



MEDIA RELEASE

Office of the County Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 10, 2025

Anderson, Roane counties, Oak Ridge, spotlighted at ATVG summer meeting

OAK RIDGE, TENN.—Anderson County, Roane County, and the City of Oak Ridge were on display as the Association of Tennessee Governments (ATVG) Conference showcased area assets and talent at the two-day summer ATVG Conference held in June.

Welcoming attendees from six of the seven states that make up the Tennessee Valley, the conference focused on energy, with a special emphasis on the history and future of nuclear.

“Our local government leaders from the entire valley were welcomed by the greater Oak Ridge community,” ATVG Executive Director Mike Arms said. “The tours allowed us to see projects and sites that have been discussed often in our previous meetings. ATVG is a strong supporter of TVA’s nuclear power and the SMR role in 'new nuclear'. At our Oak Ridge meeting we were all exposed first-hand to the nation’s nuclear renaissance,” Arms added.

Attendees were welcomed by Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank and Roane County Executive Wade Creswell at the American Museum of Science and Energy.

“We were excited to welcome local government officials to share some of our history and future, as well as the collaboration, partnerships, and alignment that are attracting innovation and investment to Tennessee and the greater Tennessee valley area,” said Mayor Frank, who currently serves as President of the ATVG.

“It was such an honor to join Mayor Frank and host such an incredible group of leaders in Anderson and Roane Counties,” Roane County Executive Wade Creswell said. “It was also such an honor to tell the story of the Oak Ridge Corridor and show the incredible work happening here every day. Our future is incredibly bright, and leaders from across the Tennessee Valley are now partners in our mission thanks to the work of ATVG.”

Attendees from across the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi had a full line up that included: a presentation on the US Presidency by AMSE Director Alan Lowe; and tours, led by Oak Ridge Historian Ray Smith, of New Hope Center, Y-12 (including a briefing on the UPF project), Oak Ridge National Lab and the Graphite Reactor, Bull Run Steam Plant, TVA’s Clinch River Site for proposed Small Modular Reactor, as well as viewing the TRISO-X, Orano, and Kairos Power sites.

The conference was highlighted by presentations from Stephen Streiffer, Director of ORNL, and Jeff Smith, retired. Smith served as a former Deputy of Operations as well as Interim Lab Director for ORNL, and he also served on the TVA Board from 2017-2022.

“America must lead the world in innovation and technology breakthroughs, which includes accelerating the work of the Department’s national laboratories,” U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright said during a March 2025 visit to ORNL. In keeping with Wright’s statement, Streiffer’s presentation at the June ATVG conference highlighted ORNL’s efforts of “Increasing Competitiveness, Accelerating Innovation.” Smith’s presentation focused on the nuclear renaissance, including several recommendations to achieve success.

Other presentations included: a Welcome to the City of Oak Ridge by Mayor Warren Gooch; a presentation on state of the system by TVA’s Bert Robinson; Presentation on Fusion and Governor Bill Lee’s Nuclear Council by Ron Parsons, Radioactive Material Licensing Manager, Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation; TVA Economic Development by Derrick Collins, TVA Small Modular Reactor update by Joe Shea of the TVA Clinch River Project; and Seven States over Corporation presentation by Betsey McCall, President and CEO of Seven States.

The two-day conference wrapped up with a reception with the East Tennessee Economic Council and dinner remarks by Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs, and American Nuclear Society President Dr. Hash Hashemian.

ATVG represents the nearly 1,000 local governments that reside within the seven-state TVA region. Representing local governments in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, ATVG’s mission is to serve the mutual interests of local governments and their partners in both the public and private sectors at the national, regional, and state levels.

Cutlines: (Photos by Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank-ATVG President)

Jeff Smith presents a slide stating that “TVA’s Clinch River SMR Site is the nation’s lowest risk and quickest approach to bring new nuclear onto the grid at a cost the system can afford.”

Gene Sievers, Vice President of Production and Operations for CNS, gives conference attendees a briefing on past and current operations at Y-12 during their visit to New Hope Center in Oak Ridge.