



March 2016 ATVG Newsletter

EPA Set to Declare Memphis Area in Compliance With Smog Standards

In a move that would give a boost to local economic-development efforts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency appears poised to declare the Memphis area in compliance with federal air-pollution standards.

EPA recently published proposals to reclassify Crittenden County and part of DeSoto County as being in attainment, or compliance, with the standard for ground-level ozone pollution. The two counties encompass the Arkansas and Mississippi portions of the local area that has categorized as nonattainment, or in violation of the standard.

The federal agency also has signaled its intention to reclassify the Tennessee portion of the nonattainment area, Shelby County, as being in compliance with pollution rules.

"EPA is proposing to determine that the Memphis, TN-MS-AR area is attaining the 2008 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standards," the agency said in a public notice published February 11th in the Federal Register. The proposals are subject to public comment periods ending in March.

Should the reclassification become final, the Memphis area will be much more attractive to industries seeking sites for new plants, said Bob Rogers, pollution-control manager for the Health Department. In areas that violate air standards, new and expanding industries face greater difficulty getting environmental permits. They are also subject to much more rigorous and costly pollution-control standards on air emissions.

"It's a very big deal. When we're in attainment, we get on more lists for expansions and businesses to move here," Rogers said. "It tells businesses that we have a clean, safe environment for their workers.

Reid Dulberger, chief executive of EDGE, the Economic Development and Growth Engine for Memphis and Shelby County, said the reclassification would make it more feasible for companies to move to the area. "This removes an impediment for a company that otherwise might have wanted to locate here," he said.

A component of smog, ozone is a noxious, lung-scarring substance created when the volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides emitted from motor vehicles, power plants and industries react in sunlight.

The Memphis area has been classified as in violation of the 2008 standard since it went into effect, but air-monitoring data from a three-year period from 2012 through 2014 found ozone levels to be well within the federal limit. Preliminary data from last year showed the area continuing to meet the standard, EPA said.

Health officials attribute the reduced ozone levels to cleaner-burning vehicles, fewer large industrial emitters and stricter pollution controls on factories. Shelby County's air stands to get even cleaner once the Tennessee Valley Authority's coal-burning Allen Fossil Plant, is replaced by a natural gas-fired generating facility in 2018.

Grout May Sound Low-Tech, TVA Explains Why It Isn't

Grout – a mixture of cement, sand and water, may sound rather “low-tech” but for the Boone Dam project, the mixture and application of grout requires some of the most high-tech equipment on the site, according to the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Special software allows engineers to view real-time data about grout that is being injected into previously drilled boreholes on the earthen embankment. “Grout IT” is the command center for this activity on site and allows engineers to examine data for the dozens of monitoring instruments installed on the dam and in the surrounding area.

"All of these tools help ensure the grout is properly doing its job while maintaining the safety and stability of the embankment," a TVA spokesman said. After months of investigation, TVA officials determined that repairing the earthen embankment of the dam would be done by placing a composite wall under the embankment and pumping grout into the dam.

Boone Lake levels were lowered to winter pool in October 2014 so the cause of the sediment seepage could be investigated and the water levels remained low throughout the summer, decreasing recreational use of the lake. In July, TVA officials announced that the lake likely will not be raised until at least 2020 because repairs are slated to take five to seven years to complete at a cost of \$200 million to \$300 million. Without repairs, TVA officials have said the dam could fail.

TVA officials reported in January 2016 that the repair project is on schedule to be completed in five to seven years as anticipated.

A related project underway at Boone Lake will create a habitat to help the fish population recover once the lake returns to full pool, also according to the Tennessee Valley Authority. Shannon O'Quinn, TVA Senior Water Resources Specialist, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency officials John Hammonds and Russell Young recently met with the Boone Lake Association to discuss the Fishery Habitat Enhancement Project. O'Quinn said in the statement that the project will plant hardy grasses, purple coneflowers and Black-eyed Susans to help prevent erosion while enhancing shoreline beauty. TWRA will plant the seed and provide the workers for the program that will initially target 400 acres.

“I personally fish on Boone every chance I can get.” O'Quinn said in the statement. The enhancement project is being jointly managed by TVA and TWRA.

Landowners who are interested in participating in the project can call O'Quinn at 423-467-3801.

