



TREEDC



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

TREEDC Hosts Annual Conference and Awards Reception



From left to right: MTAS Municipal Management Consultant Warren Nevad, TREEDC President Dwain Land, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture SVCSVP Dr. Keith Carver (Dr. Joe Johnson Award) and Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council (TAEBEC) Cortney Piper (TREEDC Environmental Legacy Award)

On November 14, 2024, the Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) partnered with Tennessee Tech University (TTU) and the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) to host its annual conference and awards reception in Cookeville, Tennessee. Dr. Michael Aikens, Tennessee Tech University (TTU) Assistant Vice President for Economic Development and Dr. Dennis Tennant, TTU Director of Professional Studies planned and organized the event which featured an update on clean energy funding opportunities from Chris Brazell, of Appalachian Regional Commission.. Attendees introduced themselves and shared progress regarding their projects. Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs provided the keynote presentation. The awards reception was sponsored by PATH Company.

Presentations were given regarding local government opportunities in clean energy from Mark Finlay of Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation (TDEC) Office of Energy Programs, Tommy Lee, Upper Cumberland Development District and Justin Wilkerson, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. The afternoon session consisted of presentations regarding opportunities in community resiliency from Dr. Satish Mahajan, TTU Director for Energy Systems, Georgia Carruthers, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Initiative Lead and Scott Stephens, Vice President of PATH Company. Area 51 Solar Founder Harvey Abouelata gave an overview of current and future trends in solar development.

During the conference, TREEDC President Dwain Land presented the following annual awards:

1. Dr. Joe Johnson Legacy Award: Dr. Keith Carver, The University of Tennessee Senior Vice Chancellor/Vice President
2. TREEDC Environmental Legacy Award: Cortney Piper, Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council Executive Director
3. TREEDC Champion Award: William Franklin PATH Company Vice President:
4. TREEDC Champion Award: Scott Stephens: PATH Company Vice President
5. TREEDC Excellence in Rural Economic Development: Dr. Chris Shults, The University of Tennessee MTAS:
6. TREEDC Excellence in Community Resiliency: Tiffany Wilmot, Wilmot, Inc. President.



From left to right: Ricky Shelton, TREEDC Mayor Emeritus, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs and TREEDC President Dwain Land



From left to right: Dr. Chris Shults, UT-MTAS received TREEDC Excellence in Rural Economic Development from President Land

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SENIOR VICE CHANCELLOR AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT DR. KEITH CARVER HONORED WITH DR. JOE JOHNSON MEMORIAL AWARD AT TREEDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Keith Carver, senior vice chancellor and senior vice president of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, was awarded the prestigious Dr. Joe Johnson Award on November 14, 2024, at the annual Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) Conference. This recognition celebrates Carver's remarkable contributions to the TREEDC's initiative and his longstanding collaboration with



MTAS' Warren Nevad, TREEDC President Dwain Land, UTIA's Dr. Keith Carver (Dr. Joe Johnson Award)

Carver's dedication to advancing the mission of TREEDC has been instrumental in fostering innovation and collaboration. His work alongside Johnson laid the foundation for many of the program's successes, embodying the vision and values that continue to guide TREEDC today. "Dr. Carver's leadership and commitment to renewable energy and economic development exemplify the spirit of this award," said TREEDC President Dwain Land. "His partnership with our mayors as Honorary TREEDC Chairman since 2018 has left a lasting impact, and we are honored to recognize his contributions."

The award was established last year in memory of TREEDC Founder and former UT President Joe Johnson who started TREEDC 16 years ago in 2008. Last year's award winner was UT-MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris. This award is given to a person who best embodies Dr. Johnson's spirit of relationship building through outreach public service and being the boots on the ground for Tennesseans.

TREEDC (www.treedc.us) is a 501 c-3 organization of 108 Tennessee Mayors working together to create a path to fast-track renewable energy in Tennessee and the Philippines, TREEDC was founded in 2008 by University of Tennessee (UT) President Emeritus Dr. Joe Johnson, UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service and 4 mayors representing the cities of Crossville, Gainesboro, Graysville and Pikeville, Tennessee.

CORTNEY PIPER HONORED WITH TREEDC ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY AWARD AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Cortney Piper, Executive Director of the Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council (TAEBEC) was awarded the prestigious Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) Environmental Legacy Award on November 14, 2024 at the TREEDC Conference in Cookeville. This honor recognizes Piper's remarkable achievements in advancing clean energy and sustainable practices across Tennessee.

