

TREEDC –Franklin Forum Report: June 12, 2013



Andrew Orr, Franklin Sustainability and Sally Sawyer, Wilmont, Inc.

The Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council (TREEDC) held its 3rd forum at the Franklin Police Conference Center on June 12, 2013. A total of 53 attendees gathered together to hear presentations from leading Middle Tennessee businesses including Energy Source Partners, Nissan North Americas, PHG Energy, Rhoades Car International, Whole Foods, and Wilmont Inc. Franklin Mayor and TREEDC Middle Tennessee Coordinator/ Ken Moore, Franklin Sustainability Coordinator Andrew Orr, (MTAS) Management Consultant/TREEDC Director Warren Nevad and L.K. Browning of the Tennessee Valley Authority crafted the agenda.

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's (TDEC) Energy Education Initiative also sponsored presentations regarding qualified conservation bonds and energy awareness. The TREEDC-Franklin forum was the third out of 5 forums organized under the Tennessee Energy Education Initiative. This Initiative will be delivered in connection with TREEDC Diamond Member Pathway Lending and other statewide energy resource providers and will provide in depth training and educational tools.

Molly Cripps, Director, Office of Energy Programs for TDEC gave an overview of broad educational activities available under the Tennessee Energy Education Initiative. Pete Westerholm of TDEC shared details of the state's qualified energy conservation bond program which has a \$64 million dollar allocation. Ken Srebnik, Senior Manager, Corporate Planning for Nissan reviewed the automaker's Green Program 2016, US Facilities and Manufacturing sustainability initiatives and Nissan LEAF sales which have exceeded 62,000 worldwide. Srebnik stated that Nissan desires to improve fuel efficiency of vehicles and reduce corporate carbon footprint by 20% by 2016. He also reviewed Nissan's Electric Vehicle (EV) charging facilities which are equipped with solar arrays for the Smyrna and Franklin facilities. Sally Sawyer with Wilmont Inc advised the audience that the greenest building is the one that you don't have to build. "We are putting known toxins and carcinogens in our buildings, yet many try to argue that there is no connection between our health and indoor air quality. We know that buildings with better indoor air have lower incidences of asthma, respiratory illness, headaches, legionnaires disease, and employees are more productive with fewer sick days" Sawyer concluded her comments by saying that lighting consumes most energy in any building it kilowatt hours per square foot.

Mike Webb, PHG Energy Director of Business Development presented a powerpoint presentation that illustrated how PHG Energy converts wastes to energy. He stressed that the PHG Energy does not use incineration. Their scalable downdraft gasifier converts crop residues, scrap tires and sludge into syngas. The key is to having feedstock with 30 percent or less moisture. The Covington Wastewater project will divert over 300 tons/month diverted from landfill and save over 452 tons of CO2 Emissions per year. The project is expected to be completed in August 2013. Webb also added that General Electric (GE)

Power & Water and PHG Energy have successfully collaborated on an innovative project to produce electricity from waste material by employing gasification technology to power GE's Clean Cycle heat-to-power generator. Bill Pomakoy, President of Rhoades Car International gave a historical overview of Rhoades Car International which is a manufacturer of solar 4 wheel quadricycles with 1, 2, or 4 seats and 1, 7 and 42 speed gearing with optional pedal-assist electric motor. The frames of the quadricycles are made from recycled steel and that Tennessee-based suppliers make the majority of proprietary components. Rhoades Car International also won the David Lipscomb University 2011 Green Business Innovator of the Year. Pomakoy also expressed his appreciation to the TREEDC leadership for exploring market development opportunities for Rhoades Car manufacturing in Tennessee and the Philippines.

Michael Martin of Whole Foods stated that Whole Foods placed third on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's list of the "Top 25 Green Power Partners". The company also received the EPA Green Power Award in 2004 and 2005 and Partner of the Year award in 2006 and 2007. The company plans on purchasing 458 gigawatt hours of wind energy credits. This will keep about 700 million pounds (300,000 metric tons) of carbon dioxide emissions out of the atmosphere. This is equivalent to taking 60,000 cars off the road or planting 90,000 acres (360 km²) of trees. Martin also stated that several times a year, Whole Foods' stores hold community-giving days where five percent of that day's net sales are donated to a local nonprofit or educational organization. Ron Merville, President of Energy Source Partners provided details of his firm's solar installation at the new Music City Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee. The convention center boasts a 350,000 square-foot exhibition hall that is acoustically-designed to serve as a live music venue. The building, which spans three city blocks, also includes 59 meeting rooms, two ballrooms, 38 loading docks, and a 1,900-vehicle parking garage. Designed by TV's design of Atlanta, Music City Center has a modern exterior of glass curtain wall and limestone panels. The building's mechanical penthouse is shaped to resemble the geometry of a guitar. A one-acre portion of the Music City Center's roof supports a photovoltaic solar panel array.

Designed by local firm Energy Source Partners, the convention center's 211 Kw solar program is located above the grand ballroom and will help offset the facility's electrical costs. Energy Source Partners provides the design, financing, installation, management and support for all aspects of the solar energy system. TREEDC Director Nevad expressed his appreciation for their sponsorship of the breakfast.

During lunch, Mandy Carter – Lowe of Columbia State Community College and President of Tennessee Academy of Science gave a thorough review of the sustainability related accomplishments of Columbia State Community College. A Sustainability Council consisting of all sectors of Columbia State was developed initially. An Energy Savings Performance Audit was completed on all buildings owned by Columbia State. Some of the projects from the performance contract included a campus lighting retrofit, water saving strategies and procurement of hybrid and electric vehicles. Columbia State's Williamson Campus has been named a platinum partner of the Live Green Partners Program for businesses, which is a collaborative effort of local businesses, Leadership Franklin, and the City of Franklin to promote sustainable operations in the workplace. The Columbia State Sustainability Community Action Plan recommends the formation of a volunteer program to raise awareness and recognize those businesses that are taking strides in a sustainable direction. Columbia State also joined the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, (AASHE). This organization provides consultation, webinars, training, collaboration among Colleges and Universities.