



TREEDC Newsletter April 2023



TREEDC Chairman Dr. Keith Carver Begins New Post as Head of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture



TREEDC Chairman Dr. Keith Carver

TREEDC Chairman D. Keith Carver will serve as the new leader of the UT Institute of Agriculture (UTIA). Carver has worked with the UT System for 26 years, serving as executive assistant to UT president Joe DiPietro for six years before taking the post at UT Martin. He has held leadership positions in Knoxville, Martin, and Memphis, including interim vice chancellor for development and alumni affairs at the UT Health Science Center in Memphis, assistant vice chancellor for development at UT Martin, and director of development and alumni affairs for the UT College of Law in Knoxville. He has served as Chairman of the Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) since 2016.

Carver will head UTIA in a two-year limited duration appointment to provide stability and leadership to the institute. The UT Institute of Agriculture provides solutions to problems across the state through UT Extension, UT AgResearch, the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, and the Herbert College of Agriculture.

For more information about UTIA click [Institute of Agriculture](#) | [UTIA \(tennessee.edu\)](#)

Funding Announced for TVA Connected Communities Pilot Program



TVA announced \$2M in new funding for Connected Communities pilot projects to improve the quality of life and equity for communities in its service area through innovative community-driven solutions. This 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 and cyber threats.

For the upcoming funding opportunity, TVA is seeking projects demonstrating an emerging technology or a new intervention approach to connect communities to resources that will directly and measurably have a positive outcome in two or more of the following areas:

- Equitable access to services such as broadband and digital literacy,
- Equitable access to innovative, sustainable, connected technologies,
- Energy burden or energy poverty,
- Access to quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education,
- Environmental health, including indoor environmental health/justice,
- Enhanced resiliency for vulnerable populations, or
- Access to better employment, career, or entrepreneurial opportunities.

Prior pilot projects addressed these topics through activities such as monitoring indoor environmental health, offering coding training programs, installing broadband hotspots, providing digital literacy education, installing solar and battery storage, and offering educational resources. You can learn more about current pilot projects on the TVA Connected Communities [website](#).

The call for pilots is expected to be open from **April** through **June**, with project selection announcements expected in late **September**. TVA is interested in providing awards of up to a maximum of \$750K per project and anticipates awarding approximately four to eight projects. All projects must take place within the TVA service territory and be completed within two years of project kickoff.

For more information and to access the application form when the Call for Pilots opens, visit tva.com/ConnectedCommunities or contact ConnectedCommunities@tva.gov.

KUB Announces Completion of New Community Solar Project

On March 15, The Knoxville Utilities Board announced the completion of the first community solar array in Knoxville. Community solar is a way for KUB customers to support local solar projects and subscribe to the benefits of a shared solar array, KUB will own, operate, and maintain the site, with customers signing up for a monthly subscription. People that subscribe are then credited back a portion of their subscription fee based on the amount of renewable energy produced by the array each month.



KUB said the array will produce an average of 1.36-gigawatt hours of solar energy per year, which is enough to fill the energy requirements of around 100 homes. Renewable energy generation from KUB's community solar array will also help avoid approximately 964 metric tons of CO₂e emissions per year, which is equal to saving more than 100,000 gallons of gasoline.

Memphis' First C-PACE Loan Gives Assist to Uptown Studio and Storage Project



The Uptown Studio and Storage Project has received \$2.3 million in Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy, commonly known as C-PACE, financing. This project will convert the former Greyhound bus station at 525 N. Main St. into a mixed-use site, has become the first project to receive C-PACE financing in the City of Memphis and the second in the State of Tennessee. The C-PACE lending mechanism provides for water and energy efficiency, renewable energy, and resiliency projects. The program allows property owners to finance building retrofits, gut rehabilitations, and new constructions with no upfront costs.

Memphis has long been working toward getting a C-PACE program online. In 2021, the Tennessee State House passed legislation allowing local cities and counties to establish their own programs. The Economic Development Growth Engine for Memphis and Shelby County (EDGE) passed the Memphis C-PACE program in September of last year.

The Memphis program, which is administered by EDGE, is known locally as C-PACER. The 'R' stands for resiliency, a requirement for Tennessee, but not present in all programs nationwide. The first C-PACE deal in Tennessee took place north of Nashville in White House, Tennessee, to help with the construction of a senior living facility.

Paris Board of Public Utilities, TVA, and Silicon Ranch Celebrate Newest Tennessee Solar Farm with “Flip the Switch” Event

Silicon Ranch, one of the nation’s largest independent power producers and a community-focused renewable energy company, the Paris Board of Public Utilities (Paris BPU), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) held a “Flip the Switch” event on March 28, 2023, to celebrate the completion of a new 6.75-megawatt (MWAC) solar facility in Puryear, Tennessee. This solar facility will generate enough renewable, cost-effective energy to power approximately 1,000 homes annually.