Under Piper's leadership, TAEBEC has become a driving force in positioning Tennessee as a leader in the advanced energy sector. Her efforts have fostered collaboration between public and private entities, supported economic development, and promoted innovation in energy technologies.

"Cortney Piper is Tennessee's top ambassador for clean energy. I have admired her many accomplishments over the years which includes developing startups, organizing opportunities in clean energy forums, supporting workforce development and building strong industry partnerships" said UT MTAS Consultant /TREEDC Director Warren Nevad. "She has significantly expanded the footprint of many companies like Silicon Ranch, Strata-G, Bridgestone and Clearloop."

TREEDC LAUNCHES 2025 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

TREEDC Chairman/UT Institute of Agriculture SVCSVP Dr. Keith Carver and TREEDC President Dwain Land have officially launched our 2025 membership campaign. The TREEDC board has kept the 2025 membership dues levels unchanged from prior years. Memberships help pay for expenses related to TREEDC's outreach, educational and project facilitation for our member local governments. Being a TREEDC member, affords networking, business matchmaking and developmental opportunities, sponsorships of various events and participation in our international exchange program.



*TREEDC Assistant Madeline Shelly
and TREEDC Chairman
Dr. Keith Carver*

During 2024, TREEDC hosted an annual conference and awards program with Tennessee Tech University. We also worked with various local governments on determining the feasibility of streetlight conversions to LED. TREEDC also partnered with the University of Tennessee MTAS with its Rural Community Development Initiative Program to strengthen rural economies through outreach and resiliency. 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. We also partnered with Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC) with its tree planting program. TREEDC West Tennessee Coordinator Bolivar Mayor Julian McTizic worked closely with development of the Ford Motor Company Electric Truck Manufacturing plant development in West Tennessee. We also assisted the Tennessee Municipal League (TML) and MTAS with informational workshops for its members.

TREEDC is a 501 C 3 charitable organization. For more information regarding 2025 membership opportunities click <http://treedc.us/membership/index.html>

CLEAN ENERGY BUSINESS NETWORK RELEASES 2024 REPORT



The Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN) is the small business voice of the clean energy economy, working to enhance opportunities for clean energy providers and community leaders through policy support, market and technology information, and business development. CEBN works in all 50 U.S. states, nearly every Congressional district, and across every aspect of the clean energy economy, including renewable energy, energy efficiency, natural gas, and other advanced energy and transportation technologies.

Started in 2009 by TREEDC Member The Pew Charitable Trusts, the CEBN transitioned in May 2017 to become an independent initiative of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy, a coalition of companies and trade associations from the energy efficiency, natural gas and renewable energy sectors. CEBN celebrates its 5th year as an organization in 2022

To view the annual report, click: [FINAL CEBN Annual Report 2024](#)



TENNESSEE SOLAR FOR ALL PROGRAM

Tennessee's Solar for All Program will accelerate the deployment of solar infrastructure to benefit low-income households and disadvantaged communities while supporting Tennessee's varied urban, suburban, and rural communities. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Office of Energy Programs (TDEC-OEP) will receive \$156.12 million from the EPA for a new program aimed at deploying solar infrastructure to low-income households and disadvantaged communities. The Tennessee Solar for All Program will be administered by the TDEC-OEP. Of the funding awarded, \$400,000 will be awarded as in-kind services provided by the EPA in partnership with the U.S. DOE under the forthcoming National Solar for All Technical Assistance Program. The proposed program's geography covers the entire state, and the scope of work is to provide financial assistance for residential rooftop and residential-serving community solar infrastructure, storage, and associated enabling upgrades in conjunction with preexisting, complementary programs (e.g., the Tennessee Valley Authority's Flexibility 2.0 Program, Dispersed Power Production program, and community solar programs such as Nashville Electric Service's Music City Solar program).

- TDEC OEP elected to include a one-year program planning period to provide time to refine program plans after receiving an award from EPA and before beginning to deploy financial and technical assistance.
- TDEC OEP's one-year planning period began on September 1, 2024, and will end on August 31, 2025.
- During the planning period, OEP will:
 - Continue engaging with Stakeholders via our monthly update call;
 - Complete revisions to the budget and workplan;
 - Define both "Local Project Implementation Teams" and the "Statewide Program" with regard to identification, process, expectations, and roles/responsibilities for each, etc.;
 - Release a Notice of Intent for Local Project Implementation Teams;
 - Develop and issue a Request for Proposals for Statewide Program Implementer to address additional communities; and
 - Engage in contracting process with Local Project Implementation Teams and Statewide Program Implementer.

