



# TREEDC Newsletter

## April 2024



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### TREEDC Releases Annual Report



*TREEDC members provides emergency disaster fanny packs to Ata. Maria Elementary School in Pampanga Philippines*

TREEDC recently completed its annual report for 2023. To view this report visit: [annual\\_report.pdf \(treedc.us\)](#). During 2023, TREEDC hosted an annual conference and awards program with Tennessee Tech University. TREEDC established the annual Dr. Joe Johnson Legacy Award in honor of our late Chairman. TREEDC worked with Cooley Public Strategies to inform the Tennessee General Assembly about the economic and environmental benefits of green stormwater infrastructure for the Protect Tennessee program. TREEDC West Tennessee Coordinator Bolivar Mayor Julian McTizic worked closely with development of the Ford Motor Company Electric Truck Manufacturing plant in West Tennessee. TREEDC provided emergency disaster kits to 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Sta. Maria Elementary School in Pampanga Philippines. We also assisted the Tennessee Municipal League (TML) and MTAS with informational workshops for its members.

TREEDC continued with its strategic partnership with the Energy Services Coalition (ESC) to help match local community energy needs with appropriate renewable energy technologies to reduce costs and emissions. TREEDC and ESC promoted Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) as a financing mechanism used by local governments to advance renewable energy. Also, during 2023, TREEDC commenced its streetlight feasibility statewide program for its members. TREEDC is excited to develop new partnerships and programs with Tennessee Tech University and the University of Tennessee Southern during 2024. Stay tuned.

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## TREEDC Promotes Community Resiliency with Protect Tennessee



TREEDC is excited to update you on developments that will enhance sustainability and disaster resiliency in Tennessee. HB 1684 is a bill filed by Leader William Lamberth in the Tennessee House of Representatives to allow the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency to operate the Resilient Tennessee Revolving Loan Fund. The Tennessee legislature seeded the fund with \$5 million which will then be matched with up to \$50 million by the federal government as provided by the STORM Act. This Act is a federal law that establishes the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund program to seed state-run revolving loan funds which will assist communities in funding their local share of federal grants. This program will function like the Clean Water and Drinking Water revolving funds administered by TDEC.

Building resilience to natural disasters remains a priority for TREEDC and the elected officials who grapple with these issues on the ground in their communities. Flooding stands as the most frequent and costliest disaster in Tennessee, and local elected officials desperately need tools to effectively prepare for extreme flooding. Resiliency is a priority shared by mayors across the state, all of whom are looking for ways to save lives, homes, and businesses in their communities.



*TREEDC President Dwain Land Visits State Representative Johnny Shaw*

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## TREEDC Member Town of Morrison Announces EV Manufacturing Plant



*Morrison Mayor Sue Anderson and City and County Officials and Unitech Announce New EV Plant*

Unitech North America, LLC recently announced a \$30 million investment in Morrison, TN, where it will locate its first U.S. operations. This facility will specialize in the production of thermal adhesives and battery compression pads for EV battery manufacturers across the Southeast, as well as industrial adhesives and sealers for its automotive customers. In phase one of the project, Unitech will create 75 new jobs in Warren County, with plans to grow through future expansions.

Unitech North America, LLC is a subsidiary of Unitech Co., Ltd., which is headquartered in Ansan, South Korea, and is a leading manufacturer of adhesives and sealants. The expansion to Tennessee represents Unitech's first location in the U.S. and will join the company's other operations in Europe and Asia. For more information click here: [Governor Lee, Commissioner McWhorter Announce Unitech North America, LLC to Establish First US Manufacturing Operations in Warren County - News - Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development \(tnecd.com\)](#)

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## Mark Your Calendar for TREEDC Conference on November 14, 2024

TREEDC will hold its annual conference and awards reception on November 14, 2024, at the Cookeville -Putnam County Chamber of Commerce building in Cookeville. We are excited to be partnering with Tennessee Tech University Center for Rural Innovation and School of Professional Studies along with the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service. with 37 Cedar Restaurant in Cookeville.

The conference will include presentations from municipal sustainability professionals, energy services providers, rural economic development officials, PACE clean energy initiatives and updates from TDEC Office of Energy Programs and USDA Rural Development funding opportunities. The awards reception will be held across the street at 37 Cedar Restaurant and will begin at 5 pm. More information and registration details will be provided in early September. For sponsorship and presentation opportunities, please call TREEDC President Dwain Land at 423-718-3435 or email at [mayorland@gmail.com](mailto:mayorland@gmail.com).



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## TREEDC Founding Member University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) Celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout the year across Tennessee. MTAS is hosting three celebrations across the state. The first event was held on April 15, 2024 at the Southwest Tennessee Development District in Jackson. Elected and appointed officials across West Tennessee recognized MTAS for its role in helping cities over the years. The next celebration will be held in Nashville on June 27, 2024. For more information, click here: [MTAS Anniversary Celebration | MTAS \(tennessee.edu\)](#)

MTAS is an agency of the Institute for Public Service (IPS) of the University of Tennessee. IPS is a statewide, system-wide organization that fulfills the University's public service mandate by applying university expertise to community and workplace needs. Through MTAS the towns and cities of Tennessee are supported by and have available experts dedicated solely to research, consulting and training on Tennessee municipal issues. MTAS and Former University of Tennessee President Dr. Joe Johnson founded TREEDC in 2008.

MTAS was established on April 15, 1949, in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League, provide for studies and research in municipal government, publications, educational conferences and attendance at such conferences and in furnishing technical, consultative and field services to municipalities in problems relating to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, improvements and public works and in any and all matters relating to municipal government.

MTAS collaborates with agencies within IPS, the university system, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and with all entities that work with municipal governments. Congratulations, MTAS!



