



## TREEDC Newsletter July 2023



### TREEDC Member Paris, Tennessee Wins Statewide Green Leadership Award



Paris Tennessee Mayor, City Manager and Board of Commissioners receive award.

Congratulations to TREEDC Member City of Paris for being awarded a statewide award in Green Leadership by the Tennessee Municipal League. The City of Paris recently implemented significant modifications for programmable thermostats, movement sensors for lights, LED lighting in buildings and updated HVAC systems.

Over the past several years the City of Paris has worked to improve walkability in the community. Paris has applied for and been awarded three grants to date totaling \$2,596,560 for construction of new sidewalks within the city. The first of the three grants were a Transportation Alternative Grant which has recently been completed. It connects four schools and links to existing sidewalks that lead to the main retail thoroughfare. The new sidewalk is used daily and has been extremely well received in the community.

The City of Paris is proud to be connected to the Paris Board of Public Utility (BPU) grid that is now powered with a portion of renewable energy. Citizens of Paris will realize electric rate stability due to the expected \$300,000 in annual power cost savings. Local industry will also be able to claim Renewable Energy Certificates to assist with carbon reduction goals. Paris hosted a prior TREEDC Forum back in 2014.

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## TREEDC Member Cities Algood and Harriman Wins Tennessee Municipal League Statewide Awards

Congratulations to TREEDC member cities Algood and Harriman for winning Municipal Excellence Awards at the Tennessee Municipal League (TML) Annual Conference held in Nashville. Algood was recognized for its community development efforts in 2022. Algood implemented fleet management and safety measures to monitor its Sanitation and Fire vehicles. The city also completed its enhancements to its water system.

Harriman won a small city progress award for its work on parks and recreation, excellence in police services and community events. The city successfully started and completed many projects to help build the quality of life for its citizens.



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## Tennessee Officials “Flip Switch” on 100 MW Obion County Solar Power Project to Power Google Data Centers



*Left to right: Kathleen Campanella, Excelsior Energy Capital; Ed Jackson III (Rep. David Kustoff); Mark Yates, TVA; Nick Kistenmacher (Sen. Marsha Blackburn); Christopher Moakley, Excelsior; Thomas Gamble, Google; Johan Vanhee, Origis Energy and Ryan Kelley, Wanzek Construction Inc flip the switch.*

Representatives from several businesses and utility groups ceremoniously flipped the switch to celebrate the completion and activation of the Skyhawk Solar project, a 100 megawatt energy project in northwestern Tennessee that will power a pair of Google data centers in Tennessee and Alabama.

Skyhawk Solar is located southeast of Union City, near the Everett-Stewart Regional Airport. Minnesota-based Excelsior Energy Capital owns the project and Florida-based company Origis Energy developed and constructed the arrays under an alliance with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Origis Services will be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the project.

Under a power purchase agreement with Excelsior, Google is purchasing the renewable energy credits generated from Skyhawk Solar to add to its energy portfolio. That will benefit two Google data centers in the Southeast: one in nearby Clarksville, and the other in Jackson County, Alabama. The project was announced in 2020 under TVA's Green Invest Program, which allows companies in TVA's region, like Google, to purchase renewable energy credits and invest in green energy resources. The project is also a job creator. Around 300 people worked on the project at the peak of its construction, and as many as eight people will be employed full-time to help maintain the project's operations.

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## Petros PACE Financing Discusses Commerical Energy Efficiency Opportunities in Tennessee



*Left to right: Madison Rollings, Chattanooga green/spaces, Nicole Robben, Petros PACE Financing and Warren Nevad, MTAS*

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Nicole Robben, Vice President of Petros PACE Financing recently gave a presentation at Chattanooga green|spaces ([Home — green|spaces \(greenspaceschattanooga.org\)](https://greenspaceschattanooga.org)) event on July 12, 2023. Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy + Resiliency (C-PACER) is an innovative financing mechanism to help commercial, industrial, agricultural, and multi-family buildings become more efficient and resilient.

According to Robben, C-PACER does not use any government funds, it is a loan agreement between a private lender and the property owner, like a mortgage or home improvement loan. The unique part about C-PACER financing is that the county records the loan as a lien on the property, which means that if the property owner sells the building, the assessment stays with the building (unless the payoff is part of the sale agreement). Primary benefits include increases in net operating income (NOI); investments to attract and retain tenants; the ability to pass costs on to tenants who benefit from corresponding utility savings; and favorable accounting treatment as the building owner has no long-term liability.

Examples of projects that can be financed using C-PACER include:

- Energy and water efficiency
- Electrification improvement (eliminates fossil fuel combustion)
- Renewable energy
- Electric vehicle charging
- Seismic hardening
- Fire detection and suppression
- Flood readiness
- Stormwater management
- Energy storage

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## Rural Electric Co-Ops to Receive \$10.7B in USDA Funds for Clean Energy Grants, Loans

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the availability of nearly \$11 billion in grants and loan opportunities that will help rural energy and utility providers bring affordable, reliable clean energy to their communities across the country. This represents the single largest investment in rural electrification since President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act into law in 1936.



