responses**

Better service and lower rates will keep people happy forever.

**Additional Comments  
(continued)****Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Positive Responses**

I notice the employees are friendly, but when they come out I notice they work slowly. They are fast and right on the spot for storm outages.

**Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Negative Responses**

I have had the business for a little over a year maybe, but have been here as long as Vermont Electric has been. I am irritated, I have checks not getting there and I have several accounts, there is no answer for it when I talk to them. How would I know if the bill is correct unless I know the electric business? I have no idea why some are at one rate and some billed at another. I get the bill and pay it. There is no understanding of it. You caught me at a good time to talk and I am irritated, but can't rate that! Thanks for calling.

Lower rates! I rated the employees being professional low because when I have in the past talked with them, there is a bit of an attitude from them! As far as the wind power, I would be all for it if on an individual front with members working with the co-op. I am totally against the big corporates putting up the windmills and controlling it all.

**Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Neutral Responses**

I would like a rep to come out and talk about energy efficiency at my business.

I would like a rep to come out personally to visit me on the issue of electricity.

I would like an account representative assigned to me.

I would like to be assigned an account rep.

**Billing/Finance – Negative Responses**

I have had the business for a little over a year maybe, but have been here as long as Vermont Electric has been. I am irritated, I have checks not getting there and I have several accounts, there is no answer for it when I talk to them. How would I know if the bill is correct unless I know the electric business? I have no idea why some are at one rate and some billed at another. I get the bill and pay it. There is no understanding of it. You caught me at a good time to talk and I am irritated, but can't rate that! Thanks for calling.

**Rates/Fees – Negative Responses**

"Efficiency Vermont" - the person that I have tried to reach is never available. I cannot reach them when I call. I have 15 different accounts and probably have called about one of them, but can't recall why or when in detail. I pay 15 cents a kWh and that is expensive! Some I have at 10 cents a kWh.

**Additional Comments**  
**Rates/Fees – Negative Responses**  
(continued)

I have 3 to 7 meters and you charge me a fee for every meter which I do not feel is right.

It is what it is. I have to have it, so I don't complain. I do know that Quebec is half the rate we pay here, but that is understandable too. My greatest fear is that the same thing that happened at Seabrook will happen here. When they see they're not making the money they wanted to, they will pass all that cost on to us. That is a fear of mine. The rates are high, but it is what it is, like I said.

**Lower rates!** I rated the employees being professional low because when I have in the past talked with them, there is a bit of an attitude from them! As far as the wind power, I would be all for it if on an individual front with members working with the co-op. I am totally against the big corporates putting up the windmills and controlling it all.

Lower the price.

The cost of power is too high compared to other locations.

The rates are too expensive.

We all always want things to cost less and I did feel that last raise was a bit high. The only time I had a concern with my service was when I got a bill for over \$800 and it was from a leak in my water heater and the heat stayed on the whole month and I didn't know it. That was upsetting. I guess I have had service with Vermont since they took over Citizens and don't remember when that was.

**Rates/Fees – Neutral Responses**

Better service and lower rates will keep people happy forever.

**Efficiency Vermont - Positive Responses**

"Efficiency Vermont" -- we have received several rebates through them. I don't need e-mails from VEC. If I have a question I know I can just ask. We know what we need to do to be efficient.

**Efficiency Vermont - Negative Responses**

"Efficiency Vermont" - the person that I have tried to reach is never available. I cannot reach them when I call. I have 15 different accounts and probably have called about one of them, but can't recall why or when in detail. I pay 15 cents a kWh and that is expensive! Some I have at 10 cents a kWh.



## **Additional Comments (continued)**

### **Efficiency Vermont - Neutral Responses**

Ten years ago, when we remodeled, we did use "Efficiency Vermont", but can't really rate it because it has been too long ago. There are two owners and the one always says our best service here is the electric co-op! We do a lot of sandblasting on granite and that takes a lot of electricity. I wish you had called me at home. It would be a totally different survey! Here it has been 13 years since I can remember an outage at all. Thanks for calling.

What is "Efficiency Vermont"? I love being able to check my hourly usage on the computer for my home. Love that!

### **Renewable Energy**

I don't like how the wind farm has destroyed the mountains. I wish they could take them down. I know they are expensive, but do not like where they put them at all. Those over by Westfield ruined the area, or wherever that is.

I have to look at windmills here and we do not want or need any more of them. The ones I look at belong to someone else and I do not like having to look at them at all!

I think renewables are a big waste!

We have two accounts with VEC. This is a bed and breakfast that we just bought. We do, however, have solar panels and are quite happy with them and VEC is good to work with us with those.

