



September 2021 ATVG Newsletter

ATVG 2021 Annual Meeting

Please make your plans now to attend our Annual Meeting on October 26th at the Courtyard Marriott in downtown Gatlinburg. We will begin the day with an 11:00 A.M. Board and general membership meeting which will include the election of our 2022 officers and new board members. We will finalize our 2022 meeting schedule which includes a July 27/28 meeting in Oxford at the “Inn at Ole Miss” and dinner on Oxford Square.

At our meeting in Gatlinburg, lunch will be served outside the courtyard at noon (spouses welcome) and our full program kicks off at 1:00. In addition to our TVA update and some timely TVA presentations, we will also have two outstanding guest presentations. We will receive an update on the Tennessee Riverline Partnership by its director, Brad Collett. Also, Presidential Historian Alan Lowe will provide an insider’s perspective on Presidential Libraries. Alan has served as Director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and the George H. W. Bush Library. We will conclude our day with a 5:00 social hour followed by a “Country Hoedown” dinner. As always, spouses are invited to our social hour and dinner.

This year we are requesting our members bring a local government guest. It can be a neighboring county or city official or any perspective member you wish to invite. These guests can attend at our low membership registration rate of \$100. We think this will provide a great opportunity to expose some of your peers to our organization.

So please make your hotel reservation soon (Downtown Gatlinburg Marriott 865-436-2008) since our room block will fill up quickly. Also invite a local government guest to join us. We need your registration forms early to ensure accurate head counts for our meals. The registration form can be found on the insert pages of this newsletter.

See you in Gatlinburg!



TVA Implodes Coal Plant for Cleaner Energy

A string of dynamite charges toppled Colbert Fossil Plant's six smokestacks recently as America's largest public power utility successfully imploded its fifth coal-generation asset since 2017. The Tennessee Valley Authority leveled the stacks and a portion of 50s-era landmark as part of a \$43 million demolition initiative that will clear the Tuscumbia site for future development and cleaner energy.

All demolished plant materials are being recycled.

"It's been a three-year process to get to this point," said Roger Waldrep, TVA Vice –President of Major Projects. "As we approach the finish line, safety is our primary concern. I'm proud of the team because they were able to complete the implosion without any issues."

Former Colbert plant manager Steve Hargrove, now retired from TVA, has lived in the shadow of the stacks since he was a child. He worked 25 years at the plant and said today is the first time in his life he's seen a bare skyline from his bluff home overlooking the Tennessee River.

Hargrove now serves on the board of directors of the Shoals Economic Development Authority and is also the general manager of Sheffield Utilities, the local power company that serves the City of Sheffield and rural Colbert County.

"I don't know anything but Colbert," Hargrove said. He explained how customer demand for cleaner, cheaper power is making investments in coal alternatives necessary.

"I'm sad to see it go, but I guess the guy who invented the horse and buggy had to have a sad day too."

In July, TVA announced it will invest \$500 million to add to the existing natural gas power-generating units that are also located on the Colbert 1,300-acre reservation. New gas units are about 70% more efficient than TVA's aging coal plants. As TVA continues to retire more fossil plants, natural gas is providing a cleaner alternative while the utility makes upgrades to its 109-unit hydroelectric fleet and strengthens its solar-generation portfolio.



Rail Museum to Preserve Rare Locomotive from TVA

A rare Fairbanks-Morse locomotive has a new home at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga, TN courtesy of TVA. Built in 1958, the locomotive is one of the few surviving engines of its type.

“This locomotive holds a unique place in history for TVA and the region, and we’re excited that it will be well-preserved in its new home,” said TVA Supply Chain Vice President Laura Campbell. TVA used the Fairbanks locomotive to carry coal to its Gallatin Fossil Plant until it was retired in 1997; when coal shipments shifted from train to barge delivery.

In 2019, TVA started to look at opportunities to preserve this piece of history. “I’m happy this train now has a second life,” said Travis Patterson, Gallatin Fossil Plant Manager. “It has an incredible story, and I hope it will power a new generation’s imagination at the museum.” TVA used cranes to lift the partially disassembled Fairbanks-Morse on to a specifically-equipped truck to travel to Chattanooga.

“The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum is honored that TVA would place this locomotive in our collection for future display and possible operation,” said Museum President Tim Andrews. “Our mission is to educate the public on the role of railroads in developing the Tennessee Valley region, and what better example than this locomotive to showcase the intertwined efforts of the railroads and the supply of electricity by TVA in powering our economy.”

The locomotive will be on display in Chattanooga as one of the only nine Fairbanks-Morse locomotives left today – just in time for the Museum’s 60th Anniversary celebration beginning in October.