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Funding is available through two programs under the Inflation Reduction Act, which makes the nation’s largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be opening a Letter of Interest process for the Empowering Rural America (“New ERA”) program, which makes \$9.7 billion available to eligible rural electric cooperatives to deploy renewable energy systems, zero-emission and carbon capture systems. In addition to New ERA, USDA will also be opening a Letter of Interest process for the Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) program, which makes \$1 billion available in partially forgivable loans to renewable-energy developers and electric service providers, including municipals, cooperatives, and investor-owned and Tribal utilities to help finance large-scale solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydropower projects and energy storage.

Electrification Act into law in 1936. This announcement is part of the Investing in America agenda to grow the American economy from the bottom up and the middle out by rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure, driving more than \$435 billion in private-sector manufacturing investments, creating good-paying jobs, and building a clean-

More information on the **New ERA program** is available at [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/empowering-rural-america-new-era-program](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/empowering-rural-america-new-era-program). Rural electric cooperatives, including current and previous USDA borrowers, are eligible for funding. To apply, eligible entities must submit a Letter of Interest between July 31 and Aug. 31, 2023. More information on the **PACE program** is available at [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program).

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## TVA Celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Congratulations to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May. TVA was established with the signing of the TVA Act by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on May 18, 1933. To kick off our celebrations on the actual anniversary, TVA employees and retirees participated in a “Day of Service,” volunteering in more than 150 projects at agencies and non-profit organizations across our region.

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TVA's employees serve the people of our seven-state region through energy production, environmental stewardship, and economic development. This three-fold mission of service has stood the test of time and is as relevant today as ever before. TVA welcomes the public to join in its 90th celebration, which includes:

- Opportunities for the public to tour several historic dams. “Built for the People” tours are being offered on a limited basis at Kentucky Dam, Norris Dam, Pickwick Dam, Fontana Dam, Chickamauga Dam, Wilson Dam and Raccoon Mountain from June into September. Anyone interested in joining a tour can sign up at [www.tva.com/90](http://www.tva.com/90). Names will be drawn at random for each of the tours and individuals will be notified prior to the dates of the tours.
- TVA is also bringing the festivities to communities throughout the summer. Look for TVA booths at various locations. For more information and a complete schedule of the anniversary activities visit [www.tva.com/90](http://www.tva.com/90).

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### **TVA Awards \$2.6 Million to Help Make Schools More Energy Efficient**

Schools across the Southeast region will have more money back into their budgets and cleaner air within their facilities thanks to \$2.6 million in grants from the Tennessee Valley Authority. These grants are awarded as part of TVA’s School Uplift program, which is expected to save sixty-four schools across six states including Tennessee an average of 10% on their energy bills this year. The grants ranged from \$10,000 to \$410,000 and the amount was dependent on the score each school achieved by cutting their energy waste. The grant scoring also incorporates a needs-based assessment of each school’s facilities to determine which buildings could achieve the greatest energy savings. In 2021, TVA launched the School Uplift program to invest in students’ futures by offering energy efficiency training and grants that not only reduce energy costs but improve the quality of the learning environment. To date, TVA has invested \$7.28 million and has helped 118 schools save on their energy bills. The 2023-2024 School Uplift program will kick off this summer with 125 new schools already enrolled and on their way to saving energy and helping students across the Valley thrive. School Uplift is one of many TVA programs focused on improving outcomes for students in the region. For more information click here: [School Uplift - Helping schools save on energy - TVA EnergyRight](#).



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## TREEDC Member the Nature Conservancy Appoints New Director



The Nature Conservancy has named Laurel Creech as State Director in Tennessee. Creech comes to TNC from the Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County, where she helped create and serve as the Assistant Director for Metro Nashville's Division of Sustainability. While there, Creech oversaw environmental initiatives including renewable energy, energy efficiency, green infrastructure, waste reduction practices and an education program. Under her leadership, the Division received two Governor's Environmental Stewardship awards and four U.S. Green Building Council Impact Tennessee awards.

Creech's experience and involvement with various environmental and sustainability groups position TNC to continue making progress in protecting Tennessee's land and water. Creech previously served on the Board of Directors of the Nashville Parks Foundation, Cumberland Trails Conference and the Tennessee Nature Academy. She also served on the advisory boards of Urban Green Lab, Walk/Bike Nashville and Tennessee Women in Green, which she co-founded in 2008. Congratulations, Laurel.

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## UT Martin Names New Chancellor

The University of Tennessee at Martin has hired Dr. Yancy Freeman as the next chancellor to lead the University of Tennessee at Martin. Dr. Freeman replaces TREEDC Chairman Dr. Keith Carver who was recently appointed as the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture earlier this year.