We live in a lying, deceiving world. Those light bulbs cost more than we paid for the electric to run the other bulbs and we could actually see with the others! Meters are read at the office. They never come out here, but I have a charge for the meter reading. How is that right? I need power or the milkers drop from the cows. No common sense used in anything. The wind farm; how can you have something that is not paying for itself? How do you spend money and not make a profit? Glad you called me!

Lower rates! I rated the employees being professional low because when I have in the past talked with them, there is a bit of an attitude from them! As far as the wind power, I would be all for it if on an individual front with members working with the co-op. I am totally against the big corporates putting up the windmills and controlling it all.

### **Other Comments**

I work at a Post Office and I see the customers pitch the newsletter "Co-op Life" in the waste basket. Please make it a different format or something more interesting to catch the eye so they take time to look at it.

Using the cooperative name is a farce.

**Additional Comments  
(continued)**

We live in a lying, deceiving world. Those light bulbs cost more than we paid for the electric to run the other bulbs and we could actually see with the others! Meters are read at the office. They never come out here, but I have a charge for the meter reading. How is that right? I need power or the milkers drop from the cows. No common sense used in anything. The wind farm; how can you have something that is not paying for itself? How do you spend money and not make a profit? Glad you called me!

"Efficiency Vermont" -- we have received several rebates through them. I don't need e-mails from VEC. If I have a question I know I can just ask. We know what we need to do to be efficient.

Essex County is where I had all my problems.

Have someone instruct the Fairpoint to send this questionnaire because I could tell them a lot more and could fill a book with complaints for Fairpoint.

I have 3 different co-ops for my electric service.

I usually hang up on surveys, but I have to say this is the best and most fun survey; you really handled this well. Thanks for calling!

Some of this I really do not want to comment on account of being a town clerk!

We all always want things to cost less and I did feel that last raise was a bit high. The only time I had a concern with my service was when I got a bill for over \$800 and it was from a leak in my water heater and the heat stayed on the whole month and I didn't know it. That was upsetting. I guess I have had service with Vermont since they took over Citizens and don't remember when that was.

# Appendix C: Questionnaire

**2012 Vermont Electric Cooperative  
C&I MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Code # \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION:**

May I please speak with the person who is primarily responsible for making decisions regarding electric power at your company or organization? 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. May I have about 10 minutes of your time to ask you some questions now?

Yes ... **Continue**     No ... When would be a more convenient time for me to call back?  
Date to call: \_\_\_\_\_ Time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

1. First, how long has your company or organization (at your location) received your electric service from Vermont Electric Cooperative? (*tenure1*)

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Less than 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 3 to 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 10 to 14 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 20 years or more   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 1 to 2 years     | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 6 to 9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 15 to 19 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Don't Know/Refused |

**Satisfaction and Performance Ratings**

2. Now, please consider all your experiences to date with Vermont Electric Cooperative. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "very dissatisfied" and "10" means "very satisfied," how satisfied are you with Vermont Electric Co-op? (*satis*)

Very dissatisfied    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    Very Satisfied

3. 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**)

On ...	Very Poor				Excellent	DK
a. The overall customer service they provide ( <i>cust_svc</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Delivering good value for the money ( <i>value</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Resolving any issues or problems ( <i>resolve</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Having professional employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Communicating with you and keeping you informed ( <i>communic</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Operating with concern for the environment ( <i>environ</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Supporting the local community ( <i>community</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. The speed and efficiency of responding to customers ( <i>respond2</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. The courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems ( <i>courtesy</i> )	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Contact

4. In the past year, did you contact VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE for any reason?  
[ ] Yes [ ] No **Skip to Q.8**
5. 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
6. How many TIMES did you contact the co-op concerning this issue/reason?  
1 2 3-4 5-6 7-9 10+ \_\_\_Don't Know/Refused
7. 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? (cntceval)  
[ ] Much worse [ ] Somewhat worse [ ] As expected [ ] Somewhat better [ ] Much better
8. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all valuable" and 5 means "extremely valuable," how valuable is it to your business to have an account representative from Vermont Electric Cooperative who works with you to determine how best to meet your business needs?
- |                     |   |   |   |   |                    |        |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--------|
| Not valuable at all |   |   |   |   | Extremely Valuable | DK/Ref |
| 1                   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6                  |        |

