

2013 RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION



7/12/2013

Vermont Electric Cooperative

Survey Results Prepared by:

NRECA
**MARKET
RESEARCH
SERVICES**

VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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2013 Residential Satisfaction

VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following are the top-line findings for the study's main objectives based on the results of a telephone survey of 378 randomly selected residential members of Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) conducted in May and June of 2013:

- Overall satisfaction with VEC is good, with a mean rating of 8.29. This is not significantly different from the co-op's 2012 study, but is significantly higher than the studies conducted in 2003, 2006, and 2007. However, it is lower than the Co-op Norms mean rating of 8.71.
- The mean ratings for 18 of the 23 performance attributes are above 4.00, which is considered good. The co-op is rated most positively on the employees, consistent voltage, and overall customer service. These attributes have mean ratings at or above 4.50, which is considered excellent. The only attribute with a significant change from the 2012 study is *the accuracy of meter reading and billing*, for which the mean rating dropped from 4.52 to 4.32.
- The strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is **Cost**. The mean ratings for *charging reasonable rates, helping customers keep bills low, and the monthly service fees* are the lowest in the study, and evaluations are lower than the Co-op Norms. Continue communications with consumers about how VEC is working to keep costs down and energy efficiency steps members can take to help keep their bills low. One-third of the members are aware of the wattWatchers program and 70% are aware of Efficiency Vermont.
- The second-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is **Member Service**. This is an area where VEC receives good ratings, including three of the highest rated attributes in the study. Nearly six in ten members had reason to contact the co-op in the past year, which is a significant increase from 2012. Those who did so give very positive evaluations of the contact, especially those who wanted general information or to make payment arrangements.
- **Electric Service** and **Concern for Environment** are also key drivers of satisfaction, and are areas where VEC receives very good ratings. **Bills and Meter Reading** is the final key driver, and VEC is rated very positively in this area as well, but the mean ratings for *the accuracy of meter reading and billing, providing accurate and easy to understand bills, and having convenient payment options* have all declined significantly from recent studies.

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 approximately 34,000 residential members in 74 communities with 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 residential 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 residential member survey addresses but is not limited to the following informational objectives:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** Assess how satisfied members are with VEC.
- **Performance Quality Attributes:** Evaluate residential member perceptions of 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 Data.
- **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 importance of various types of renewable energy, support of large-scale wind development on Vermont's ridgelines, and awareness/use of VEC's wattWatchers program.
- **Member Demographics and Segmentation:** Provide demographics of the residential membership base and identify differences in attitudes between segments.

METHODOLOGY

As in previous studies, data was collected through telephone surveying. 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 12 minutes.

Calls were completed with 378 residential members of VEC between May 28 and June 10, 2013, with sampling done proportionate to connect date and district. Of those contacted, 495 declined to participate, resulting in a response rate of 43%. Additionally, 356 of the phone numbers attempted were disconnected. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample is plus or minus 5 percentage points. This means that a result of 50% in the survey may be between 45% and 55% if the entire residential 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 nine studies conducted between 2003 and 2012. Comparisons are also made to results from similar studies conducted by 59 co-ops among approximately 23,000 residential members across the nation between January 2009 and February 2013. 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.

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.

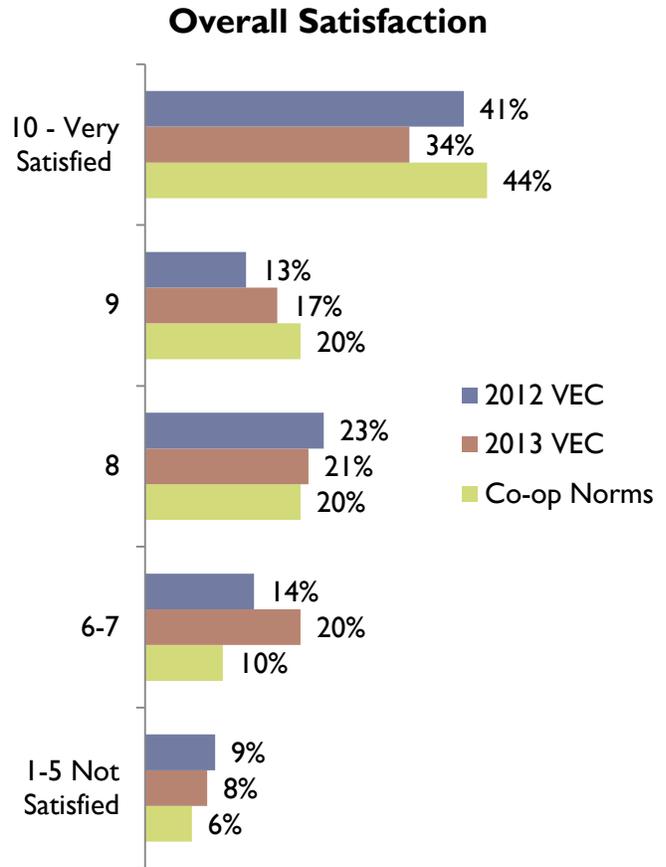
KEY FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

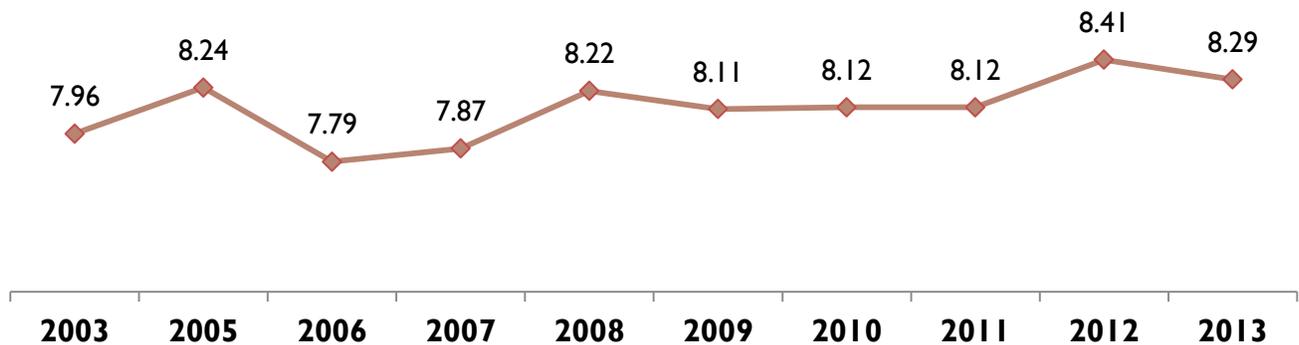
Overall satisfaction among VEC’s residential members has decreased since the 2012 study, but the difference is not statistically significant. Half of the members give ratings of “9” or “10”.

The mean overall satisfaction rating of 8.29 is lower than the Co-op Norms (8.71) but is consistent with recent studies and significantly higher than studies conducted in 2003, 2006, and 2007.

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



Mean Satisfaction Rating By Year



Performance Quality Attributes

Members were asked to evaluate 23 performance quality attributes related to member service, image, electric service, communication, billing and cost. On 18 of the attributes measured, the mean ratings are above 4.00, a “good” rating on a 5-point scale.

Additionally, mean ratings for four attributes meet or exceed 4.50 which can be considered excellent. More than eight in ten members rate each of the following positively (“4” or “5”):

- Having professional employees (4.59)
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts (4.57)
- The courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to inquiries or problems (4.54)
- The overall customer service they provide (4.50)
- Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum (4.42)
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills (4.37)
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum (4.36)
- Communicating with members and keeping them informed (4.38)
- The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions (4.38)

Conversely, the attributes on which VEC is rated least well are *the monthly service fees* (50% rating “4” or “5”), *charging reasonable rates* (51%), and *helping customers keep bills low* (58%). 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.

Performance Quality Trends and Benchmarks

Mean ratings on all but one of the comparable performance attributes did not change significantly since the 2012 study.

The only attribute that changed significantly from the 2012 study is the *accuracy of meter reading and billing*, which has a mean rating of 4.32 in 2013, down from 4.52.

Although mean ratings have not changed significantly since 2012, there are a number that have improved significantly since the 2010 study. These include all of the member service and electric service attributes.

Conversely, there are four attributes for which mean ratings have significantly decreased since 2011:

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

On most of the comparable attributes, mean ratings among VEC members are lower than the Co-op Norms although some of the differences are very small. The attributes with the biggest gaps between mean ratings are shown below.

Attribute	VEC Mean Rating	Co-op Norms Mean Rating	Gap
Keeping members informed on the status of outages	4.06	3.96	+0.10
Helping members be more efficient in electricity use	3.66	4.16	-0.50
Charging reasonable rates	3.42	3.81	-0.39
Supporting the local community	4.17	4.48	-0.31
Delivering good value for the money	3.87	4.11	-0.24
Having convenient payment options	4.34	4.58	-0.24
Operating with concern for the environment	4.20	4.43	-0.23
The monthly service fees	3.42	3.63	-0.21
Providing accurate and easy to understand bills	4.37	4.55	-0.18
The restoration of power after an outage	4.27	4.45	-0.18
The speed and efficiency of responding to customers	4.33	4.51	-0.18
Demonstrating concern for customers' best interests	4.16	4.33	-0.17
Resolving any issues or problems	4.33	4.45	-0.12

Prioritizing Improvement and Maintenance Efforts

The key drivers of overall satisfaction among residential members are: cost, member service, electric service, concern for environment, and bills and meter reading. Going forward, these are the areas that Vermont Electric Cooperative 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 cost has a score of 0.44 and bills and meter reading has a score of 0.15, we can say that members' perception of the cost of their electricity has almost three times the impact on their overall satisfaction as their perception of the accuracy of their bills and meter reading. 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.

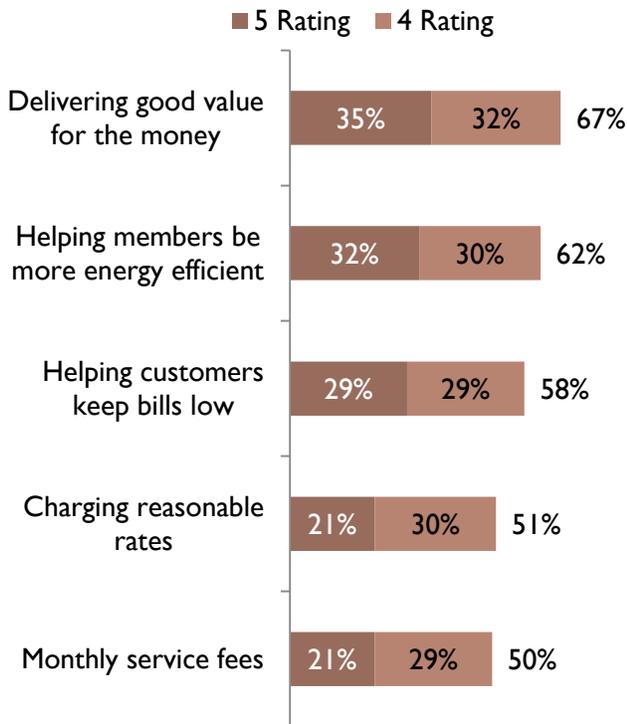
Overall Satisfaction

Cost	Member Service	Electric Service	Concern for Environment	Bills & Meter Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Charging reasonable rates •Helping customers keep bills as low as possible •The monthly service fees •Helping members be more efficient in their use of electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional employees •Courtesy, understanding and helpfulness of employees to your inquiries or problems •Overall customer service •Resolving any issues or problems •Concern for customers' best interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reliability of service •Minimizing longer outages •Minimizing blinks and momentary outages •Restoration of power after an outage •Speed and efficiency of responding to customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Operating with concern for the environment •Concern for customers' best interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The accuracy of meter reading and billing •Providing accurate and easy to understand bills
0.44	0.37	0.36	0.20	0.15

Cost and Value

“Cost” is the strongest key driver of overall satisfaction. This is the area that includes the lowest rated attributes in the study, which is typical, especially in a still-struggling economy.

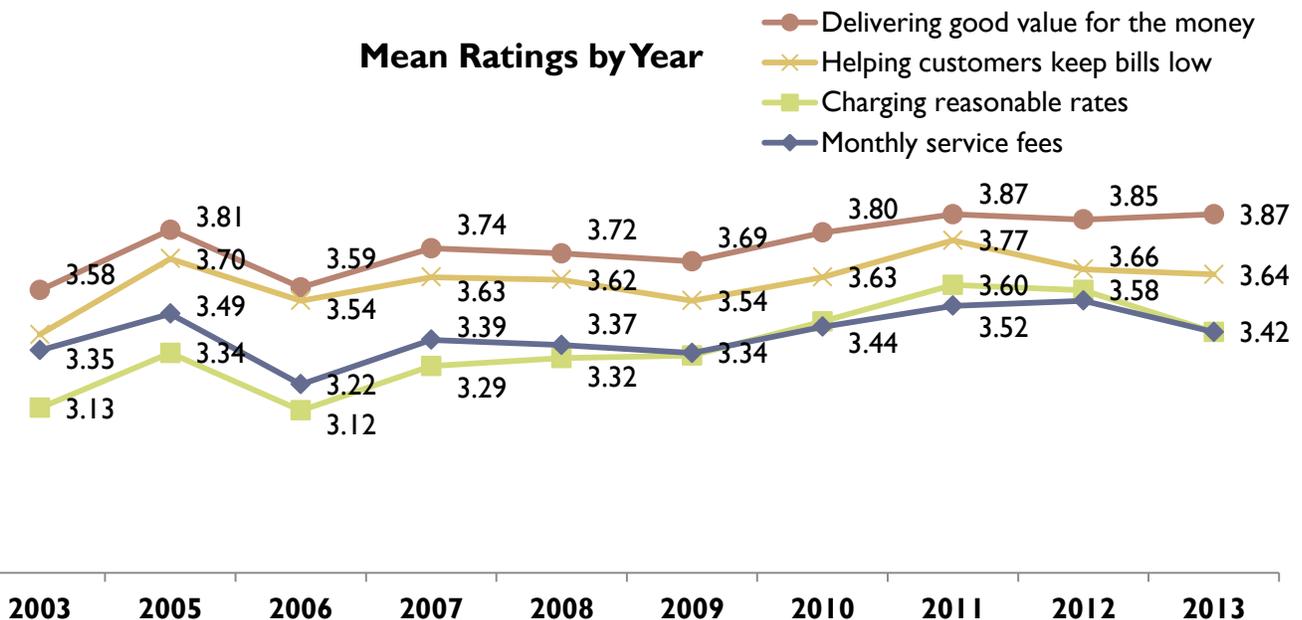
Top Two Box Ratings



Mean ratings for the cost-related attributes have not changed significantly since 2012. The mean rating for *charging reasonable rates* has decreased significantly since 2011.