Children's Museum to Host Exhibit of Norris Dam Photos

The Children's Museum of Oak Ridge will host the opening of an exhibition by Harvey Towns commemorating the 80th anniversary of the completion of Norris Dam. The opening reception was held Sunday March 6th, at the Children's Museum, 461 West Outer Drive.

On March 4, 1936, the outlet conduit gates in Norris Dam were closed and the storage of water in the reservoir began. This exhibit displays rare and historic photographs of the construction leading up to that event. Norris Dam, hydroelectric facility, was the first dam built by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In March 2015, a cache of original panorama photographs taken by contract photographer Rell Clements to document construction of the dam was discovered at the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge by Exhibit Director Margaret Allard.

Because of the age and fragile condition of the photographs, an effort to digitize and reproduce modern copies was begun. The scanning, editing and printing of the photographs was achieved through the generous contribution of time, equipment and technical knowledge of Edward Stickle of Oak Ridge, during a period of several months.

Harvey Towns, of Appalachian Frame Shop, designed, printed and assembled the exhibition, which combines the photographs belonging to the Children's Museum with his own collection. Harvey and his wife Judy have donated this exhibition to the museum for future display. Inspiration and support for this project was provided by photographer E. Wayne Nobles, of Oak Ridge.

Lecture Highlights Global Impact of TVA

East Tennessee has made a larger footprint in history than you might think. Tore Olsson, University of Tennessee assistant professor in the Department of History, held a discussion on Tuesday, March 1st titled “How East Tennessee Transformed the World: TVA’s Global Career after WWII” at The Grill at Highlands Row.

“There’s still a sense that the South is kind of a disconnected, secluded and excluded place from global occurrences, and I think that’s completely wrong, and the TVA is an important way to show that,” Olsson said of TVA’s widespread impact. Founded in 1933 as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) addressed rural poverty in the South. By building hydroelectric dams, the TVA generated electricity and made the rivers more navigable.

“It’s a huge local institution, headquartered in Knoxville,” Olsson said. “I examined how the TVA was globalized, which many people here are not familiar with.” Olsson explained that people from countries such as Mexico, India, Afghanistan, Colombia, and many others came to and continue to come to Knoxville to learn more about the TVA in order to imitate its success.

“There are huge concrete dams all over the world modeled after the ones found right here on the Tennessee River,” Olsson said.

Olsson’s lecture is part of an initiative by the Humanities Center called “Conversations and Cocktails,” hosted the first or second Tuesday of the month. Community members eat dinner and hear lectures on a variety of topics from UT faculty members.

“It’s an important outreach program,” Thomas Heffernan, director of the Humanities Center, said. “We want to give to the wider public what you have access to as a student.” As the TVA is a corporation with a globally recognized impact, it is important for community members to learn about its impact, according to Olsson. “It will push people to think about East Tennessee as something other than a world apart and how incredibly interconnected we are.”

Cash For Class: Alabama Legislators Start Session With School Gifts

Two Limestone County schools received welcome news from local legislators recently as more than \$27,000 of Tennessee Valley Authority's in-lieu-of-tax funds were awarded for improvement projects. Piney Chapel Elementary School was awarded \$17,788, which Principal Rebecca Valenzuela said would be used to update the library and school gymnasium.

Rep. Danny Crawford presented Valenzuela a check for \$7,788, which the principal said would go toward a new curtain for the gymnasium stage and new safety pads for the gym walls. Crawford's grant will also go toward new furniture for the lobby, which will make parents and visitors feel more welcome when they enter the school, she said.

Sen. Tim Melson, R-Florence, sent the school a check for \$10,000. Valenzuela said that money is to be used for making improvements to the library's circulation desk, media center and toward the purchase of new tables and chairs for the library. Valenzuela said. "We want to make the school the best it can be."

Limestone County Schools has poured money into making renovations at some of its older schools to make them safer and more energy efficient, including some extensive work done at Piney last year. Valenzuela said the work was important and the grants help to make some cosmetic changes that were necessary, but not a major priority. "Our school system has been working very hard," she said. "This just helps us take it a step further."