### Electric Service Performance

9. 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. The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (elec_svc) | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4         | 5 | 6  |
| d. The restoration of power after an outage (restore2)                  | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4         | 5 | 6  |
| e. Keeping you informed on the status of outages (outinfo2)             | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4         | 5 | 6  |
| f. Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (pwr_qual2) | 1         | 2 | 3 | 4         | 5 | 6  |
10. Which of the following best describes your electric power delivery requirements for your business or organization?
- It's absolutely necessary to have electric power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - It's strongly desired to have power at all times, especially during business hours, but your business can manage any 2 or 3 hour outage. It's very inconvenient but not seriously damaging.
  - It's strongly desired to have power at all times, but your business can only manage a 2 or 3 hour outage if it does not occur during particular business operations.
  - Don't Know/Refused
11. On a 5-point scale where 1 is not at all serious and 5 is extremely serious, how would you rate the impact on your business of experiencing...?
- |  | Not at all serious |   |   | Extremely Serious |   | DK/Ref |
|--|--------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|--------|
| a. Inconsistent power quality such as surges, blips, dips, or other voltage variations | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                 | 5 | 6      |
| b. Power outages lasting 5 to 10 minutes   | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                 | 5 | 6      |
| c. Power outages lasting 3 to 4 hours  | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4                 | 5 | 6      |

**Rates and Fees**

12. 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	1	2	3	4	5	6	
f. The accuracy of meter reading and billing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
g. Helping you to be more efficient in your use of electricity	1	2	3	4	5	6	

13. 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

14. Which of the following best describes your electric power costs? [READ and Check only one]

- Electric power costs are the single biggest expense in your business, greater than labor or insurance costs.
- Electric power costs are the single biggest utility cost but not the biggest cost overall in the business.
- Of all the fixed or variable costs of your business, electric power is among the lowest.
- DK/Refused

**Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

15. Were you aware that you can view your detailed hourly, daily, and monthly electricity usage on VEC’s website, through their new program called wattWatchers? [ ]1 Yes [ ]2 No (Skip to Q.17)

16. (If yes) Have you used wattWatchers yet? [ ]1 Yes [ ]2 No

17. Have you heard of the energy efficiency utility in Vermont, called “Efficiency Vermont”? [ ]1 Yes [ ]2 No (Skip to Q19)

18. Using a 5-point scale where “1” means not at all beneficial and “5” means very beneficial, how beneficial do you feel “Efficiency Vermont” is for Vermont consumers?

Not at all beneficial 1 2 3 4 5 Very Beneficial 6 - DK

19. 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 power from the following renewable energy sources? (randomize)

	Not at all Important				Extremely Important		DK
a. Wind	1	2	3	4	5	6	
b. Solar	1	2	3	4	5	6	
c. Hydro	1	2	3	4	5	6	
d. Gas Methane	1	2	3	4	5	6	
e. Bio-mass	1	2	3	4	5	6	

20. 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 Up to 15% more per month  
 2 Up to 10% more per month

3 Up to 5% more per month  5 Nothing more per month  
 4 Up to 3% more per month  6 Don't Know/Refused

21. Do you support large-scale wind development on Vermont's ridgelines? Please rate your opinion of this on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you are "entirely against" wind development on the ridgelines and 5 means you are "entirely for" it.

Entirely opposed    1        2        3        4        5        Entirely for

22. A large-scale wind development does not qualify as "green power" for renewable energy credits in Vermont. Knowing this, whether or not it changes your opinion, please rate your opinion again, where 1 means you are "entirely against" wind development on the ridgelines and 5 means you are "entirely for" it.

Entirely opposed    1        2        3        4        5        Entirely for

### **Communications**

23. Have you ever heard of The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, or NRECA?

1 Yes         2 No (**Skip to Q.25**)

24. Is Vermont Electric a member of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association?

1 Yes  2 No

25. How often would you like to receive email communications from VEC?

1 weekly         2 every-other-week     3 monthly     4 quarterly     5 less often than 4 times/year

26. 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

27. 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

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

29. Do you have Internet access either at home or at work? *(has\_isp)*

1 At home     2 At work (**Skip to Q23**)     3 Both at home and work     4 Neither (**Skip to Q23**)

30. 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

### **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.*

31. Which of the following best describes your company or organization's primary business?*(ageresp)*

1 Manufacturing

7 Other service industry/business

2 Wholesale or retail distribution

8 Government and municipalities

3 Health Care

9 Agriculture

4 Financial or insurance services

10 Transportation and utility

5 Construction

11 Not for profit

6 Real Estate

12 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

32. Into which of the following categories does your company or organization's annual revenue fall? (**Read list**)

- 1 Less than \$50,000                      2 \$50,000 to \$100,000                      3 \$100,001 to \$150,000  
4 \$150,001 to \$200,000    5 \$200,001 to \$300,000    6 \$300,001 to \$500,000  
7 \$500,001 to \$1,000,000 8 Over \$1 million                      9 DK/Ref.

33. Zip Code at your business location\_\_\_\_\_

**DO NOT ASK (BUT MAKE SURE THE FOLLOWING IS COLLECTED):**

Respondent's Name:

Company Name:

Company Phone Number:

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION. HAVE A PLEASANT DAY**