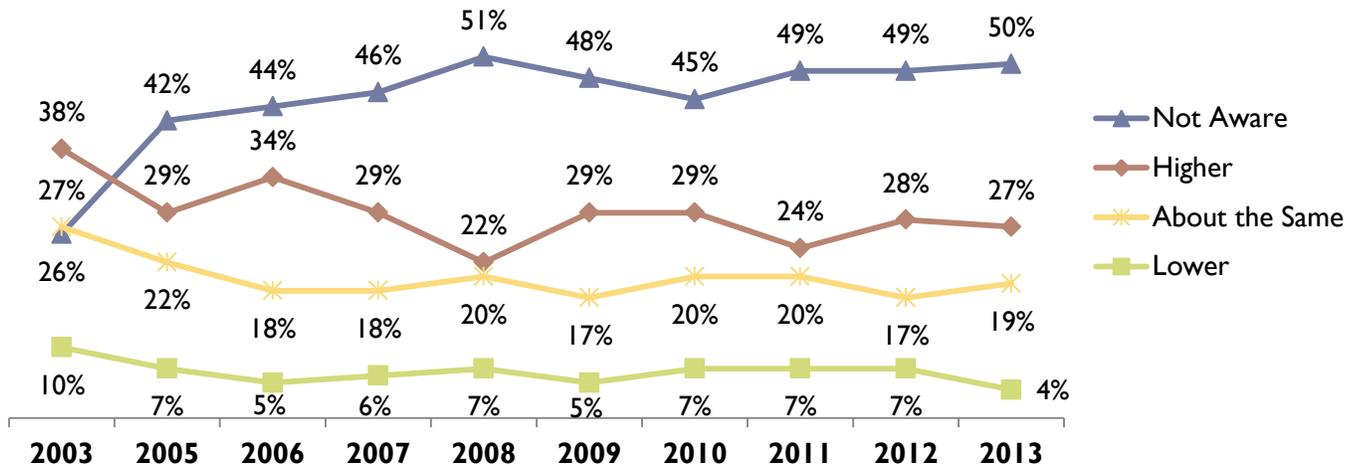
The mean ratings are lower than the Co-op Norms for all of the comparable attributes.

Mean Ratings by Year



Similar to recent studies, fully half of the members are not aware of how their rates compare to other electric companies. There has been no significant change in perceptions compared to past studies. Those less satisfied with the co-op, those with higher electric bills, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to think their rates are higher.

Vermont Electric's Rates Compared to Other Electric Companies



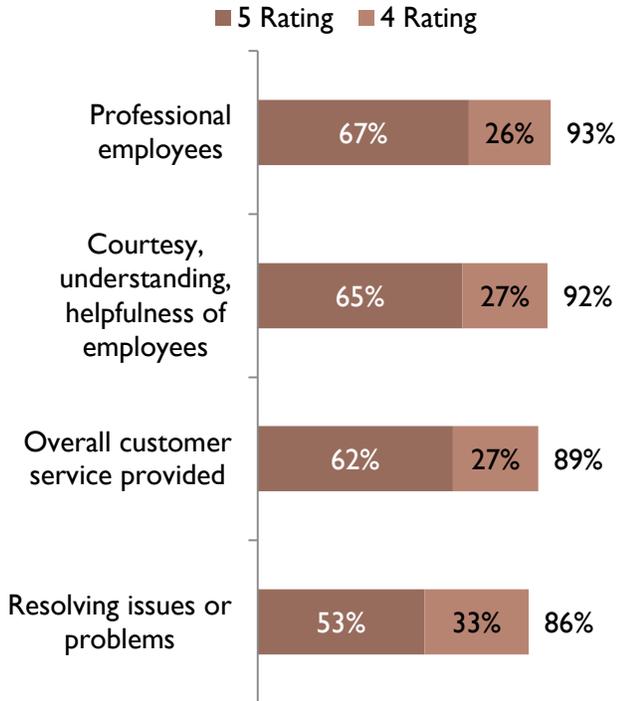
A regression analysis was also conducted to determine the key drivers of *delivering good value for the money*. As seen in the table below, it was found that five factors/attributes are significant drivers of value. So, although the perception of the cost of electricity has the strongest impact on the value members feel they receive, it is not the only factor that enters into the “value equation” among members of VEC.

Key Drivers of Value	
Cost	0.49
Supporting the local community	0.44
Member Service	0.26
Electric Service	0.25
Bills and Meter Reading	0.14

Member Service

“Member Service” is the second-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction. This is an area in which VEC receives good ratings, including three of the highest rated attributes in the study.

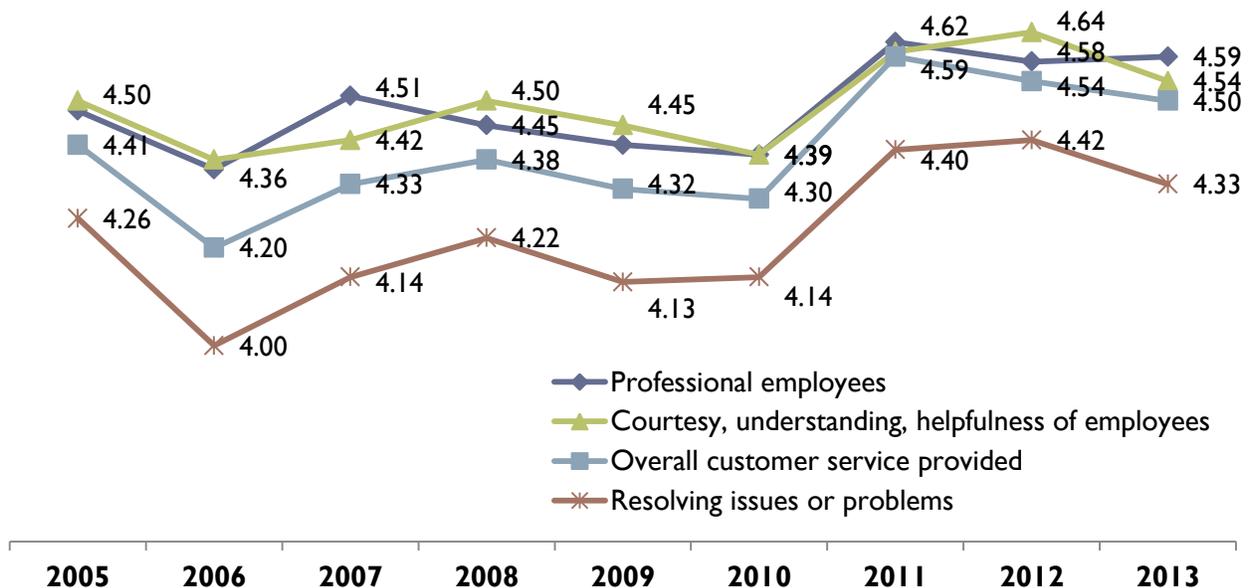
Top Two Box Ratings



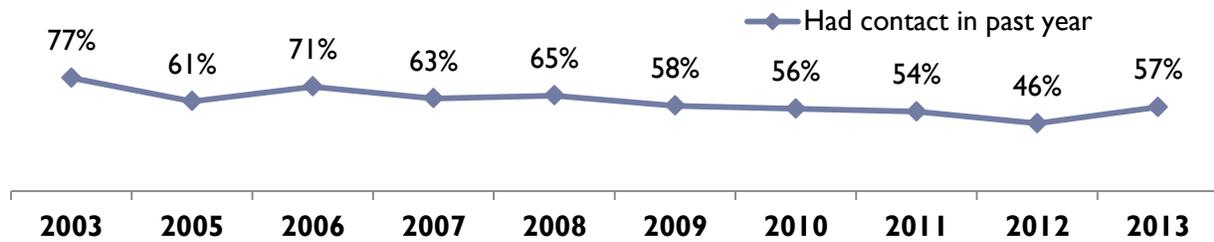
Mean ratings for all of the attributes that make up the Member Service factor are well above the 4.00 “good” threshold.

Additionally, all of the attributes are rated significantly higher in 2013 than in 2010.

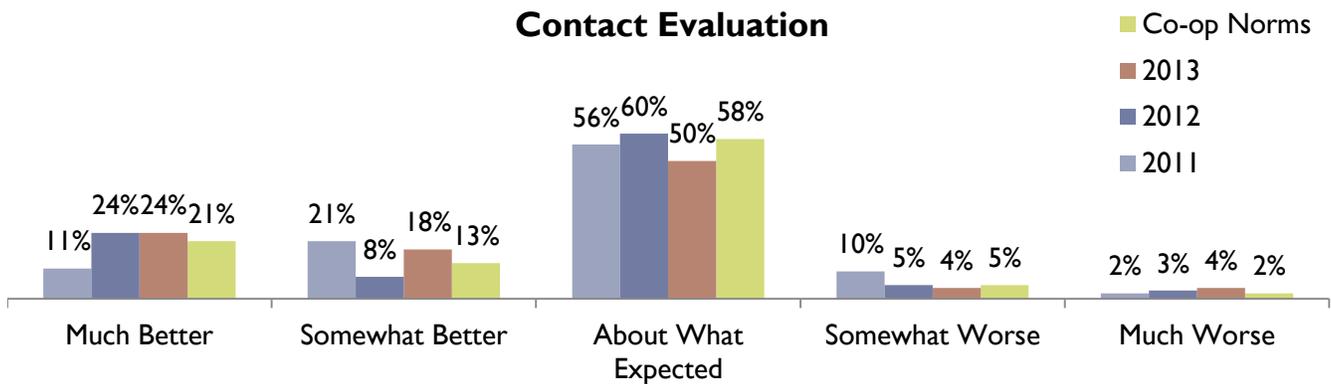
Mean Ratings by Year



Fifty-seven percent of the members indicate they have contacted VEC over the past year. This is significantly higher than in 2012 but significantly lower than the 2008 study. Those less satisfied with the co-op overall, younger members, newer members, those who are currently employed, those paying higher monthly electric bills, those living in larger households, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to have contacted the co-op in the past year.



Almost all of those who contacted the co-op in the past year say their expectations were met or exceeded. Four in ten indicate their contact was somewhat or much better than expected, which is significantly higher than 2012 and most of the other previous studies.



Almost half of those who contacted VEC did so to report or get information on an outage and two-thirds say their issue was resolved in one phone call.

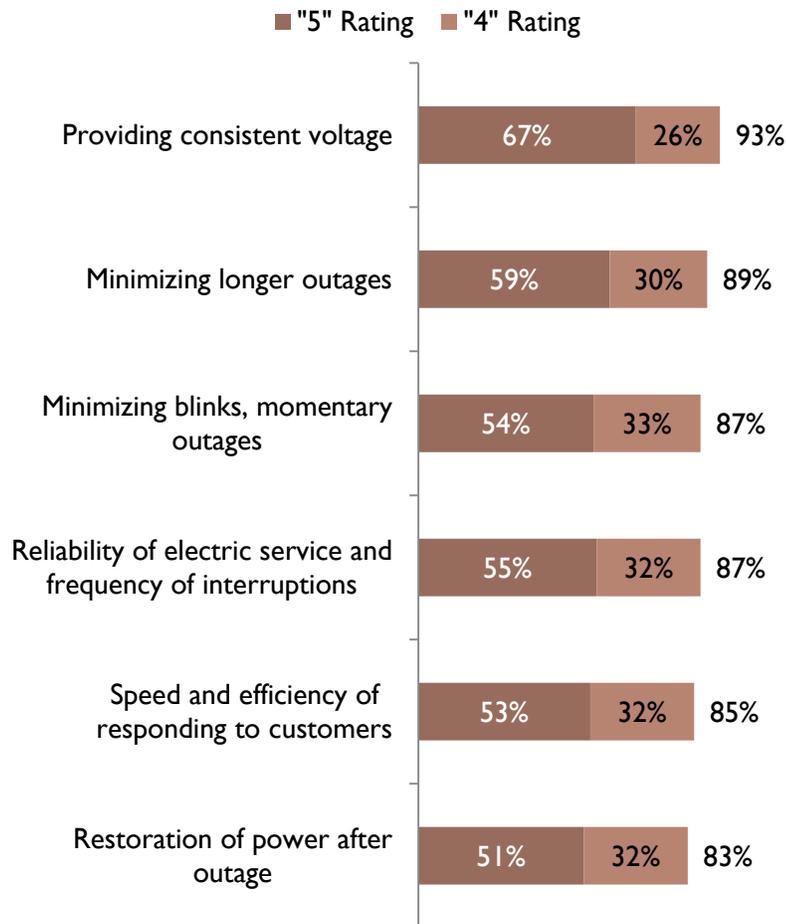
Reason for Most Recent Contact	% of Those Who Contacted	% Evaluate "Much Better"
Outage	48%	20%
General service	7%	47%
Pay bills	7%	21%
Bill question	5%	18%
Payment arrangements	5%	40%

Number of Contacts	% of Those Who Contacted	% Evaluate "Much Better"
1	68%	25%
2	15%	17%
3-4	11%	29%
5+	5%	30%

Electric Service

The next-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction is “Electric Service.” This is an area in which VEC receives very good ratings.

