



## **TREEDC – Hiwassee College Forum: April 4, 2014**

The Mayors of the Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council (TREEDC) held their first 2014 Community Energy forum at Hiwassee College on April 4, 2014. TREEDC 2014 Founding members Hiwassee College, Gibson County Utility District and the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service sponsored this free community outreach forum for Hiwassee College students, staff and Monroe County area clean energy stakeholders. Presentations consisted of best campus practices of renewable energy and the State of Tennessee Energy initiatives. Todd Littleton, Hiwassee College Director of Alumni Affairs welcomed TREEDC and expressed his appreciation to the Mayors for organizing the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference at Hiwassee College.

TREEDC Chairman/University of Tennessee President Emeritus Dr. Joe Johnson traced the origins of TREEDC as an organization that has grown initially from four (4) Tennessee rural cities in 2008 to 96 cities in Tennessee and the Philippines in 2014. Dr. Johnson advised the audience that TREEDC is now providing educational forums to elementary schools across the state. He added that TREEDC recently collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Tennessee Energy, Industry and Construction Consortium (TEICC), Tennessee Tech University and the Gibson County Utility District to conduct a state-wide essay contest for middle school students to build awareness for careers in renewable energy. Dr. Johnson concluded his remarks by complimenting the TREEDC Mayors with their innovative work in the Philippines by bringing in new partners to Tennessee renewable energy stakeholders.

The University of Tennessee Public Administration Intern Troy Williamson gave a thorough PowerPoint presentation about renewable energy activities across college campuses across the United States. He mentioned that the University of Tennessee purchased 1,760 CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Lamps) to exchange for bulbs from students' desk lamps, saving \$4,190 and 60 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in a single semester. According to Williamson, The University of South Carolina is starting a \$19 million high-tech biomass energy plant which will annually consume an estimated 57,000 tons of tree waste and save

\$2 million a year in energy costs. The University of Vermont has installed a small-scale 10 kilowatt wind turbine which is expected to generate 3,000-5,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

MTAS Management Consultant Warren Nevad also gave a PowerPoint presentation about the TREEDC International Exchange Program. The objectives of the Exchange program were to accomplish the following:

- 1) Recruit TREEDC sister cities/colleges abroad;
- 2) Exchange information about technology partners in respective countries;
- 3) Develop and replicate TREEDC similar type organizations in 5 countries;
- 4) Attract multinational corporations for corporate social responsibility;
- 5) Advance renewable energy for cities all over the world; and
- 6) Organize an International TREEDC Forum annually

The TREEDC Mayors selected the Philippines because of its very high energy costs, vast renewable energy resources, frequent blackouts and the Renewable Energy Law of 2008. TREEDC believes that there are tremendous educational and business opportunities for our members. As of April 2014, TREEDC has 8 Philippine cities and 12 universities as members. TREEDC has conducted education forums and conferences in five (5) different colleges across the Philippines and is working with E3 integrated Solutions, ARiES Energy and Vis Solis to develop solar and waste to energy facilities in the Philippines. Philippine members will participate in the TREEDC International Renewable Energy Forum to be held at Tennessee Tech University on October 12 – 14, 2014.

Harvey Abouelata, President of ARiES Energy gave an overview of the USDA REAP Program. The USDA REAP is currently accepting applications from Rural Farmers, Ranchers, and Small Businesses for Grants Supporting Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects. The Program is designed to promote rural economic development by assisting rural businesses to become more energy efficient and even generate energy from their own renewable systems. According to Abouelata, grants may cover up to 25% of the cost for eligible renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Grants may range from \$2,500 to \$500,000, and the funding level this year is expected to match or exceed last year's level. ARiES Energy will prepare all the grant paperwork for organizations to apply for the grant. Contact [harvey@ariesenergy.com](mailto:harvey@ariesenergy.com) for more details.

Pete Westerholm, Program Manager at Office of Energy Programs (OEP), with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation gave an update regarding recent

initiatives. In December 2013, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded OEP \$426,644 for its State Energy Program 2013 Competitive Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) application. Tennessee was just 1 of 6 states to receive funding in the FOA's Area of Interest 3 – Retrofitting Public Buildings.

The project objectives are to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to serve local governments and public housing authorities (PHAs) and to drive demand for energy efficiency investments in the State of Tennessee. The grant period of performance is February 1, 2014 to January 31, 2016. Contact Pete.Westerholm@tn.gov for more information

Max Shilstone, Business Development Director for TREEDC Diamond Member Clean Line Energy Partners described the Plains & Eastern Clean Line Project which will connect Tennessee to superb wind resources of Great Plains with a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line. This planned development is a \$300 million investment in transmission facilities in western Tennessee. Hundreds of direct jobs will be created during construction. Significant property tax revenue will be generated to Tipton and Shelby Counties. Shilstone urged all TREEDC members to provide support for this worthy project.

The forum concluded at 1:00.