Aside from the changes to the building, a portion of the money is going toward building "go bags" for each teacher. The bags will contain a class list, information on who a student is allowed to leave campus with and copies of emergency procedures — basically, every document a teacher would need in case of an emergency where the teacher and students needed to quickly leave the classroom. Valenzuela said the bags will also contain a few first-aid supplies and some space blankets.

Crawford also presented a check worth \$12,000 to Ardmore High School toward the purchase of new band uniforms. Band Director Patrick Dailey said the money is a welcome gift, because the 18-year-old uniforms were coming apart while students were performing at games and parades. Crawford said he saw the grant as the fulfillment of a promise Dan Williams gave. Williams had talked with band boosters, including Missy Nix, about the need for new uniforms and the possibility of getting a TVA in-lieu-of-tax grant to help with the purchase. Williams died of leukemia before getting the opportunity to make the arrangements. Crawford said he promised to stay true to Williams' word when he was elected and called Nix four days after he was sworn in to tell her about the grant. He then personally added \$6,000 to the check.

Fishing Improves at Twin Lakes

Spring is in the air, and the warmer weather has improved fishing conditions at Kentucky and Barkley lakes for those anglers who can stay out of the wind. March has always been a windy month, but it is also a great month for fishing as the warm fronts move through the area.

Winds are generally out of the south, and fortunately most of the bays on Kentucky and Barkley lakes run east and west. The southern banks should be shielded from most of the wind. The Tennessee Valley Authority (Kentucky Lake) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Lake Barkley) are pulling a lot of water through the reservoirs, and the current on the main lakes will be above average to strong. The water levels at the dams are approximately 355.5 feet above sea level, but there is a large wall of water coming downstream with the water level at Savannah on Kentucky Lake above 370 feet.

Anglers attempting to fish the main river channel dropoffs will have to battle the wind and the current. Kentucky Lake fishing guide Steve McCadams reports that crappie anglers are catching a lot of under-the-length-limit fish with a few keeper-sized fish in the mix. "The dingy water often requires some loud-colored lead heads, ranging from fluorescent orange or green to red or pink. Tube or solid body skirts offering loud colors can be productive, as well."

He noted that finding schools of larger crappie has been difficult, but occasionally an angler will land a slab crappie weighing two pounds or more. That's good news for the spring fishing season! Bank anglers have been having some success around the Springville pumphouse casting jigs beneath bobbers around the pumphouse discharge and along the rip-rap levee.

Bass anglers have made some decent catches over the winter, McCadams reported. "Most of the successful anglers have been using their down-scan or side-imaging units to find deep schools of shad out on the main lake ledges or on the main river banks. Others have concentrated on drop-offs within the mouths of the bigger bays."

Swim baits, deep running crankbaits and large spoons have been the baits of choice. Spring will officially arrive on March 20, but you don't have to wait until then to get the jump on the fishing. The boat ramps will probably be full each weekend, and a lot of anglers will be enjoying the Twin Lakes fishing.

**Association of Tennessee Valley Governments
Spring Meeting - April 27, 28 & 29, 2016**

Paris Landing State Park
400 Lodge Road Buchanan TN 38222-4141
Phone: (731) 642-4311

April 27, 2016 (Central Time Zone)

ATVG Program

- 3:00 p.m.** Paris Landing State Park Check-in
5:30 p.m. Reception at home of Governor Ned McWherter, *hosted by TVA*
Board Member Mike McWherter
7:00 p.m. Dinner at MeoMio's Cajun & Sea Food – *van transportation will be provided*

April 28, 2016

Breakfast on your own-

- 9:00 a.m.** Depart for tour of TN Wildlife Refuge and Visitor Center *transportation provided*
11:30 a.m. Lunch at State Park Restaurant

ATVG Program

- 12:30 p.m.** Welcome and Introductions - *Don Stisher, ATVG President*
12:45 p.m. TVA Update - *Bert Robinson, TVA*
1:15 p.m. TVA Economic Development - *John Bradley, TVA*
1:45 p.m. TVA Environment Stewardship and Land Management - *TBA*
2:15 p.m. **Break**
2:30 p.m. Homeland Security Overview - *David Purkey*
3:15 p.m. Land-Between-the-Lakes - *USDA Forrest Service*

ATVG Board Meeting

- 4:00 p.m.** Business Agenda will be provided at meeting - *Mike Arms, ATVG Ex. Director*
5:00 p.m. Reception at Paris Landing State Park
6:30 p.m. Paris Fish Fry Dinner - *van transportation will be provided*

April 29, 2016: Optional Events, Downtown Paris

- 8:00 a.m.** Local/State Officials Breakfast
10:00 a.m. Paris Fish Fry Grand Parade

Please help us make necessary arrangements by letting us know if you will be attending. Send the enclosed registration form by email to: registration@atvg.org or by U.S. mail to: ATVG, P.O. Box 3578, Clarksville, TN 37043.