TVA Board Extends \$220M Pandemic Recovery Credit, Community Support

Based on the continued operational and financial performance of Tennessee Valley Authority employees this past year and the strength of the Tennessee Valley public power model, the TVA Board of Directors took significant actions at its August meeting to further extend support to communities, businesses, and people across the region challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing ongoing pandemic recovery efforts, the Board approved an extension of the Pandemic Recovery Credit through fiscal 2022 and requested a proposal to explore the potential of a further extension through the following year. First approved a year ago, the initiative provides a monthly 2.5% wholesale power cost credit to each of the 153 local power companies TVA serves, as well as TVA directly served customers and large customers served by local power companies. For fiscal 2021, the credit will be about \$200 million and extending the program through fiscal 2022 is expected to provide an additional \$220 million.

The Board also approved the continuation of the Community Care Fund into the new fiscal year, providing up to \$5 million in additional TVA funds. This brings the total TVA contribution to \$9 million to support groups that continue to help those most in need in local communities. “TVA was created to benefit the public good and has continued to build on that clear mission,” said Jeff Lyash, TVA President and CEO. “Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our employees, we continue to deliver value to those we serve. Because of TVA’s strong operational and financial performance, we have an opportunity and responsibility to use these resources to provide continued support for customers, businesses, and communities.”

The Board also commended the success of TVA and its local power company partners in reliably delivering vital energy to the region during challenging weather conditions in February and over the past three weeks, when TVA met some of its highest summer peak energy demands in the past decade.

“The public power system served by TVA and local power companies is uniquely capable of handling such events through a combination of systematic planning, continually monitoring weather forecasts to anticipate need and investing for the future,” said Lyash. “Such efforts allow us to demonstrate the four dimensions of value that make public power a unique strategic advantage for the region: resiliency, reliability, environmental performance and cost.

“Even under difficult circumstances, we can consistently deliver some of the nation’s lowest-cost, most reliable, and cleanest energy. The diversity of our generation portfolio and resilient transmission system helps ensure the residents and businesses we serve are insulated from the kinds of price spikes and power shortages seen in other parts of the country.”

TVA remains a national leader in carbon reduction. Through the end of June, nearly 60% of TVA’s energy was delivered from carbon-free sources. TVA’s overall carbon emissions at the end of the last fiscal year were 63% below 2005 levels. To further support carbon reductions, TVA announced its intent



to convert up to half of its fleet vehicles to electric, while continuing to lead a broad vehicle charging network across the entire region through the Electric Highway Coalition. The TVA team's performance

also enabled the Board to approve the fiscal 2022 budget that maintains a stable wholesale power rate while continuing to invest for future regional needs and maintaining a focus on reduced debt levels.

"TVA's operational and financial performance through the end of the third quarter has been outstanding and has allowed us to maintain a lower effective wholesale rate today than we had 10 years ago," said John Thomas, TVA chief financial and strategy officer. "Just in the past two years, effective wholesale power rates have fallen by more than 6% and retail rates in TVA's service area were down 4% since 2019. Today, nearly 80% of those served by large utilities in the U.S. pay more for power than those served by TVA and our local power company partners.

"Combined with a debt level that is the lowest in more than 30 years, our strong financial position gives us confidence in maintaining stable rates through at least 2030 while preserving our ability to invest in our existing facilities and future capabilities, and continuing to support the people in communities in our region," added Thomas.



ATVG Meeting

Fall 2021

October 25th & 26th (Eastern Time Zone)

**Downtown Gatlinburg Courtyard Marriott (ATVG room block available)
865-436-2008**

October 25th

- **6:00 p.m. Early Arrivals Dinner at the Park Grill**
*RSVP Required: *see registration form below*

October 26th

- **11:00 a.m. Annual Board Meeting and Officer's Election** *(Separate agenda will be provided)*
- **Noon: Courtyard Lunch**
- **1:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction of New Officers** - *Larry Chesser; ATVG Board President*
- **1:15 p.m. TVA Update** - *Bert Robinson; TVA*
- **1:45 p.m. TVA Economic Development Presentation** - *Heidi Smith; TVA*
- **2:30 p.m. Tennessee Riverline Partnership** - *Brad Collett; Director (UT College of Architecture & Design)*
- **3:00 p.m. Break**
- **3:15 p.m. Great Smokey Mountain National Park Update And Economic Impact** - *GSMNP Deputy Superintendent Alan Sumeriski*
- **4:00 p.m. Presidential Libraries** - *Alan Lowe; Presidential Historian and Executive Director, ASME*
- **4:45 p.m. Wrap-up and Announcements** - *Mike Arms: ATVG Executive Director*
- **5:00 p.m. Social Hour at Marriott**
- **6:30 p.m. Dinner a "Country Hoedown" at Calhoun's**

Plan Ahead: July 27 & 28, 2022, ATVG Meeting in Oxford, MS at "Inn at Ole Miss"

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: \$100.00 for members and affiliates; \$200.00 for non-members

Name: _____

* Will you be attending the Early Arrivals Dinner on October 25th? YES: _____ NO: _____

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

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Hydro Remote Control System Gets a Reboot

TVA operates a majority of our hydro fleet, 109 units, remotely from the Hydro Dispatch Control Center, and the control system is due for an upgrade. “We’ve completed nine plants, a total of 49 units, to date with a new control system,” said Robby Floyd, HDCC manager. “Just like a computer operating system needs frequent updates, our remote system needs an update every 20 years.”