Top Two Box Ratings

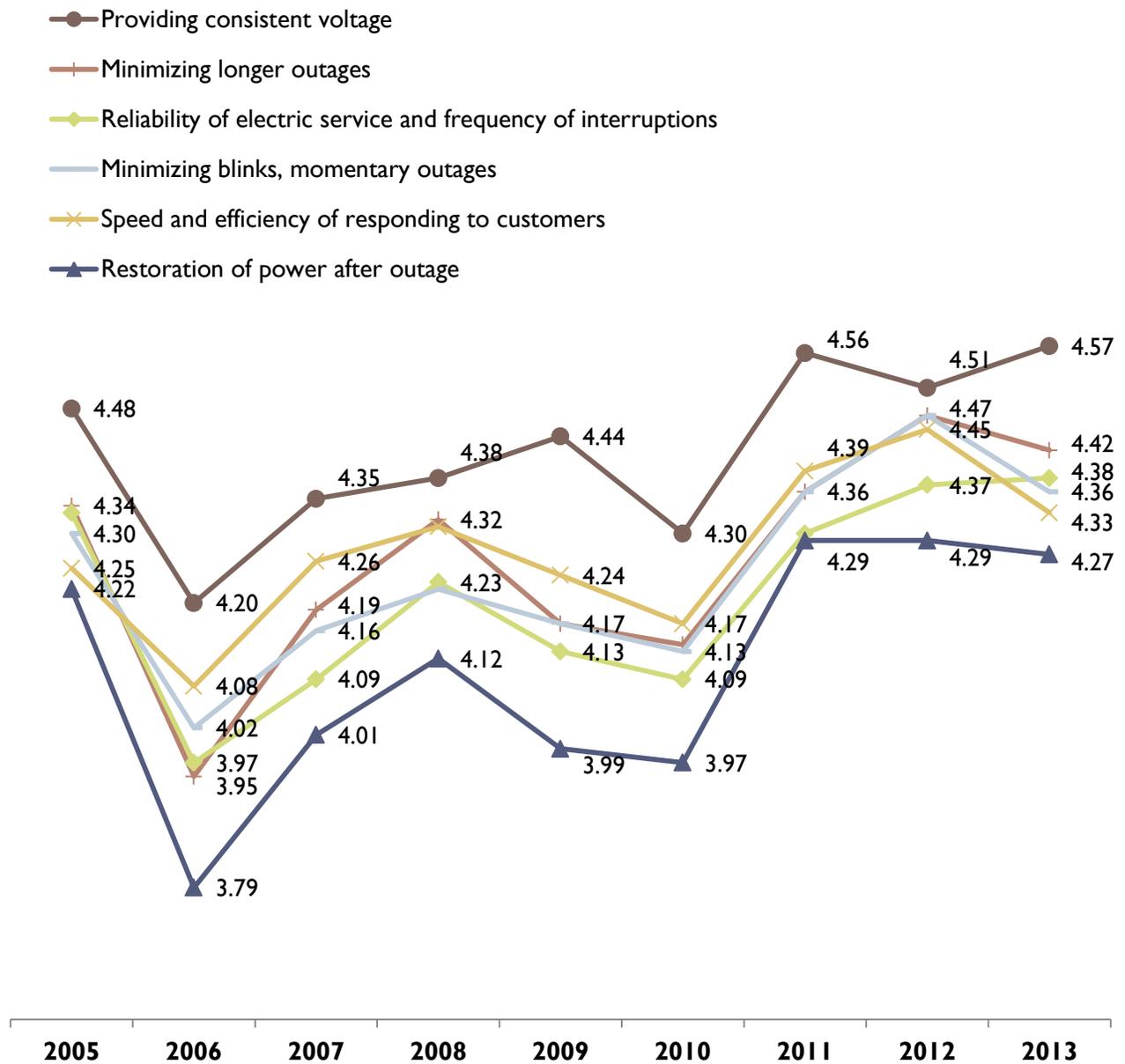


The attributes that make up this key driver have mean ratings that are well above the 4.0 “good” level. They are also significantly higher than the 2010 study.

There is some room for improvement: *the restoration of power after an outage and the speed and efficiency of responding to customers* are both rated lower than the Co-op Norms.

Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts is one electric service attribute that is not a key driver of satisfaction. The mean rating for this attribute is above the 4.5 “excellent” threshold.

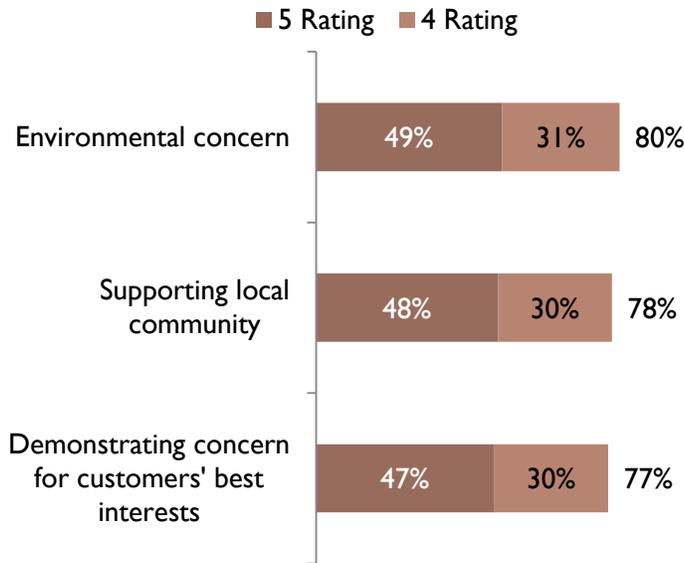
Mean Ratings by Year



Social Responsibility

“Concern for the Environment” is the next-strongest key driver of overall satisfaction. This is another area in which the co-op receives positive ratings.

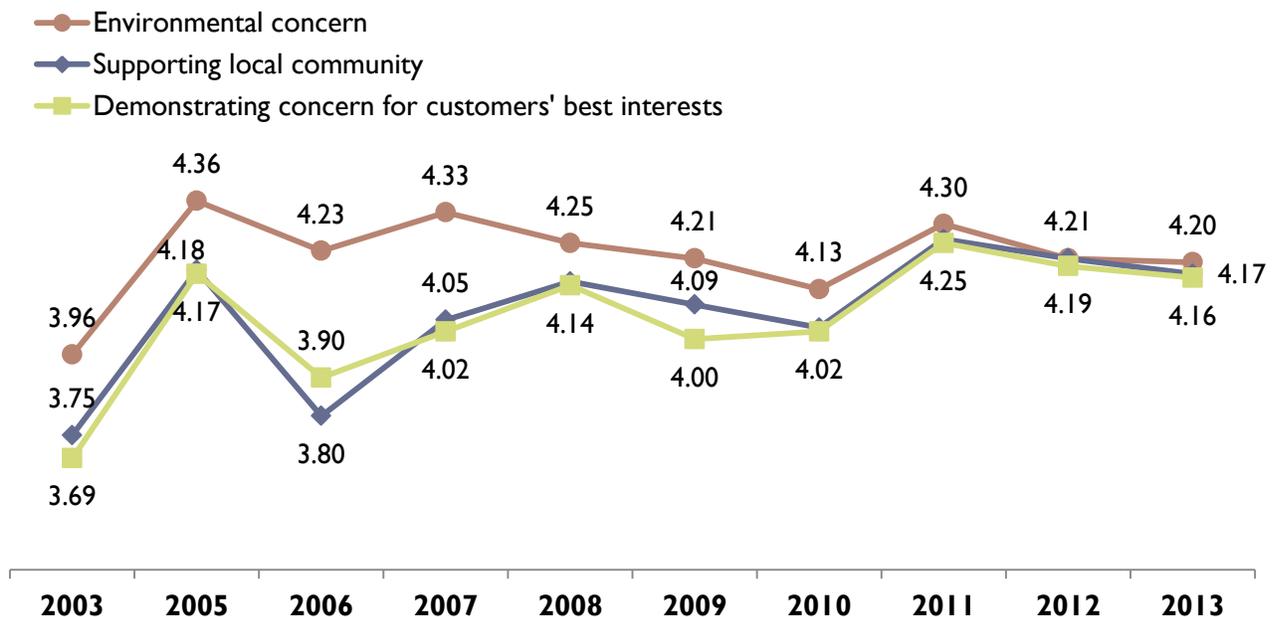
Top Two Box Ratings



Supporting the local community is not a key driver of satisfaction, but is another way in which the co-op demonstrates social responsibility.

All of the mean ratings are above the 4.0 “good” level and are consistent with the 2012 study. However, ratings are lower than the Co-op Norms.

Mean Ratings by Year

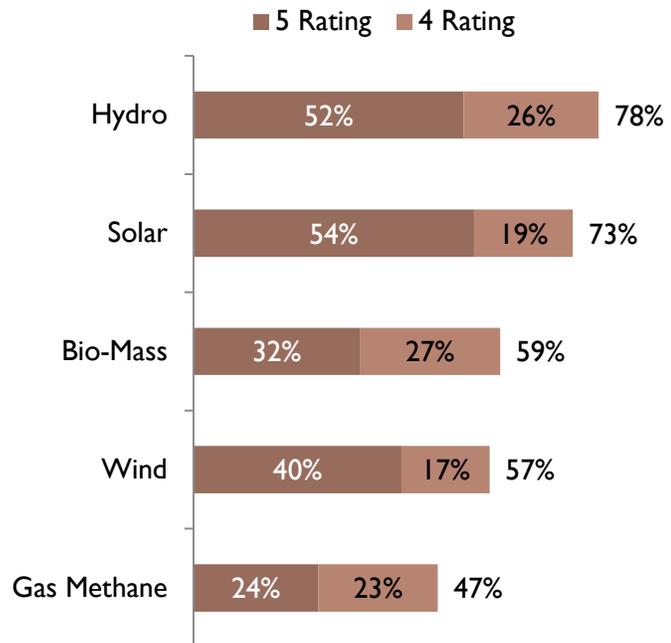


Three-quarters of the members give high ratings for the importance of VEC providing green power from hydro and solar power. Importance ratings are somewhat lower for bio-mass, wind, and gas methane.

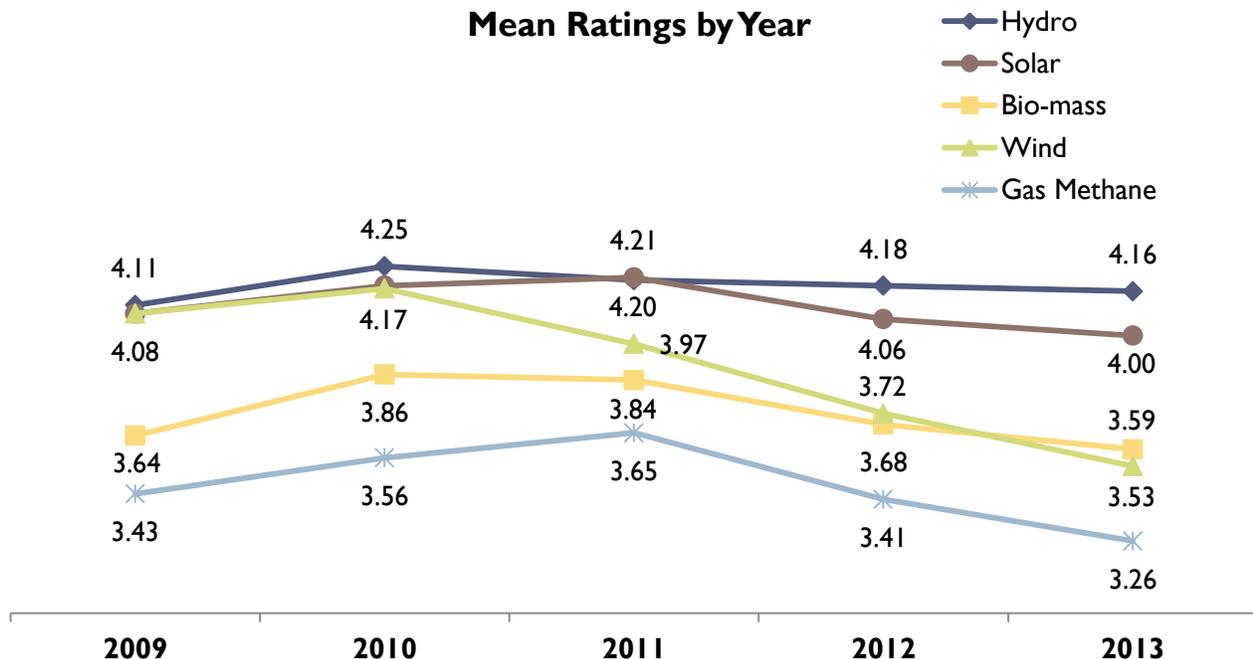
Importance has fallen significantly since 2011 for four of the five types of renewable energy tested. The perceived importance of hydro power has not changed significantly since first tested in 2009.