Freeman has served at UT Chattanooga for the past 25 years in various admissions, recruitment, and enrollment roles. A first-generation college graduate, Freeman completed an undergraduate degree in political science, a master's degree in public administration, and a doctorate in learning and leadership from UT Chattanooga. He currently serves on the board of the Public Education Foundation and has previously served as a member of 100 Black Men of Chattanooga, and on the Boards at Chattanooga Christian School and Youth YMCA Leadership Council. Freeman is also a 2020 graduate of the UT System's Executive Leadership Institute. Congratulations, Dr. Freeman.



*Dr. Yancy Freeman, UT-Martin Chancellor*

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## **TenneSEIA Hosts Upcoming Annual Solar and Energy Storage Conference**



TREEDC is a proud partner of the upcoming TenneSEIA Tennessee Valley Solar and Energy Storage Conference on October 18-19, 2023, at the Downtown Chattanooga Hotel Curio Collection by Hilton. The focus of the Tennessee Valley Solar Conference is to bring together people who are interested in growing solar business opportunities in the Tennessee Valley to discuss strategies, market trends, and policies that impact the solar industry. Attendees will participate in in-depth and forward-looking discussions on TVA policy and processes and evolving technical opportunities facing the industry in the Tennessee Valley region. Registration may be accessed at [Conference – TenneSEIA Solar Association](#)



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## Mark Your Calendars for TREEDC Conference on November 16, 2023

TREEDC will hold its annual conference and awards reception on November 16, 2023, at 37 Cedar Restaurant in Cookeville. The conference will start at 1 pm. Attendees will hear presentations from municipal sustainability professionals, energy services providers, PACE clean energy initiatives and updates from TDEC Office of Energy Programs and USDA Rural Development funding opportunities. The awards reception will begin at 5 pm. More information and registration details will be provided in early September.



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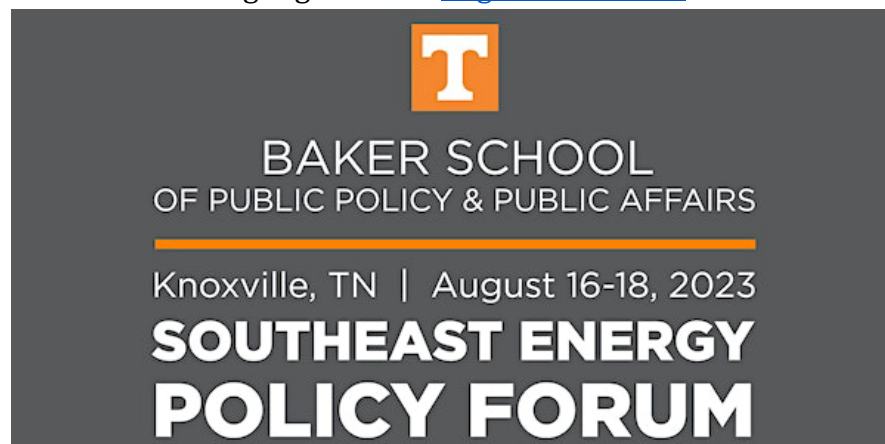
## UT Southeast Energy Policy Forum: August 16-18, 2023

This inaugural event hosted by The Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs at UTK on August 16 – 18, 2023 will provide educational content and networking opportunities for private and public sector leaders as they navigate new energy markets, decarbonization trends, demand-side technologies, and transportation electrification. A government official rate is available.

A few of the featured speakers during the event will include:

- Phil Bredesen, former Governor of Tennessee and founding chairman of Silicon Ranch Corporation and Clearloop
- Jeff Lyash, President, and CEO of the Tennessee Valley Authority
- Shameek Konar, former CEO of Pilot Company
- Michael W. Howard, Ph.D., CEO Emeritus of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and Chair of the World Energy Council
- Russell Gold, award-winning investigative journalist at Texas Monthly and formerly The Wall Street Journal, and author of The Boom and Superpower on the American energy revolution

Use code SEPF2023GOVT during registration. [Register to attend](#)



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## UT-CTAS Environment Management Consultant Kim Raia Moderates TAEBC Solar Energy Panel



*Kim Raia, CTAS Environment Management Consultant*

The Tennessee Advance Energy Business Council (TAEBC) recently organized a Join Solar Energy for Economic Development webinar. The event featured speakers from Silicon Ranch Corporation, the Nature Conservancy, the City of Ripley, the Paris Board of Public Utilities, the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce, and Bradley. County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) Environment Management Consultant moderated the solar energy panel discussion which featured discussion and examples of how public and private partners leverage solar energy to enable best land use, maximize economic impact and benefits to the community. For more information about the webinar click here: [Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council — Tennessee Community Leaders Examine Solar Energy for Economic Development - Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council \(tnadvancedenergy.com\)](https://tnadvancedenergy.com)

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## 2023 U.S. Energy and Employment Report

The United States Department of Energy (U.S. DOE) recently released the [2023 U.S. Energy and Employment Report \(USEER\)](#). USEER is a comprehensive study designed to track and understand employment within key energy sectors. The analysis shows that energy jobs grew 3.8% from 2021 to 2022, from a total number of 7.8 million energy jobs in 2021 to 8.1 million in 2022.