



TREEDC – Jackson, Tennessee Renewable Energy Forum Report: April 12, 2012

From: Warren Nevad, the University of Tennessee MTAS

The Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) held its 3rd annual renewable energy forum for area farmers, elected officials and clean energy providers at Jackson State Community College in Jackson, Tennessee on April 12, 2012. A total of 67 participants representing 16 cities, 8 counties and 4 states joined together to learn about the clean energy sectors of biofuels, solar energy, green diesel, compressed natural gas and biosolids gasification. The event was sponsored by TREEDC founding members Jackson Energy Authority (JEA), Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, Jackson State Community College, Tennessee Gas Association and Jackson City Councilman Ernest Brooks, II. The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) crafted the agenda which consisted of educational presentations from PHG Energy, Tennessee Gas Association, 49 Green, Paradoxe Corporation, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the University of Tennessee Center For Industrial Services, and Efficient Energy of Tennessee. Mayors from Ducktown, Jackson, Huntingdon, Milan and Covington were also in attendance. TREEDC also conducted a TVA Green Power Switch sign up promotion at this forum, which was the 14th forum held by TREEDC since 2009.

Jackson Mayor Jerry Gist thanked the Jackson community for supporting economic development through renewable energy and complimented Jackson Councilman Ernest Brooks for his efforts in bringing more awareness in clean energy to West Tennessee. Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce Vice President Shirley Jones also welcomed the crowd and stated that she was proud that the Chamber was a sponsor of the forum. Jackson Energy Authority President Jim Ferrell advised the audience that Jackson Energy Authority recognized the need and importance of compressed natural gas as a viable alternative transportation fuel for various fleets across the state. Scott Golden, Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Stephen Fincher gave an update on renewable energy related activities in District 8. He explained that as a farmer, Congressman Fincher understands the importance that renewable energy producing facilities such as biomass gasification and solar can bring

to needed farm income. Also, those rural communities depend upon the prosperity of its farms and that renewable energy can benefit everyone in the region.

Jackson State Community College President Bruce Blanding informed the stakeholders that TREEDC Founding member Jackson State was a member of the Sustainability Education & Economic Development Center (SEED). The Center is a leadership initiative and online resource center exclusively for community colleges. This resource provides tools for community colleges to advance sustainability and green workforce development practices. Jack Laser, Jackson State Director of Center of Emphasis expressed to the audience the need for communities to become more educated about renewable energy and that we needed to encourage younger generations to learn more about renewable energy through continuing education. Director Nevad also announced plans for future forums to be held later this year at Tennessee Tech University, Middle Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. TREEDC Consultant Bill Owen recommended that area businesses and citizens join the TVA Green Power Switch program by signing up at www.greenpowerswitch.com/treedc.

Peg Hamlett gave a thorough presentation about the benefits of sustainable agriculture for area farmers. Donna Stokes with TREEDC Founding Member Efficient Energy of Tennessee gave an update of the 1 megawatt solar system in Jackson that was interconnected to JEA last year. This solar system supplies enough power to roughly 200 homes in Jackson. TVA Green Power Business Development Associate Donna Suter stated that Green Power Switch was created by TVA on Earth Day 2000. This program adds more renewable energy to our local grid. TVA is transitioning from Generations Partners to Green Power Providers. The goal if this transition is to provide long-term stability to small scale renewable growth in the TVA region. Eddie Parimore explained that Solar & Renewable Power was formed as a division of Paradoxe Corporation in 2008. Solar & Renewable Power built the first solar interconnected systems in Jackson, Savannah and Milan, Tennessee. They also built a 2 kilowatt wind turbine at Walters State Community College in Morristown.

Henning Bollerslev of 49 Green explained their revolutionary Danish process of converting municipal and agricultural wastes into green diesel as an emerging alternative transportation fuel for city and county fleets. Also, this technology does not take feedstock from the food chain. The technology should be available for commercial production in Denmark sometime in late 2012. Chris Koczaja, PHG Energy Vice President of Sales & Engineering presented a powerpoint presentation that illustrated how PHG Energy converts wastes to energy. Their downdraft gasifier converts crop residues, scrap tires and sludge into syngas. This process can offer clean carbon neutral energy solutions to waste disposal costs. His powerpoint along with the others will be available shortly at http://www.treedc.us/newsletters_reports/index.html

Keith Ridley, Energy and Environment Team Leader with the University of Tennessee Center For Industrial Services (CIS) gave an historic overview of CIS which was formed in 1963 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The mission of CIS is to help Tennessee businesses succeed, grow and create high quality jobs. Tennessee manufacturers are CIS' primary market. Ridley also discussed the E3 Initiative which stands for Economy, Energy and Environment. The kick-off was at TREEDC member Bartlett Chamber of Commerce. Other partners to the E3 initiative include TREEDC members Pathway Lending and Pew Charitable Trusts.

Scott Dahlstrom, representing TREEDC Founding members Tennessee Gas Association and Jackson Energy Authority informed the audience that natural gas is considered to be the cleanest fossil fuel because it produces fewer emissions than other fuels. According to Dahlstrom, Natural Gas Vehicles produce 25% less CO₂, 80% less nitrogen oxide and 90% less particulates. He also showed a photograph of JEA's first Natural Gas truck and also recapped the Natural Gas Vehicle Expo with the Tennessee Gas Association.

TREEDC will be hosting a luncheon event with Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan on May 9th at Austin Peay State University. The next TREEDC forum is scheduled for July 27, 2012 at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee. Please check out the membership tab on the newly revised TREEDC website at www.treedc.us if your community or organization is interested in becoming a 2012 TREEDC member. Individuals or businesses that enroll under the TVA Green Power Switch program will be entitled to membership privileges for 2012. For more information about TREEDC and speaking/sponsorship opportunities, contact warren.nevad@tennessee.edu.