There are few significant differences between member segments. Those more satisfied with the co-op overall and those paying lower monthly electric bills place higher importance on hydro power. Those paying higher electric bills give higher importance ratings for wind power and gas methane. Younger members give higher importance ratings for solar power. Females give higher ratings for wind and solar power while males give higher ratings for gas methane.

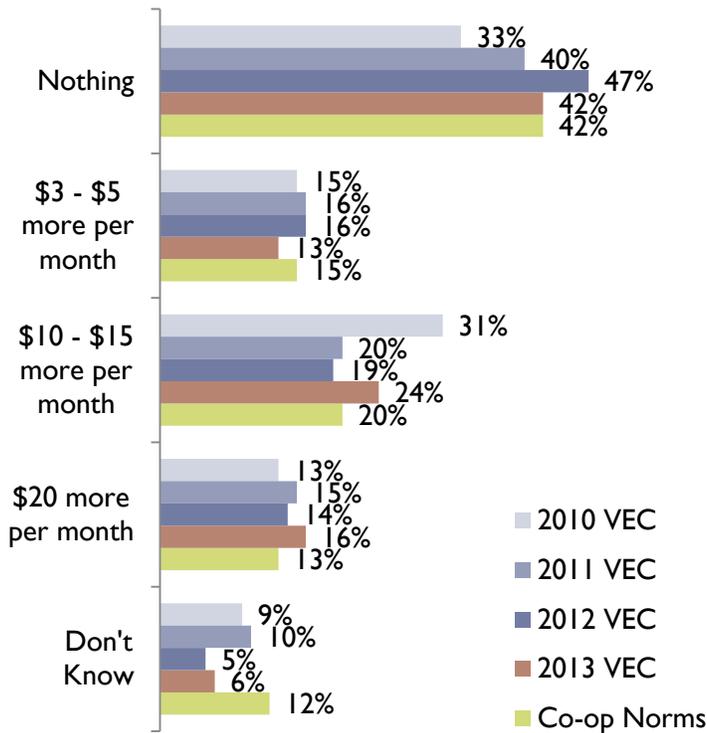
Importance of Using Green Power Top Two Box Ratings



Mean Ratings by Year



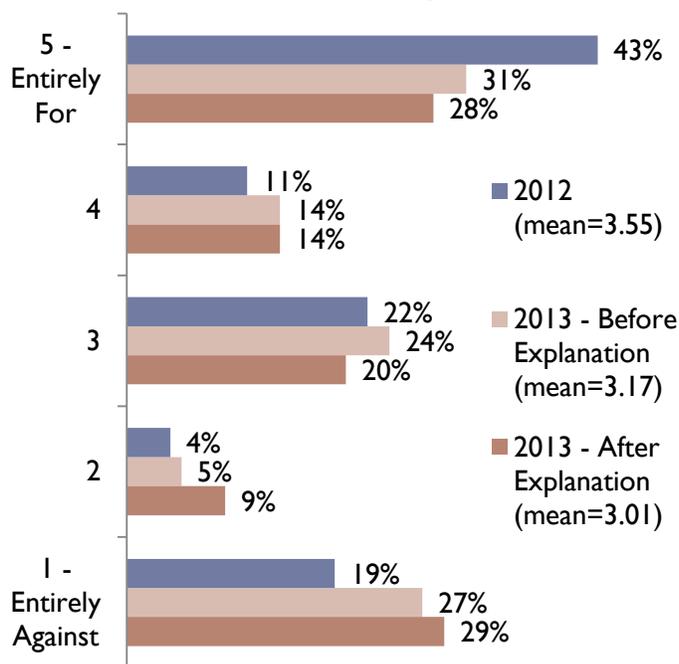
How Much More Willing to Pay for Green Power



Although 42% say they are not willing to pay anything extra each month for renewable energy, 40% say they would be willing to pay \$10 or more per month.

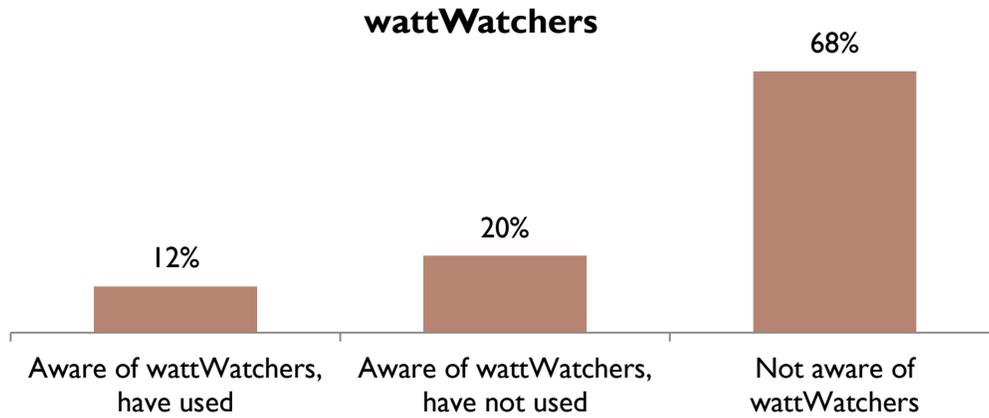
The proportion of members who are willing to pay something extra to get green power has decreased significantly since 2010 (52% vs. 58%). Younger members, those currently employed, those living in larger households, and more affluent members are significantly more willing than their individual counterparts to pay something extra.

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.

Younger members, those paying higher electric bills, and those living in larger households are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to support large-scale wind development.

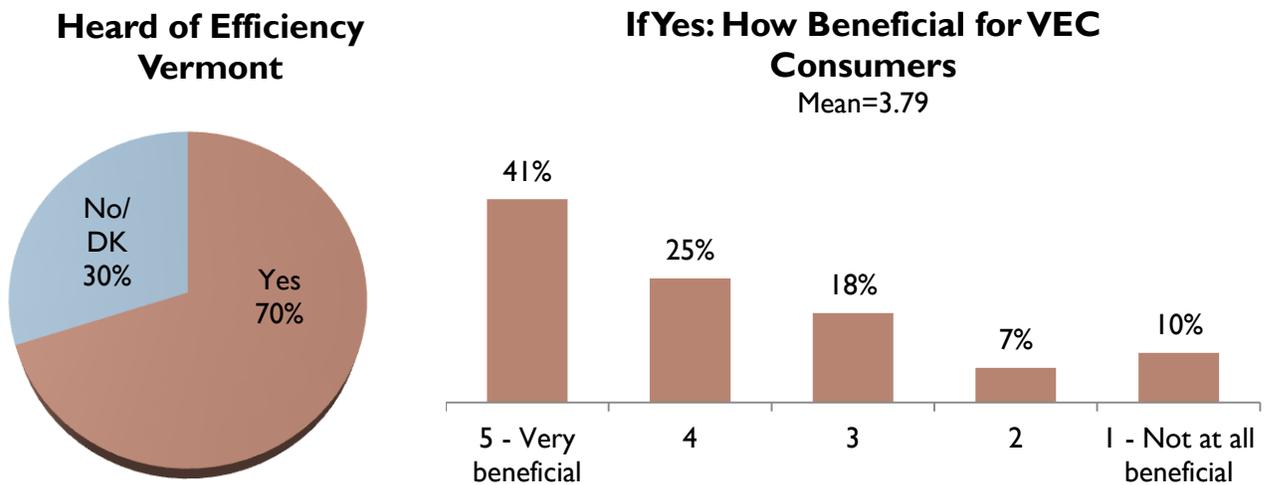


One-third are aware that they can view detailed electric use on VEC’s website through the wattWatchers program. Twelve percent have used the program.

Those with member identity and more affluent members are significantly more likely than “customers” and less affluent members both to be aware of the program and to have used it.

Seven in ten members say they have heard of the energy efficiency utility Efficiency Vermont. Those with member identity, those who are currently employed, those paying lower electric bills (especially \$51 to \$100), those between the ages of 35 and 54, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their individual counterparts to have heard of Efficiency Vermont.

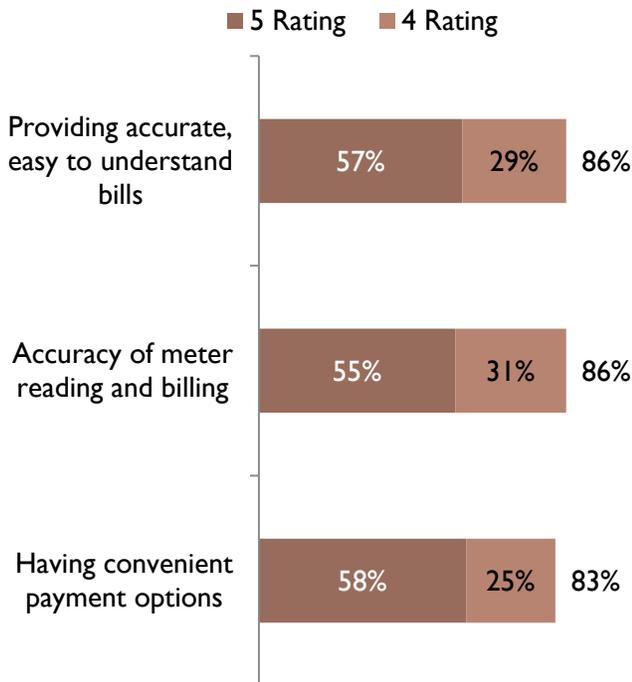
Among those aware of Efficiency Vermont, two-thirds give high ratings for how beneficial it is for consumers.



Bills and Meter Reading

“Bills and Meter Reading” is the final key driver of overall satisfaction. This is another area in which VEC is evaluated positively, although ratings have fallen from recent studies.

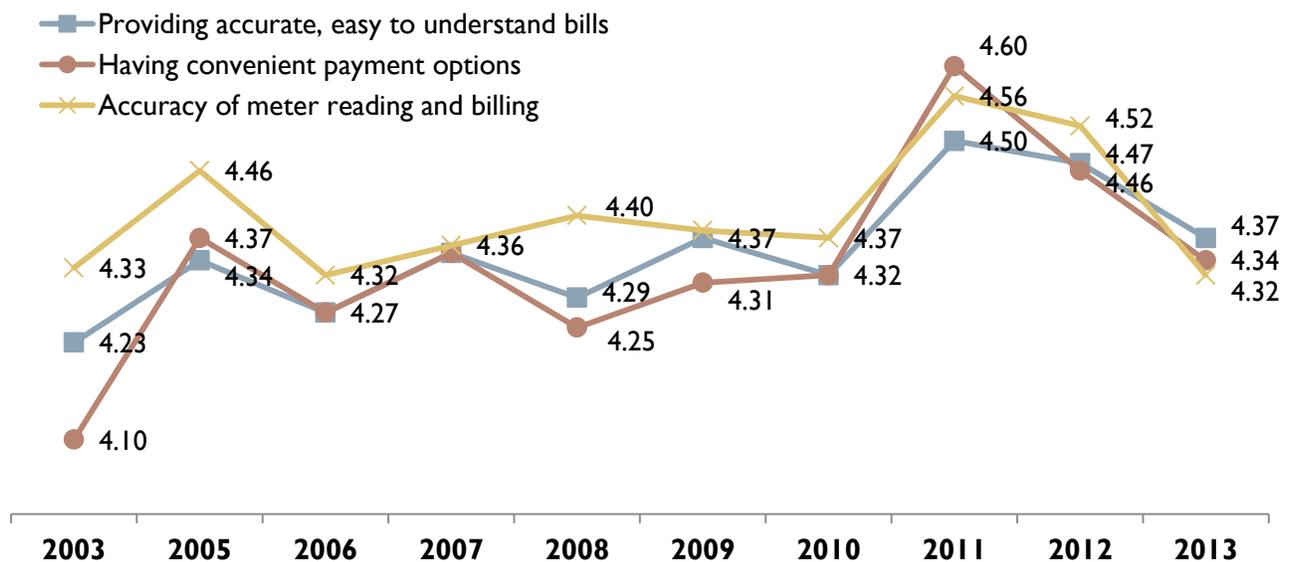
Top Two Box Ratings



Mean ratings are good for the co-op’s billing, meter reading, and payment options. However, the mean rating for *the accuracy of meter reading and billing* has decreased significantly since 2012 and all three attributes are rated significantly lower than 2011.

The mean ratings are lower than the Co-op Norms for the comparable attributes.