TREEDC 75<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Celebration on April 15, 2024 in Jackson, Tennessee

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## Clean Energy is Boosting Economic Growth



According to IEA Director of Sustainability, Technology and Outlooks Laura Cozzi, clean energy is moving towards center stage in the global energy system and as its importance rises, a new clean energy economy is emerging.

Clean electricity accounted for around 80% of new capacity additions to the world's electricity system in 2023, and electric vehicles for around one out of five cars sold globally. At the same time, global investment in clean energy manufacturing is booming, driven by industrial policies and market demand. For more information click here: [Clean energy is boosting economic growth – Analysis - IEA](#)

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## EPA Community Change Grant Program

EPA announced \$2 billion in funding from the Inflation Reduction Act for the Community Change Grants Program. Funding is available for projects that deploy clean energy, reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges. These place-based investments will be focused on community-driven initiatives to be responsive to community and stakeholder input.



There are two separate tracks available:

- Track I: Community-Driven Investments for Change, which is expected to award approximately \$1.96 billion for 150 projects at \$10-20 million each;
- Track II: Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance, which is expected to award approximately \$40 million for 20 projects at \$1-3 million each.

Eligible applicants include partnerships between two community-based non-profit organizations and partnerships between a community-based non-profit organization and a local government, institution of higher education, or federally recognized tribe. View the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and the [Grants.gov page](#) for additional information. Applications are due **November 21**.

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## EPA Renew America's Schools Funding

U.S. DOE recently announced \$180 million in funding available through the 2024 Renew America's Schools Prize for schools engaging in strategic partnerships to build capacity and implement energy upgrades at K-12 schools, lowering energy use and costs and improving indoor air quality. Competitive proposals will implement energy assessments and building improvement projects across a portfolio of 10 or more school facilities, which may be composed of school facilities from one or more districts.

Awards will focus on schools that serve disadvantaged communities, including those with a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and/or which qualify as rural. Eligible improvements include alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure (including EVs).

## Opportunity for Rural Tennesseans to Test EVs

Rural Reimagined, a U.S. DOE-funded large-scale EV community project, aims to make Tennessee roads greener by loaning EVs to rural Tennesseans interested in making the switch. The program aims to become the backbone of the EV ecosystem in rural communities. Those in eligible areas interested in testing an EV can borrow one at no cost for two to six weeks. Learn more on the Rural Reimagined page, and visit the Tennessee page to register and view participating counties.



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## Drive Electric Tennessee to Hold Second Annual Summit on May 9, 2024

Drive Electric Tennessee (DET) will hold its second annual DriveElectricTN Momentum Summit on **May 9** at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro. The Momentum Summit will focus on transportation electrification efforts, including workplace charging, economic and environmental benefits, and workforce/manufacturing efforts tied to the electric vehicle (EV) industry. The event will also include an EV demonstration and ride and drive.

Sessions will include an introduction to the DriveElectricTN Roadmap Refresh, an economic perspective panel on the EV industry in Tennessee, a discussion on workforce development, and a panel on propelling the EV transition, which will discuss EV tax credits and incentives. Breakout sessions will address the acceleration of rural EV infrastructure deployment, charging at workplaces and multi-family dwellings, the intersection between EVs and the grid, and the environmental benefits of EVs.

View the agenda and register here. For questions about the Summit, contact DET Coordinator Alex Strong at [alex@driveelectrictn.org](mailto:alex@driveelectrictn.org).



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## Valley Pathways Study: Preliminary Findings Report Released



TVA and the University of Tennessee's Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs have released the [Preliminary Findings Report](#) for the [Valley Pathways Study](#). The Valley Pathways Study was launched in February 2023 to evaluate the existing environmental landscape and explore opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and create a competitive, sustainable economy. The study found that the transportation sector is the largest source of emissions in the region, which is consistent with the national emissions landscape, and that electricity generation produces approximately 27 percent of emissions. Additional information can be found in a [one-page summary](#) of the findings and an [informational video](#).

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## TVA Connected Communities Awards Second Round of Pilot Projects

[Connected Communities](#) are towns, main streets, neighborhoods, and cities in the TVA service region using technology and data-related solutions to address community challenges and prepare for a modern energy system. TVA [Connected Communities Pilot Projects](#) aim to improve the quality of life and equity for communities in its service area through innovative community-driven solutions. Pilot project funding is intended to help communities gain expertise and test approaches that will jump-start their progress toward improving access to digital services, creating a healthy natural and built environment, scaling economic opportunities, and better preparing for natural disasters.

TVA announced [six new Pilot Projects](#) under the second round of funding, four of which are located in Tennessee. One project, "Driving Tennessee Forward - EV Technologies," led by Southwest Tennessee Community College, will receive \$950,000 to create a program that provides the community with equitable access to EV charging stations and develops a curriculum for students to learn the necessary skills for jobs related to EV charging.

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## New "Energizing Tennessee" Podcast Episodes from TAEBBC

[Energizing Tennessee](#), a podcast from the [Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council](#) (TAEBBC) and FirstBank, explores the latest news and insights about the advanced energy sector with experts sharing their thoughts on transportation electrification, workforce development, and the growing sector of advanced energy in Tennessee's economy.

In episode seventeen, host Cortney Piper interviews Jennifer Safavian, President and CEO of [Autos Drive America](#). Piper and Safavian discuss the international automotive presence in Tennessee, how the Inflation Reduction Act and other recent federal policies impact the sector, and Autos Drive America's [2023 Economic Impact Report](#). The report found that in [Tennessee in 2022](#), international automakers built 413,746 vehicles, employing 109,352 persons.

All episodes are available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and wherever you get your podcasts. [Click here to listen](#).