For more information about this program click: [Solar for All](#).

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE WINS FUNDING FOR GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has been awarded a \$750,000 grant for East Tennessee Works, a regional green jobs initiative led by the university and focused on Knoxville's inner-city and rural Southern Appalachian communities.



An interdisciplinary team from UT is one of six groups nationwide receiving funding in the [Jobs for the Future Quality Green Jobs Regional Challenge](#). The university is working with community partners, industry, labor organizations and other educational institutions to train and support job seekers in advanced manufacturing and green construction.

Over the next three years, East Tennessee Works intends to place 5,000 East Tennesseans on the path to good jobs in the green economy, with a flexible, scalable approach..

For more information click : [UT Wins Funding for Green Jobs Initiative - News](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: MARCH 5, 2025: TAEBC ANNUAL MEETING



The [Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council](#) holds its Annual Meeting every spring in Nashville, Tennessee. This event allows TAEBC members, stakeholders and potential members to gather from across the state to celebrate our growing advanced energy economy. Click here for more information: [2025 Annual Meeting Registration, Wed, Mar 5, 2025 at 1:00 PM | Eventbrite](#).

TDEC SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR 2025 GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation recently announced the 2025 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards Program. This process honor outstanding accomplishments that support the protection and enhancement of Tennessee's natural resources. Nominating an individual, group, or organization for their achievements is a meaningful way to promote conservation and recognize effective environmental leadership in Tennessee.

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2025 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards, and we are asking you to draw on your knowledge and experience to help us identify organizations and individuals who are improving the quality of Tennessee's land, air, and water. The Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards include ten categories:

1. Agriculture and Forestry
2. Building Green
3. Clean Air
4. Energy and Renewable Resources
5. Environmental Education and Outreach
6. Materials Management
7. Natural Resource
8. Water Quality
9. Sustainable Performance
10. Lifetime Achievement



For more information, click here: [website](#).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL FUNDING

The State Funding Readiness Project (SFRP) provides no-cost technical assistance to jurisdictions, including local governments, for preparing and applying for funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. SFRP can help jurisdictions identify specific investment opportunities, conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise, inform budget planning, meet Justice40 requirements, develop competitive grant applications, and strengthen linkages with administering agencies. They have supported forty projects in twenty-five jurisdictions thus far, securing over \$1.5 billion in federal funding. SFRP has an open, rolling intake process and considers jurisdiction requests at any time. Learn more on the SFRP website.

Over the decades, energy efficiency has transformed the way we use energy and has helped build a cleaner economy that is more secure, more affordable, and more productive. After several years of slowed progress, recent federal funding provides the opportunity for states, local governments, businesses, and households to further investments in energy efficiency. Given the accelerating urgency of climate change and the race to improve U.S. productivity and competitiveness in a quickly evolving international market, we need to fully capitalize on the expansive, diverse, affordable, and innovative energy efficiency toolkit.

Using 59 indicators, the [Energy Efficiency Impact Report](#) tracks progress in a variety of sectors, including utilities, buildings, industry, and transportation and examines how policy and other tools are used to incentivize energy efficiency.

ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS ANNOUNCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Energy [recently announced](#) \$400 million in funding for the [Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas \(ERA\) Program](#). The ERA Program aims to fund community-driven projects that demonstrate clean energy systems, deliver measurable and sustained benefits to people who live in areas with fewer than 10,000 people, and build clean energy knowledge, capacity, and self-reliance throughout rural America.

Projects must support at least one of the following eligible activities:

- Improving overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems;
- Siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines;
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation in rural or remote areas;
- Providing or modernizing electric generation facilities;
- Developing microgrids; and
- Increasing energy efficiency.

U.S. DOE anticipates funding between 20-50 projects with a 5–50% minimum non-federal cost share per project. Eligible applicants include state and local governmental entities, non-profit and for-profit entities, rural electric cooperatives, farming associations and cooperatives, labor unions, institutions of higher education, and both incorporated and unincorporated consortia. Additional information is available in the [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#). [Concept papers](#) are due February 28, 2025 and full applications are due August 28, 2025.

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