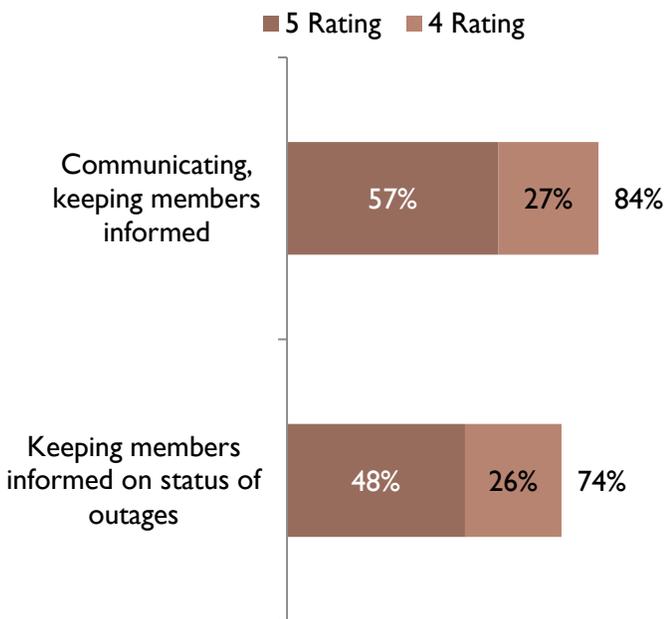
Mean Ratings by Year



Communication

The two communication-related attributes are not significant drivers of overall satisfaction, but are certainly important as they underpin the co-op’s efforts in all other areas.

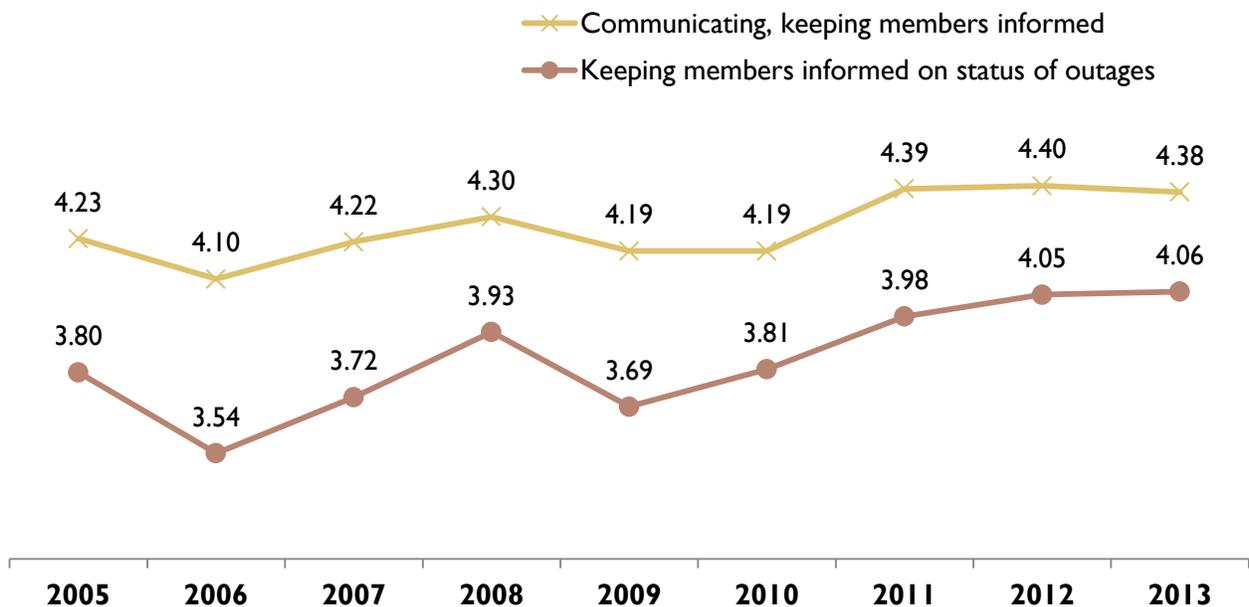
Top Two Box Ratings



VEC is evaluated very positively on both communication in general and communication regarding outages.

For both attributes, the mean ratings are significantly higher than most of the studies conducted in 2010 or before.

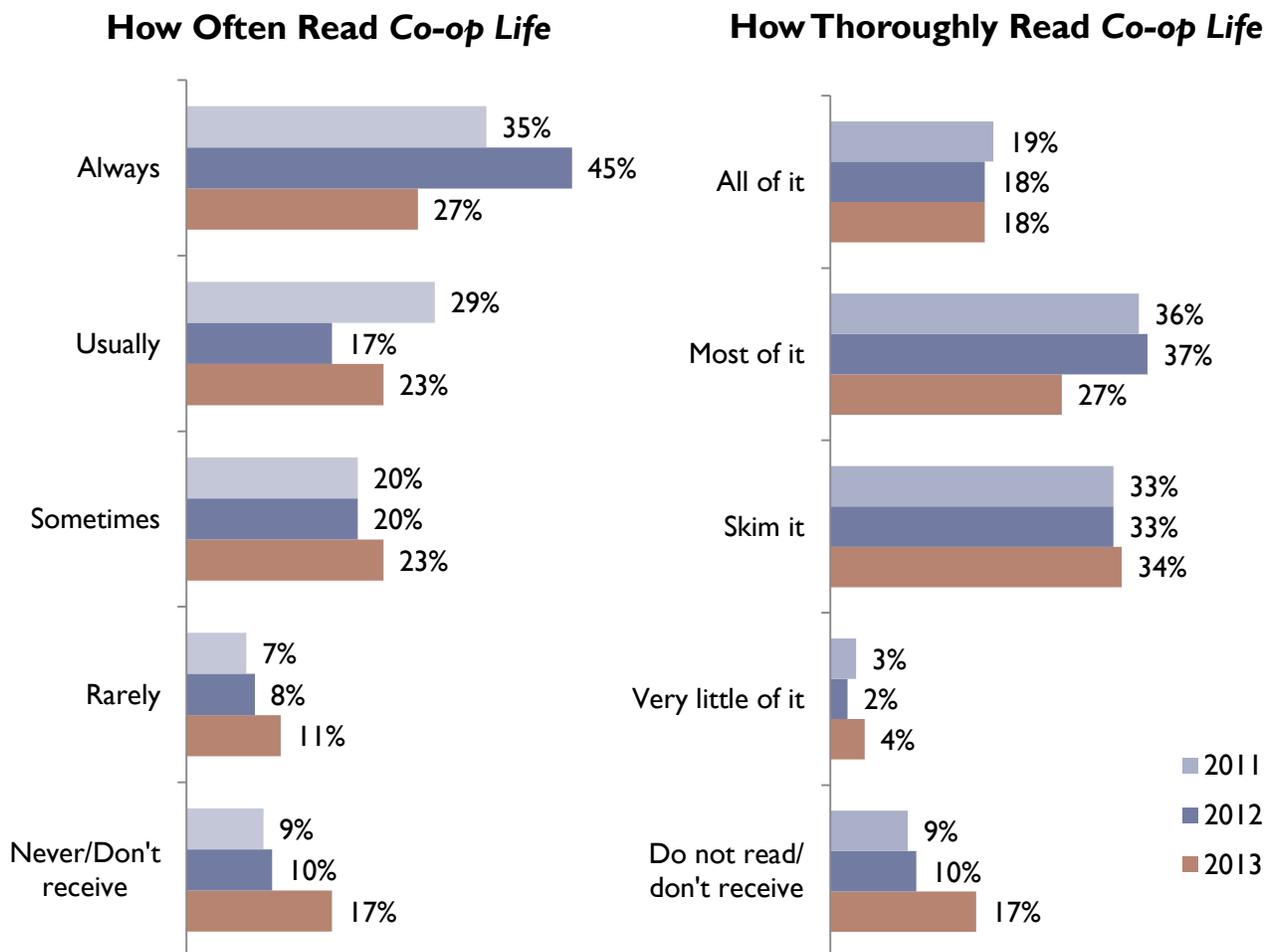
Mean Ratings by Year



Half of the members indicate they always or usually read the monthly newsletter *Co-op Life*; 28% say they rarely or never read it or don't receive it.

Readership has decreased significantly since 2011 and 2012. Of those who read it, the vast majority feel that the length of the newsletter is “about right”.

Those more satisfied with VEC, older members, longer-tenured members, retired members, those paying lower electric bills, those living alone or with one other person, and males are significantly more likely than their counterparts to read the newsletter.



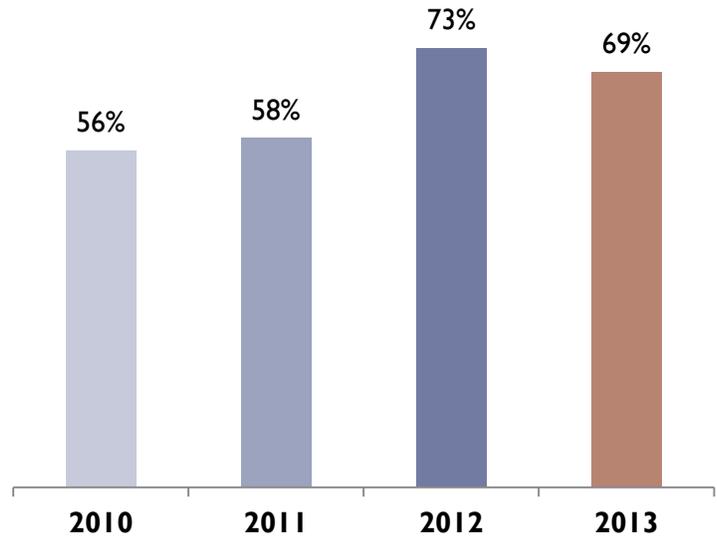
Three-quarters of VEC's members have Internet access at home and/or work. Nearly seven in ten have high-speed Internet at home, as opposed to dial-up access. Although Internet access has not changed significantly from previous studies, the proportion of members with high speed Internet at home has increased significantly since the 2009, 2010, and 2011 studies.

Younger members, newer members, those who are currently employed, those paying higher electric bills, those living with at least one other person, and more affluent members are significantly more likely than their counterparts to have Internet access.

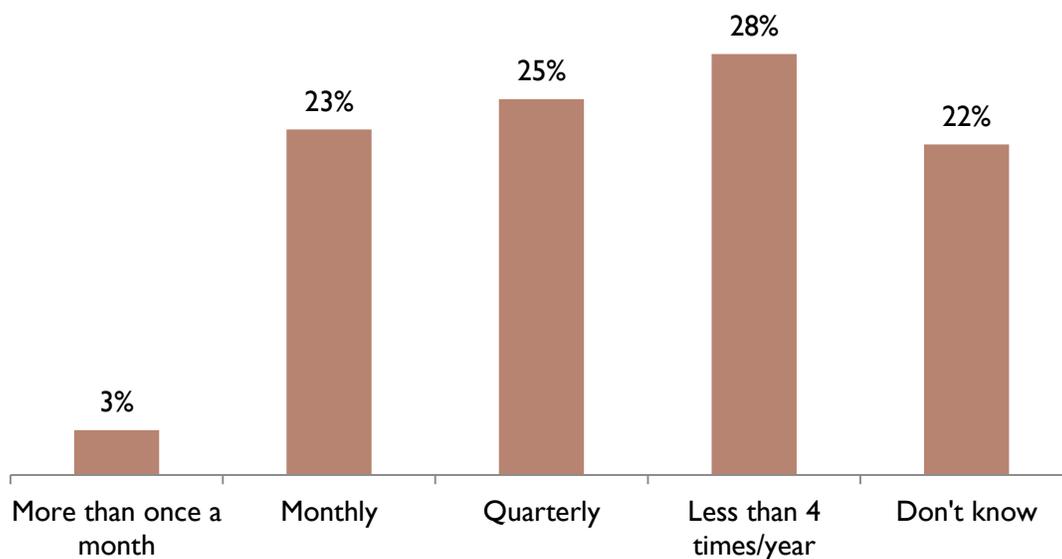
A majority of the members indicate they would like e-mail communication from VEC on a quarterly or less frequent basis.

Approximately one-quarter prefer receiving monthly e-mails.

Has High Speed Internet at Home

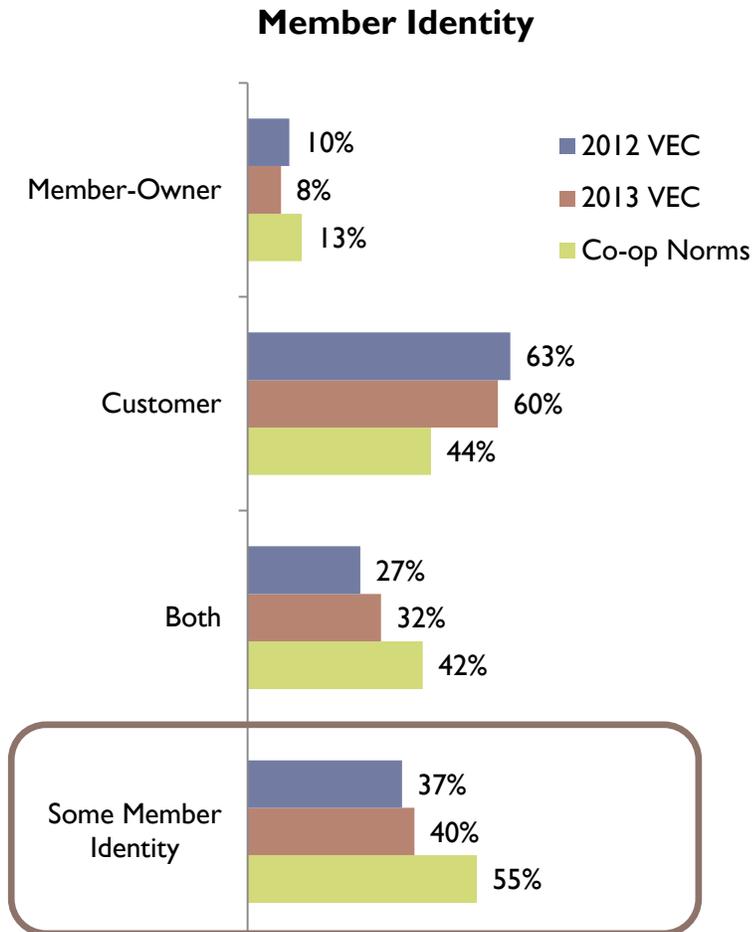


How Often Prefer E-mail Communication



Co-op Awareness

Forty percent have member identity, viewing themselves as a member-owner or both a member-owner and a customer, as opposed to feeling they are just a customer.