Association of Tennessee Valley Governments Meeting Registration Form

Registration Fee: \$40.00 for members and affiliates; \$75.00 for non-members

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Registration Fee for spouse is included/No additional charge

Company/Organization: _____

Full Address: _____

Make checks payable to: Association of Tennessee Valley Governments- P.O. Box 3578 – Clarksville, TN 37043

Ag-based Commercial Port is Worth Pursuing

Most often when government officials get involved in economic development, they focus their efforts on manufacturing plants or retail development. Those are two very important legs of a broad-based economy. But it's a refreshing twist when the efforts involve one of the oldest forms of industry in the south: agriculture.

The Colbert County Commission and Extension Service in Alabama are to be commended for their efforts to study the feasibility of using the Colbert Fossil Plant as a commercial port specializing in agricultural commodities. The Tennessee Valley Authority plans to shut down the plant in April. Converting the plant into a port that could handle timber and grain is not as farfetched as it might seem.

The former power plant is located on the Tennessee River. It has two large cranes on site that were used to offload the coal burned at the plant. The 3,000 feet of available port area could easily handle the barge traffic required for grain and timber shipments. Preliminary results of a study by Auburn University have indicated the fossil plant could be repurposed into a commercial port. There are still a ton of questions to be answered. In fact, Colbert commissioners have asked Auburn's study team to dig deeper into how the port could tap into the thriving timber market that exists in northwest Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi.

It will be up to a month before the study will be completed. Regardless of the final recommendation, it's good to know our government leaders are still connected to the roots of Southern industry.

Federal Budget for Fiscal 2017 Does not Raise Idea of Selling TVA

This year, unlike in a number of years in the recent past, the idea of privatizing the Tennessee Valley Authority is not mentioned in the president's proposed federal budget for the next fiscal year. In a section giving an overview of federal agencies, the Obama administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2017, which was released in early March, did not mention TVA, as it had over the past few years. TVA's annual financial reporting information is presented in the budget's appendix, as in past years, but there is no suggestion this year that the White House thinks that it would be a good idea to sell the federally owned utility.

The idea of selling TVA has come up periodically, over the years, Gail Rymer, Director of TVA Public Relations and Corporate Information, told Public Power Daily on February 17th. Last year, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2016 included language that ended the strategic review that was begun in 2013, and recognized steps TVA had taken to improve its operating and financial performance, Rymer stated.

At that time, TVA Chief Financial Officer John Thomas pointed out that although TVA is owned by the federal government, it does not receive taxpayer dollars and its debt is not taxpayer funded. "TVA remains financially healthy, and we continue to improve our overall financial metrics," he said. Congress established TVA in 1933 in the states of Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia, Mississippi and Georgia. Today, TVA provides low-cost electric power at wholesale to consumer-owned utilities that serve more than 9 million people in an 80,000-square-mile territory.

Make your plans now to attend the Spring, Summer and Fall Association of Tennessee Valley Governments (ATVG) meetings.

ATVG 2016 Schedule:

- Spring Meeting in Paris, TN April 27 & 28, 2016
Paris Landing State Park
400 Lodge Road
Buchanan TN 38222-4141
- Summer Meeting in Decatur, AL July 20 & 21, 2016
Double Tree of Decatur
1101 6th AV N.E. Decatur, AL 35601
- Fall Meeting in Gatlinburg, TN, October 18, 19 & 20, 2016
Clarion Inn and Suites

ATVG REPORT:

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Clarksville, TN 37043-3578

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ATVG is a 501(c)(4), not-for-profit, public interest organization. ATVG advocates for the interests of county and city/town governments residing within the seven-state TVA region and their partners in the public and private sectors.

For details about ATVG's mission and program of work, visit us on line at: www.atvg.org