Each plant receives both hardware and software upgrades that can take anywhere from two to four weeks depending on the size of the plant. During the upgrade, the HDCC doesn’t have remote control of the units and must rely on technicians at the site as they start and stop units to test and troubleshoot the new upgrades. Sites are manned 24/7 by the hydro technicians during this time period since the HDCC does not have automatic control of the sites during upgrades.

“We just completed the upgrade at Wilson Hydro, which is TVA’s largest conventional plant with 21 units,” said Floyd. “We hope to complete the entire hydro fleet by FY2023.” TVA is investing \$20 million to upgrade these systems that are crucial to operating our generating fleet and managing flood control. These upgrades, along with skilled employees at the dams, will help the hydro fleet be more efficient and reliable.

“These updates will help continue the reliable and remote operations of our hydro fleet for years to come,” said Floyd. “An investment in our hydro fleet is an investment in TVA’s future,” said David Bowling, vice president, Gas, Hydro & Integration. “We are focused on cleaner energy and our hydro generation delivers just that to our 10 million customers across the Valley.”



Better Than Plastic: TVA Land Grows Grass for Biodegradable Bowls, Plates

A forward-thinking plan with historic roots is taking shape on Watts Bar Reservoir. TVA Natural Resources and Genera, Inc. are partnering on a project that will produce a trifecta of good outcomes: more diverse plant communities, increased wildlife benefits, and eco-friendly by-products

TVA's Natural Resource Management (NRM) is converting a portion of its managed lands on Watts Bar to native grasses and forbs (flowering plants) that will provide higher quality benefits for wildlife. This is being achieved through a partnership with Genera, Inc., an agricultural industry that grows native warm-season grass to harvest for biodegradable, market-ready items including plates, bowls and cups.

"TVA has a long history of commitment to local agriculture across the Valley, but this project is a little different from TVA's traditional agricultural endeavors," says R.J. Moore, TVA Natural Resources senior specialist. The idea, native grass used to manufacture bio-degradable products, was intriguing. When the Vonore, Tennessee, company reached out to TVA about leasing the land, Moore was impressed with their plan.

Genera has been researching its green technique for many years, expanding its opportunities across the Valley. The partnership aligns with the TVA Natural Resource Plan under the Grass and Agricultural Land Management Program to enhance biological diversity on TVA's non-forested lands. "Some parcels have limitations for public use, due to proximity and property allocation, so we explore opportunities with the highest benefit. In this instance, that benefit is through a local partnership agreement," explains Moore. Not only is this a cost savings for TVA, but with environmental benefits, there is an avenue for onsite research. The research could provide vital information about quality land management methodologies and/or sustainability for public lands.

Currently, the project is in its second growing season on about 60 acres of switchgrass for production and 20 acres of other native grasses and forbs. Moore suggests looking for the vibrant colors when approaching the reservation. As summer turns to fall, some native fall flowers should begin showing, and multiple species of bees, butterflies, birds and other wildlife should be visible.

"Don't forget your binoculars and camera!" Moore advises.



Applications Open for K-12 STEM Education Grants

The Tennessee Valley Authority's STEM Classroom Grant Program for science, technology, engineering and math learning is now open for applications through October 18th.

The program funds STEM learning projects in classrooms and schools in TVA's seven-state service area and is sponsored by TVA in partnership with the TVA retiree organization Bicentennial Volunteers Inc.

"TVA is proud to support educators and students to pursue excellence in STEM subjects," said Jeannette Mills, TVA executive vice president and chief external relations officer. "We are building the energy system of the future, and our region's future workforce must be prepared to continue innovating for the decades ahead."

Last year's program awarded \$800,000 in grants to schools across the Tennessee Valley. Teachers can apply for funding up to \$5,000 for STEM projects with preference given to applications that explore TVA's primary area of focus: environment, energy, economic and career development, and community problem-solving.

Eligible applicants are teachers or school administrators in public or private schools, grades K-12. Schools must be in the TVA service area and receive electricity from a local power distributor served by TVA.

Visit the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network website to learn more about grant requirements, see examples of previously funded projects, and apply for funding.

Contact:
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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.