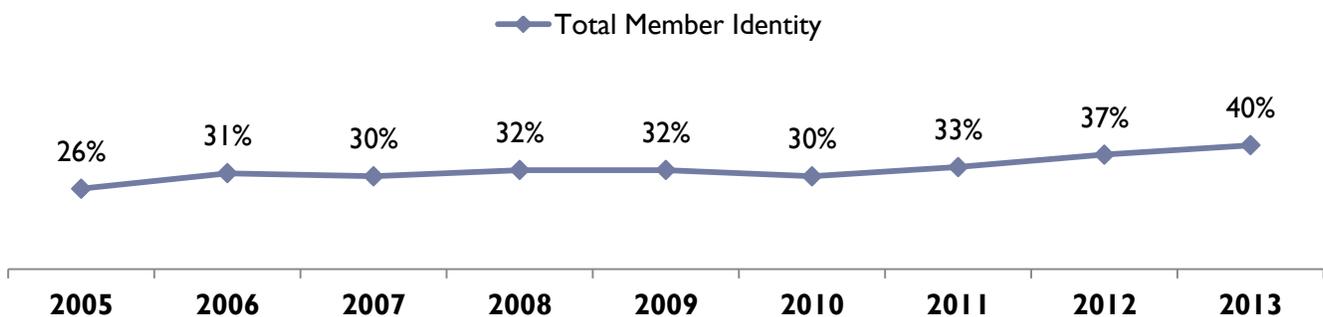


Although overall member identity has not changed significantly since 2012, it is significantly higher than in 2010 and most of the studies prior. However, it is lower than the Co-op Norms (55%).

Those more satisfied with the co-op, retired members, and older members are significantly more likely than their counterparts to have member identity.

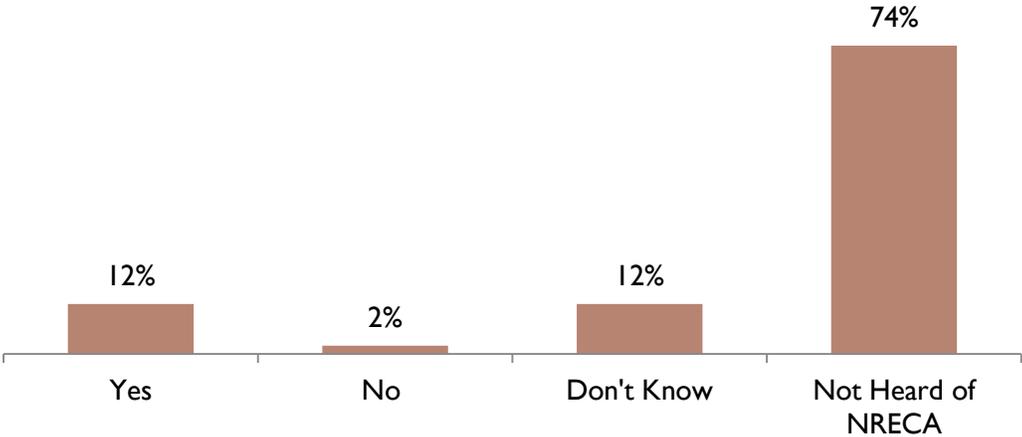
Those with member identity give significantly more positive evaluations than do those who view themselves as “customers” on most of the performance attributes, as well as overall satisfaction.

They are also significantly more likely to want regular e-mail communication from the co-op and read the monthly newsletter.



One-quarter of the members say they have heard of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), including 12% who are aware that VEC is a member of NRECA. Those with member identity, older members, and males are significantly more like than their counterparts to say they have heard of NRECA and are aware that VEC is a member.

Awareness that VEC is Member of NRECA



Member Demographics and Segmentation

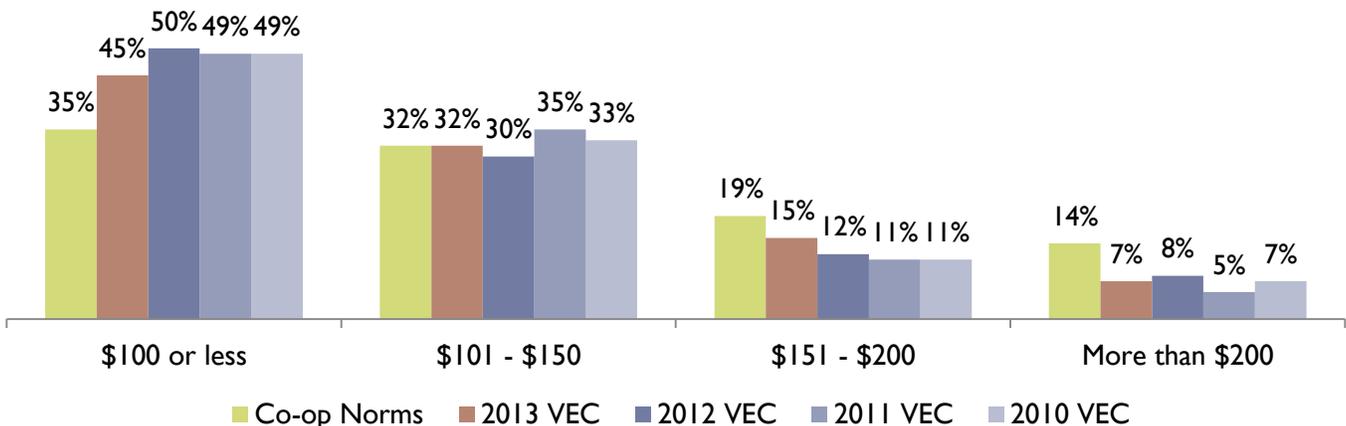
Just over one-third of the responding members are 65 years of age or older and 58% are currently employed either part- or full-time.

Member demographics in 2013 do not differ significantly from recent studies. Compared to the Co-op Norms they are somewhat longer-tenured and more likely to currently be employed.

	2013	2012	2011	2010	Co-op Norms
Younger than 35	8%				11%
35 - 64	57%				55%
65 or Older	35%				35%
Served by VEC <6 Years	17%	16%	19%	21%	24%
Served by VEC 20+ Years	41%	40%	37%	37%	37%
Household Income > \$50K	44%	50%	44%	49%	47%
Household of 3+ People	33%	34%	32%	39%	30%
Employed FT or PT	58%	54%	56%	59%	32%

Fifty-four percent of VEC members report paying an average electric bill over \$100. This is fairly consistent with recent studies and lower than the Co-op Norms.

Average Monthly Electric Bill



Member segments that give significantly higher ratings than their counterparts for their overall satisfaction include older members, longer-tenured members, retired members, those paying lower monthly electric bills, and those living alone or with one other person.

These are the same segments that tend to evaluate the co-op more positively on the various performance attributes.

In addition to giving lower satisfaction and performance ratings, younger members are significantly less likely to:

- Feel they are a member of the co-op
- Be aware of NRECA
- Be aware of Efficiency Vermont
- Read the newsletter

Conversely, younger members are significantly more likely to:

- Have contacted the co-op in the past year
- Say they would pay extra each month to get green power
- Support large-scale wind development on Vermont's ridgeline
- Access the Internet

Using the Internet and other types of electronic media is a good way to interact with and inform these often hard-to-reach younger members.

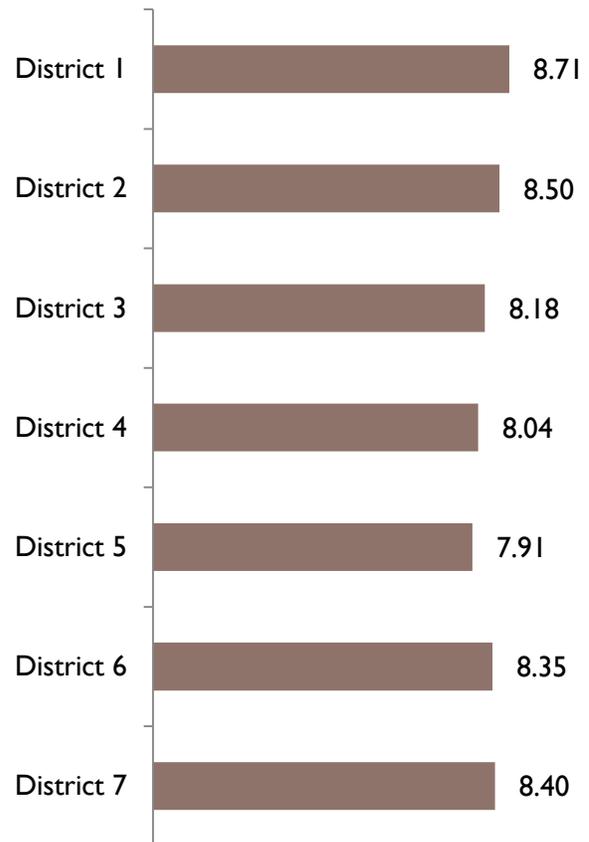
The mean overall satisfaction rating is highest among members in District 1, significantly higher than those in Districts 4 and 5.

On the performance attributes, members in Districts 2 and 3 tend to give the highest ratings while those in District 5 generally give the lowest ratings. Many of these differences are statistically significant.

Other differences between districts include the following, although some of these differences are not statistically significant:

- Members in District 5 are the most likely to be willing to pay extra to get green power while those in District 2 are least likely.
- Members in District 5 are the most likely to have Internet access, both at home and at work.
- Members in District 5 are the most likely to have member identity; members in District 4 are the least likely.
- Members in Districts 5 and 7 are the most likely to be aware of wattWatchers; those in 1 and 2 are least likely. Those in Districts 5 and 6 are most likely to have used it.
- Those in District 5 are most likely to have heard of Efficiency Vermont while those in District 6 are least likely.
- Those in District 3 are the most likely to “always” read the monthly newsletter.

Mean Satisfaction by District



Verbatim Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, members were given the opportunity to share any comments, concerns, or questions they had. Forty-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
Rates/Fees	47	1	39	7
Overall Satisfaction	39	36	3	0
Operations/Engineering – blinks, outages, tree trimming, AMI/AMR	34	17	13	4
Renewable Energy	29			
Billing/Finance	18	3	5	10
Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits	13	2	2	9
Newsletter/Information	9	1	0	8
Management/Board	9	0	2	7
Member Services/Marketing – resolving issues, customer service reps	6	4	2	0
Efficiency Vermont	4	0	0	4
Capital Credit/Dividend	4	0	1	3

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, Cost, Member Service, Bills and Meter Reading, and Concern for Environment.

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 outages to a minimum
- Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum
- The restoration of power after an outage
- The speed and efficiency of responding to customers

Cost Factor

- Charging reasonable rates
- Helping customers keep bills as low as possible
- The monthly service fees
- Helping members to be more efficient in their use of electricity

Member Service Factor

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

Bills and Meter Reading Factor

- The accuracy of meter reading and billing
- Providing accurate and easy to understand bills

Concern For Environment Factor

- Operating with concern for the environment
- Demonstrating concern for consumers' best interests

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
- Supporting the local community
- Keeping members informed on the status of outages
- Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts
- Having convenient payment options

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 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.

Appendix B:

Verbatim Responses

VERMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 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 think they do a good job. (5 mentions)

I am happy with them. (4 mentions)

Everything is fine.

I am pretty pleased with them. Can't change the rates, but we are doing energy efficient things. I am pleased.

I don't know what they could do better. They are already doing a good job.

I have been very happy with them. No complaints. The people are nice. There are not many outages. I live at the foot of the mountain so could have a lot of outages, but they take care of their lines.

I have no complaints.

I think it is a good cooperative. They are competitive with other co-ops and we get good service. We get quick service.

I think it's very important that they are a co-op.

I think overall they are doing a good job. I did have some trouble with the bill and meter reading, but I think everything is straightened out.

I think there has been improvement over the last 10 years.

I think they are a really good company and cost effective. However, when you get the bill, it is double compared to TS&H.

I think they are doing the best they can.

I think they are getting better all the time.

I think they do a good job and most of the people are great, but the power prices are a little high.

I think they do a good job. They are very easy to work with. Their customer relationships are good. They are good to work with you.

I think they do a great job. I just wish they could have diversity in their energy sources.

Additional Comments**Overall Satisfaction – Positive Responses
(continued)**

I think they do a very good job. I'm 100% active with them. I would like to have them keep the rates as low as possible as long as possible.

I think they have done real well, as far as they could.

If the co-op were to send out a weekly communication, the customer should be able to ask questions and get information. They should be able to ask questions of their representative. They have term limits for Board members and they should keep them. The term limits allow them to be more progressive and know what the younger generation needs. I like the cooperative.

I'm just very positive towards them. I'm so appreciative that they came through with electricity back in the early 1940's.

It is nice having a co-op.

I've had good experiences with them.

Keep up the good work. I am very happy with our utility.

So far everything is good.

They have been very good to us.

They've been perfect so far.

We've been very satisfied. We don't have hardly any outages. It's much better than where we lived before.

What is important to me is that they are environmentally conscientious and customer aware. This is a good company.

Overall Satisfaction – Negative Responses

Absolutely the worst electric company that I have ever had and I have lived in 15 states. Whenever I've had a long power outage, they've taken 2 to 4 days longer than every power company around here to restore power.

I think the whole cooperative thing is ridiculous. I just think it is just a bunch of people trying to get elected and it is annoying. It does not help with my bill. I just want my electricity.

I would say they need to make a person feel they are more a part of the co-op and that you have a say.

Management/Board – Negative Responses

They can stop putting the rates up. Fewer new trucks and cars for the office management. If we are equal partners in a co-op, then why do they have new cars when we can't afford to buy one?

Additional Comments**Management/Board – Negative Responses
(continued)**

Drop the rates. They get a lot of power from Canada and that should mean that they should pass the buck, instead of profiting from it. They should be doing the best for the members instead of their profit line, being they are a co-op.

Management/Board – Neutral Responses

Don't sell out to the big companies.

First of all, in Grand Isle, they are extremely reliable. I would like them to give me a sense of what I am paying versus other companies in Vermont. Also, I want to be protected from big power companies like GMP. I want the co-op to represent us locally.

I believe that they can look to achieve cost containment on all levels to enable them to provide a more competitive rate for electricity.

I think it is very important that they take very good care of their linemen.

I would prefer on the election of Directors a little longer biography. The little ones do not give me enough information on the Directors.

If the co-op were to send out a weekly communication, the customer should be able to ask questions and get information. They should be able to ask questions of their representative. They have term limits for Board members and they should keep them. The term limits allow them to be more progressive and know what the younger generation needs. I like the cooperative.

Take better care of water supplies and the fish and salmon. Taking out the dam was good.

Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses

As far as the quick outages, I live in West Bolton, Vermont. Power flashes have improved greatly in the last 2 years and I would like to say thank you for the effort and I would hope that they would maintain the lines on this in the coming years.

As far as what they used to be, it is much better now. They do well with tree trimming and are much more efficient concerning power outages.

Considering the distance they have to travel for power outages, I think they do very well.

First of all, in Grand Isle, they are extremely reliable. I would like them to give me a sense of what I am paying versus other companies in Vermont. Also, I want to be protected from big power companies like GMP. I want the co-op to represent us locally.

I am a builder and I have worked with their service department and I have always gotten very good service.

Additional Comments**Operations/Engineering – Positive Responses
(continued)**

I have been very happy with them. No complaints. The people are nice. There are not many outages. I live at the foot of the mountain so we could have a lot of outages, but they take care of their lines.

I think it is a good cooperative. They are competitive with other co-ops and we get good service. We get quick service.

I think the overall service isn't bad, but would like to see more responsively renewable resources.

I think they are just super. I haven't been without power for a long time.

I'm satisfied with the service.

In this area we have frequent outages and the outages last sometimes 10 to 11 days. I do applaud them for trimming trees and taking limbs from off the lines in this area and I do think we have had fewer outages because of this. I know this has been costly to them, but perhaps they even need to do more. The only e-mails I want from them is to notify me of planned power outages.

The linemen and crew boss are very diligent and polite.

The service is good enough, but the prices are high.

They are doing real good as far as the service and maintaining the lines. We have very few power outages.

We are very satisfied with the service that we have.

We live in the Northeast Kingdom. Now they have a quicker outage repair for us and that has been really beneficial.

We've been very satisfied. We don't have hardly any outages. It's much better than where we lived before.

Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses

Absolutely the worst electric company that I have ever had, and I have lived in 15 states. Whenever I've had a long power outage, they've taken 2 to 4 days longer than every power company around here to restore power.

I am very disappointed in the damages when they put a pole in my yard. I have asked them to call when they come on my yard so they do not kill or injure an animal. They just show up. They have been great with bills. They give me a courtesy call when I need it.

I don't think I want any meters put on. I think that is coming. When you want to do your work, you need your power on. I will put a timer on my pool and try to run it at night.

I don't understand why they don't read the meters in person anymore. I don't trust that the reading is right now. They should explain this in their bill or the newsletter.

Additional Comments
Operations/Engineering – Negative Responses
(continued)

I think the number of blinks and surges is unacceptable for where we live.

I wish they could find an alternative to herbicides for weeding.

I would love to have fewer power outages and have the power outages be shorter. I would like them to support small scale solar, wind, hydro that could feed into the grid.

I'm at an outpost. With an outage, the co-op takes longer than if they hire in from New Hampshire.

Improve their infrastructure. Stop concentrating on wind and think more of solar.

My only issue is their use of herbicide. Remove plants manually.

The restoration for the outages always seems to be interesting and it doesn't seem to be based on who was out first or who has been out the longest. Further concern, since we're at the end of the spur, we seem to be last to get power restored regardless of how long we've been without. We are shareholders of the co-op and we have a cash value in the co-op and there has been no sharing of what is happening with our money. I am not sure why we have to pay for energy efficiency and are not getting any benefit from it. We seem to be using more energy efficiency and our bill is not decreasing, based on the additional charges beyond the energy usage.

They need to do more preemptive work. I'd like to see them fix the sub on Carrol Hill.

I would like to request that they be more judicious, to avoid clear cutting of right-of-ways, to minimize tree cutting.

Operations/Engineering – Neutral Responses

I could use a little more guidance on energy usage and saving energy. I would like to know when they will be installing smart meters and how that will save me money.

I have a power right-of-way on my property and I would like them not to use herbicides.

Keep the power on.

More preemptive clearing along power lines to prevent outages.

Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Positive Responses

I have been very happy with them. No complaints. The people are nice. There are not many outages. I live at the foot of the mountain so could have a lot of outages, but they take care of their lines.

I think their rates are a little high, but their customer service is excellent. I am quite satisfied.

I think they do a good job and most of the people are great, but the power prices are a little high.

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

I think they do a good job. They are very easy to work with. Their customer relationships are good. They are good to work with you.

Member Services/Marketing/Communications – Negative Responses

The people are rude, especially if you owe a bill. They keep harassing you.

Their customer service people are rude and do not return phone calls.

Billing/ Finance – Positive Responses

I am very disappointed in the damages when they put a pole in my yard. I have asked them to call when they come on my yard so they do not kill or injure an animal. They just show up. They have been great with bills. They give me a courtesy call when I need it.

I appreciate my bill coming on the internet and not through the mail.

We put in another well on our property and we had to put in another meter for the pump. Somehow I am being charged a commercial rate on it. It is only \$22 a month, but I am just curious why. Maybe there is a policy on this of only one meter per house; otherwise you are considered a commercial. One thing really wonderful, we lost power for about five days and we do have a generator and they did not charge me for those days, which I thought was really wonderful. I wish other companies did that. I told people how wonderful that was.

Billing/Finance – Negative Responses

Concerning the billing process, I find it difficult to understand the bill when it comes each month. I have called and they couldn't really explain it at a level I could understand.

I just don't understand their billing. I am paid up and then they increase my bill for something I didn't pay before. I don't understand their explanation so don't have them call me about this. Also, their rates are just expensive. My road is on two different electric companies and Vermont Electric's rates are much higher than the rates from the other company.

If we can't get our bill paid, we can go and get a doctor's note, being on the budget plan. After that they say we broke the budget payment plan and no longer can be on the budget plan. I feel that they need to change their plan, as it is really hard to come up with the money each month, or so we aren't punished for a doctor's note.

My only comment is that if I am late for one month, by the second month I already receive a disconnection notice. I try to keep up, but sometimes I can't. It seems that after paying for so many years that it's quick how they send out a disconnection notice. I barely mail one payment in and I get another disconnection notice.

Additional Comments**Billing/Finance – Negative Responses
(continued)**

The low rating I gave on the bill rating is because I cannot pay on my Visa and all others let me do that. It is hard to do that on a check, so I would like it automatic monthly. I do appreciate the newsletter, but they could jazz it up some. Do environment things and helpful hints. Now it is a little boring on the Board and things like that.

Billing/Finance – Neutral Response

First of all, in Grand Isle, they are extremely reliable. I would like them to give me a sense of what I am paying versus other companies in Vermont. Also, I want to be protected from big power companies like GMP. I want the co-op to represent us locally.

I just want to be able to pay online with my credit card.

I think overall they are doing a good job. I did have some trouble with the bill and meter reading, but I think everything is straightened out.

I would like to be able to be on the budget plan.

I would like to go on a budget plan where it is the same all year. In the winter it doubles and it is hard to budget around that.

I would like to have auto-bill pay. Maybe be able to go online and pay and improvements like that on billing.

I would love it if they could have auto pay on the website.

In the right hand corner of the bill, it says your 2011 allotment is \$158 and the second one or total is \$1,808.34. I am wondering what those figures mean. You can't use it to pay your bill, so wondering what it is there for.

I've had trouble getting my bank to recognize my customer number online so that I can do my bill pay online. I don't know for sure whether it's my bank or the co-op.

I hope things will get better now that they have the right address for our bill. The bill was going to the wrong place, so we got behind.

Rates/Fees – Positive Responses

I think they are doing the best they can do to keep their prices down.

Rates/Fees – Negative Responses

Lower the rates. (6 mentions)

I have a question concerning my bill. I try to be conservative and it keeps going up every year.

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

Drop the rates. They get a lot of power from Canada and that should mean that they should pass the buck, instead of profiting from it. They should be doing the best for the members instead of their profit line, being they are a co-op.

I am concerned about them buying alternative power when the cost for electricity is already high enough. I own several pieces of property and my bill is over \$500. The costs keep getting higher and higher. They don't need to call me as I've already talked to them.

I don't understand why my bill is so high each month. I live in a 4-room apartment and my bill is almost \$200 a month.

I have a TV on and one light and my bill is \$140 a month. I think my bill is too high. I would like them to come here and assess things. I think I'm paying too much.

I just don't understand their billing. I am paid up and then they increase my bill for something I didn't pay before. I don't understand their explanation so don't have them call me about this. Also, their rates are just expensive. My road is on two different electric companies and Vermont Electric's rates are much higher than the rates from the other company.

I think it would be really nice if they could figure out a way to lower the rates.

I think their pricing is very high compared to others around there we have had. It is a poor area, so prices are way too high for that. The prices should be cheaper for the non-renewable ones.

I think their rates are a little high, but their customer service is excellent. I am quite satisfied.

I think they are a really good company and cost effective. However, when you get the bill, it is double compared to TS&H.

I think they are just estimating my bill. I don't have a meter. I think I pay too much. I cut back all the time and my bill is still high.

I think they do a good job and most of the people are great, but the power prices are a little high.

I wish they could help me lower my light bill. I definitely need help to pay it. I am on a fixed income of \$800 a month and my light bill is \$100. I want to see what can be done to help me pay my bill.

I wish they were more reasonable. We try to not use many lights and when I get the bill, I can't believe how expensive it is.

If they could lower the rates it would be good. I don't have a microwave. I don't have a computer. But still my bill is high. I am on disability and my bill is sometimes over \$100.

I'm glad they are giving us a way to save, but then prices go up. It is counterproductive. Also, it would have been nice to know about "Efficiency Vermont" before we moved in to our newly built house.

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

It would serve me better if they get out of this wind entirely. When there is no wind we are charged for it whether we have it or not. Those things are ugly. In five years these things will be obsolete. Will they come and remove them? Even New York has a better way. It is no fair that they take a poor state and do this to us. We get clobbered over the head. Everyone is making money putting them in and it is not fair we get nothing for it, do not reap anything from Vermont. Lowell is having a big barbecue for this and I say to hell with them. I would not buy a piece of chicken from them. People come here and retire and have money, but the rest of us do not. It is expensive. What am I doing here? I do not know.

Lower our rates instead of keep increasing them. I think we pay very high prices.

Lower their rates. Washington Electric is much lower. It is appalling when I see my bill every month.

Please lower their rates. Provide me with a solar panel or a windmill. Unless they are going to contact me about alternative energy, or to lower my rates, they don't need to contact me.

The customer service charge is way out of line. Compared to North Star, whose monthly rate is \$9 a month extra, Vermont Electric is \$19 extra. I don't like this. We have no control over the monthly charge.

The installation is quite expensive. I would like to see them reduce the cost of installing electricity.

The off-season rates have doubled and we were never notified. They don't have to call me, but I'd like to know the reasons why this happened.

The rates are way too high. They are out of control. If another power source comes in I will go with them.

The restoration for the outages always seems to be interesting and it doesn't seem to be based on who was out first or who has been out the longest. Further concern, since we're at the end of the spur, we seem to be last to get power restored regardless of how long we've been without. We are shareholders of the co-op and we have a cash value in the co-op and there has been no sharing of what is happening with our money. I am not sure why we have to pay for energy efficiency and are not getting any benefit from it. We seem to be using more energy efficiency and our bill is not decreasing, based on the additional charges beyond the energy usage.

The service is good enough, but the prices are high.

Their rates are entirely too high. They charge way too many service charges on things and it is unnecessary.

They can stop putting the rates up. Fewer new trucks and cars for the office management. If we are equal partners in a co-op, then why do they have new cars when we can't afford to buy one?

They need to have a better solar rebate program. They need to lower their prices. We are so close to Canada and the prices are so different.

We just moved here recently from Sheffield and the highest electric bill we ever had there was \$90 and that was at Christmas. Here the lowest bill was \$95 and all the rest of our bills from Vermont Electric have been over \$100. I was shocked by how much it cost here.

Additional Comments
Rates/Fees – Negative Responses
(continued)

We put in another well on our property and we had to put in another meter for the pump. Somehow I am being charged a commercial rate on it. It is only \$22 a month, but I am just curious why. Maybe there is a policy on this of only one meter per house, otherwise you are considered a commercial. One thing really wonderful, we lost power for about 5 days and we do have a generator and they did not charge me for those days, which I thought was really wonderful. I wish other companies did that. I told people how wonderful that was.

We were a previous customer of Vermont Electric and then six months ago we moved to a new address still being served by them. They charged us a deposit fee of \$45 even when we had been a previous customer. Now on the bill I just received they charged us another fee, called an establishment fee, of \$35. I don't understand why they keep charging us fees for these types of things when we had been a previous customer.

Why is my bill is so high?

Rates/Fees – Neutral Responses

I think they do a very good job. I'm 100% active with them. I would like to have them keep the rates as low as possible as long as possible.

I would love more information about the "Efficiency Vermont". I am glad to see them taking a stand on the wind development. I would also like to know why we have winter rates. Yes, you may call me.

I would want to say that lower rates would be nice.

I wouldn't mind seeing a lower bill.

My husband heard there was a discount for senior citizens, or is it for lower income? If for senior citizens, we for sure qualify. Please contact us on this.

On behalf of customers, they need to continue to find an efficient cost of energy.

Other than the fact that I have signed up for the new rate in June, there is nothing at this time. It's the one year study variable peak pricing program. I'm ready to start on this one year study.

Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Positive Response

I am pretty pleased with them. Can't change the rates, but we are doing energy efficient things. I am pleased.

It is good to know more about energy efficiency things, to cut costs, and improve on stuff.

Additional Comments
Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits
(continued)

Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Negative Responses

It was very bad response when we did the energy efficiency thing. Mr. Kennedy was excellent, but the results were like a fluff off until we wrote a letter. We did not get a star because of the windows we had. We could not have those kind with solar. Very poor, a joke on the energy efficiency thing they had. We took the time to do this and it just was a joke.

The restoration for the outages always seems to be interesting and it doesn't seem to be based on who was out first or who has been out the longest. Further concern, since we're at the end of the spur, we seem to be last to get power restored regardless of how long we've been without. We are shareholders of the co-op and we have a cash value in the co-op and there has been no sharing of what is happening with our money. I am not sure why we have to pay for energy efficiency and are not getting any benefit from it. We seem to be using more energy efficiency and our bill is not decreasing, based on the additional charges beyond the energy usage.

Energy Efficiency/Energy Audits - Neutral Responses

I could use a little more guidance on energy usage and saving energy. I would like to know when they will be installing smart meters and how that will save me money.

I don't think I want any meters put on. I think that is coming. When you want to do your work, you need your power on. I will put a timer on my pool and try to run it at night.

I have a TV on and one light and my bill is \$140 a month. I think my bill is too high. I would like them to come here and assess things. I think I'm paying too much.

I need more information about energy efficiency, such as for heating, etc.

I think it would be nice to encourage people to ask important questions and put it in the newsletter. I once asked if it would save me to have an electric heater. Someone asked about the outside furnace with wood, someone asked how efficient it was. They found you lose 25% of energy outside. Hard core questions would be good that they publish to everyone. Those two things really were important to me. They need to let us know how to run our furnaces more efficiently, without having it turn on and off again. Which electronic things suck up the energy? More detailed information on the smart meter. Unplugged things still use up electric on the smart meter. People need to know those things. Please publish this in *Life*.

I would like some ideas on how to save electricity.

I would like them to contact me about recommendations about reducing my power usage or my bill. I would like to have more information about green power and how the cooperative uses green power.

We would like to know if there is a free service to see why we use so much power for a mobile unit.

I'd like to have more information on the wattWatcher.

**Additional Comments
(continued)****Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Positive Responses**

I appreciate being informed and am very concerned about the environment and would like it to be supported and maintained.

Newsletter/Information/Social Media – Neutral Responses

I don't understand why they don't read the meters in person anymore. I don't trust that the reading is right now. They should explain this in their bill or the newsletter.

I think it would be nice to encourage people to ask important questions and put it in the newsletter. I once asked if it would save me to have an electric heater. Someone asked about the outside furnace with wood, someone asked how efficient it was. They found you lose 25% of energy outside. **Hard core questions would be good that they publish to everyone.** Those two things really were important to me. They need to let us know how to run our furnaces more efficiently, without having it turn on and off again. Which electronic things suck up the energy? More detailed information on the smart meter. Unplugged things still use up electric on the smart meter. People need to know those things. Please publish this in *Life*.

I think they should educate people to use less electricity.

I would like to know the election results. We just voted for the Directors and would like to know what happened.

If the co-op were to send out a weekly communication, the customer should be able to ask questions and get information. They should be able to ask questions of their representative. They have term limits for Board members and they should keep them. The term limits allow them to be more progressive and know what the younger generation needs. I like the cooperative.

The low rating I gave on the bill rating is because I cannot pay on my Visa and all others let me do that. It is hard to do that on a check, so I would like it automatic monthly. I do appreciate the newsletter, but they could jazz it up some. Do environment things and helpful hints. Now it is a little boring on the Board and things like that.

They could do more in the way of information to the public. Information about any conservation they do or what the customer can do. It's like we're making an investment.

In this area we have frequent outages and the outages last sometimes 10 to 11 days. I do applaud them for trimming trees and taking limbs from off the lines in this area and I do think we have had fewer outages because of this. I know this has been costly to them, but perhaps they even need to do more. The only e-mails I want from them are to notify me of planned power outages.

Renewable Energy

I am not affected by having the wind towers in my neighborhood, so I think they are probably a good idea.

**Additional Comments
Renewable Energy
(continued)**

I am concerned about them buying alternative power when the cost for electricity is already high enough. I own several pieces of property and my bill is over \$500. The costs keep getting higher and higher. They don't need to call me as I've already talked to them.

I appreciate David Hallquist asking for no more wind terminals to be built because ISO saying no more renewable energy can be accepted on the grid.

I do want to encourage them to continue to use green energies. I think they should think about using all the renewable sources. Otherwise we won't ever get out from under the thumb of the oil barons.

I hope that they go forward with the solar energy project in Alburgh.

I support the wind energy programs but very few here can afford to pay more for electricity from renewable energy sources, even if we do support the idea. I know I can't.

I think the cooperative needs to work closely with the NEDA. They need to communicate with them and the towns because people have worked very hard against wind power.

I think the overall service isn't bad, but would like to see more responsively renewable resources.

I think they do a great job. I just wish they could have diversity in their energy sources.

I think when things work, they should be left alone. I don't want to see any more of the mountain ridges having turbines on them. I know they need to try some of them out, but I don't want to see any more of them.

I would like all the power companies to listen to the customers more and use less renewable energy because it is costing the consumer too much money.

I would like some information for solar for residents. Make it cheap enough for us to get solar. I want some information on this.

I would like them to contact me about recommendations about reducing my power usage or my bill. I would like to have more information about green power and how the cooperative uses green power.

I would like to see them go ahead and provide more green power. However, I think there has to be a need for smaller wind power and it is expensive to look into getting wind power. I think there needs to be more tax incentives through the federal government and local entities.

I would love more benefits of connecting solar panels than we get.

I would love more information about the "Efficiency Vermont". I am glad to see them taking a stand on the wind development. I would also like to know why we have winter rates. Yes, you may call me.

I would love them to embrace alternative energy more than they do. Especially solar and wind, more so than the others you mentioned. They do not have incentives for doing so.

Additional Comments Renewable Energy (continued)

I would love to have less power outages and have the power outages be shorter. I would like them to support small scale solar, wind, hydro that could feed into the grid.

I'd like them to continue to pursue renewables.

If it is green power for hydro I am for it, if it has low impact on the environment. There are a lot of small scale power options out there for green power, like solar power. If they could help customers with this and then we could pay it back. I would consider solar, small scale wind, and home hydro.

Improve their infrastructure. Stop concentrating on wind and think more of solar.

It would be nice if they could be more supportive for solar, reimbursing dollars for those on solar.

It would serve me better if they get out of this wind entirely. When there is no wind we are charged for it whether we have it or not. Those things are ugly. In five years these things will be obsolete. Will they come and remove them? Even New York has a better way. It is not fair that they take a poor state and do this to us. We get clobbered over the head. Everyone is making money putting them in and it is not fair we get nothing for it, do not reap anything from Vermont. Lowell is having a big barbecue for this and I say to hell with them. I would not buy a piece of chicken from them. People come here and retire and have money, but the rest of us do not. It is expensive. What am I doing here? I do not know.

Please lower their rates. Provide me with a solar panel or a windmill. Unless they are going to contact me about alternative energy, or to lower my rates, they don't need to contact me.

Quit charging me for poor energy producers, the renewables.

There needs to be a balance between renewable energies and traditional energies. In other words, Vermont Electric is getting to the point where we will have so much green energy, no one will be able to afford to live here or work here.

They could be more honest with you. They weren't honest when they had the meetings on wind power. They took people up and showed them when they weren't generating power, so we didn't know how noisy they are. They told us that we wouldn't hear them. So they lied to us. When we had a big rain, we got flooded because of the roads they put up there. We lost two running cars, a boat, and trailer. I don't think much of the wind power.

They need to have a better solar rebate program. They need to lower their prices. We are so close to Canada and the prices are so different.

We already have the wind towers in my neighborhood, so it wouldn't do any good to be opposed to them at this point.

Efficiency Vermont – Neutral Responses

They need to provide the services that are now advertised by "Efficiency Vermont".

Additional Comments
Efficiency Vermont – Neutral Responses
(continued)

I would love more information about the "Efficiency Vermont". I am glad to see them taking a stand on the wind development. I would also like to know why we have winter rates. Yes, you may call me.

I'm glad they are giving us a way to save, but then prices go up. It is counterproductive. Also, it would have been nice to know about "Efficiency Vermont" before we moved in to our newly built house.

On each statement they tell you how much your patronage capital allocation is. I would like to start using some of that. If they could allow 50 bucks a month it would be nice, especially in the winter months. My fear is that they will put in the "Efficiency Vermont" program which most of us will never get the benefit of.

Capital Credit/Dividend – Negative Responses

The restoration for the outages always seems to be interesting and it doesn't seem to be based on who was out first or who has been out the longest. Further concern, since we're at the end of the spur, we seem to be last to get power restored regardless of how long we've been without. We are shareholders of the co-op and we have a cash value in the co-op and there has been no sharing of what is happening with our money. I am not sure why we have to pay for energy efficiency and are not getting any benefit from it. We seem to be using more energy efficiency and our bill is not decreasing, based on the additional charges beyond the energy usage.

Capital Credit/Dividend – Neutral Responses

I keep seeing on my bill the amount of my capital credits. I would like to get that money. The Directors have to vote to see if we get the money back.

On each statement they tell you how much your patronage capital allocation is. I would like to start using some of that. If they could allow 50 bucks a month it would be nice, especially in the winter months. My fear is that they will put in the "Efficiency Vermont" program which most of us will never get the benefit of.

Pay back the dividends or capital credits, whatever our co-op calls them. Give money back to the member owners instead of using it on new equipment.

Other Comments

We receive summer service only.

The whole survey is silly because you have a captive audience. We have no choice. So what difference does it make?

Appendix C: Questionnaire

2013 Vermont Electric Cooperative RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION AND CO-OP COMMITMENT SURVEY

ID # _____

Interviewer Code # _____

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 10 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*)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <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 |

2. 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

Satisfaction and Performance Ratings

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?
 1 Yes 2 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)*
 1 Much worse 4 Somewhat worse 3 As expected 2 Somewhat better 1 Much better

Electric Service Performance

8. 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 after b)*
- On ...
- | | Very Poor | | | | | Excellent | DK |
|--|-----------|---|---|---|---|-----------|----|
| a. Keeping blinks and momentary outages to a minimum <i>(limit_blink)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| b. Keeping the number of longer outages to a minimum <i>(limit_outg)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| c. The reliability of service and frequency of interruptions <i>(elec_svc)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| d. The restoration of power after an outage <i>(restore2)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| e. Keeping you informed on the status of outages <i>(outinfo2)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| f. Providing consistent voltage without surges or brownouts <i>(pwr_qual2)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |

Rates and Fees

9. 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 <i>(reasrate)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| b. Their monthly service fees <i>(svcfees)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| c. Providing accurate and easy to understand bills <i>(dearbil)</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | |
| d. Having convenient payment options <i>(payoptn)</i> | 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 | |
10. 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

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

11. 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.13)
12. (If yes) Have you used wattWatchers yet? 1 Yes 2 No
13. Have you heard of the energy efficiency utility in Vermont, called "Efficiency Vermont"? 1 Yes 2 No (Skip to Q15)
14. 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

15. 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 (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)

16. 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

17. 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

18. 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

Cooperative Commitment

19. 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

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

1 Yes 2 No (Skip to Q.22)

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

1 Yes 2 No

Communications

22. 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
23. 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
24. 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
25. Do you feel that the length of Co-op Life is 1 too short 2 too long 3 or about right?
26. 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 Q28*)
27. 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.*

28. Into which category does your age fall? (*ageresp*) 1 Under 25 3 35 to 44 5 55 to 64
 2 25 to 34 4 45 to 54 6 65 or older
29. How many people live in your household including yourself? (*hh_num*) 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more
30. 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
31. 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
32. 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

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

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

Additional Comments you would like to make about Vermont Electric Cooperative: _____

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