The Paris Solar Farm – Puryear was developed as part of TVA’s Generation Flexibility Program. The nationally renowned program is designed to encourage local power companies (LPCs) to develop distributed generation facilities and provide local solutions to the renewable needs of customers. With economic development being an integral part of Paris BPU’s mission, the ability to take advantage of flexible solutions helps ensure that Paris BPU can continue to provide Henry County customers with safe, reliable, cost-effective energy.



TREEDC Releases Annual Report

TREEDC recently completed its Annual report for 2022. To view this report visit: [annual report.pdf \(treedc.us\)](#). The report contains information about how TREEDC embarked on a new 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.



From left to right: Former Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton, TREEDC President Dwain Land, MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris and TREEDC Chairman Dr. Keith Carver

During 2022, TREEDC also forged new international exchange partnerships with The University of Tennessee Martin and Middle Tennessee State University. TREEDC worked closely with the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service to provide outreach and technical assistance to cities and counties across the state. TREEDC hosted an annual conference and awards program with Tennessee Tech University. TREEDC worked with Cooley Public Strategies to inform the Tennessee General Assembly about the economic and environmental benefits of green stormwater infrastructure for the Tennessee Flood Ready Coalition. A total of 17 counties and 23 cities joined the coalition ([Plan. Prepare. Protect. \(floodreadytn.com\)](https://www.floodreadytn.com)). TREEDC implemented its pilot community resiliency project with Woodland Mills, Tennessee which resulted in a statewide award by the Tennessee Municipal League (TML). 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 also assisted the TML and AARP with informational workshops for its members.

Membership Highlight: The University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)



The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (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 was established on April 15, 1949 in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League, to 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. MTAS has been a founding member of TREEDC since 2008. For more information about MTAS visit [Home | MTAS \(tennessee.edu\)](#)

Membership Highlight: I-Flow Technologies

I-Flow Technologies is a cutting-edge technology and service provider company that specializes in offering innovative solutions for energy, water, and wastewater management. I-Flow's primary objective is to develop and provide advanced technological solutions and services that promote sustainable and efficient management of these systems, all while reducing operating costs. i-Flow is the leader in municipal sustainability, providing turn-key solutions for communities of any size.



The company helps municipalities save money and achieve resiliency goals through funding opportunities, compliance, and educational seminars. Let us help you take your sustainability efforts to the next level.

To learn more about I-Flow Technologies visit: [Energy Savings | I-flow Technologies \(iflow.tech\)](#)

Membership Highlight: Performance Services

Performance Services ([Design-Build Performance Contractors | Performance Services](#)) is an integrated design and delivery engineering company that specializes in constructing and renovating municipal, healthcare and education facilities, delivering optimal environments through design-build and guaranteed energy savings projects. Found in 1998 by President and CEO, Tim Thoman, Performance Services is built on a culture of excellence and the highest standards of quality. Performance Services recently completed its energy services project with Arkansas Tech University. Essential components of the project included LED lighting retrofits and building automation systems upgrades across the campus. In addition to these energy improvements, the Energy Leadership program was implemented across the campus. An energy manager leads the behavioral-based student and staff energy awareness and cost reduction program, utilizing a web-based energy dashboard that provides real-time energy data to monitor and inform campus energy usage. Together, these improvements are expected to reduce annual utility costs by 13.8%



Update: Ford Plans to Produce 500,000 Electric Vehicles Annual in West Tennessee



Visit [Ford Tennessee campus to build 500,000 EVs annually \(cnbc.com\)](#) to get the latest update regarding the Ford Electric Vehicle Project in West Tennessee. In 2021, Ford Motor Company and SK On committed an historic \$5.6 billion investment to build a 3,600-acre mega campus called BlueOval City at the Megasite of West Tennessee, where the production of Ford's second generation electric trucks will begin in 2025. BlueOval City is set to create 30,000 jobs across West Tennessee, including 6,000 jobs directly on site, and will launch a landmark skilled training partnership to prepare the future workforce.

This strategic investment will result in tremendous economic development and opportunity for Tennesseans including:

- The creation of 30,000 new jobs in West Tennessee, which includes direct and indirect jobs to support the site’s operations, resulting in more than \$1.02 billion in annual earnings.
- An anticipated \$3.5 billion each year to Tennessee’s gross state product.
- Temporary construction benefits including \$5.6 billion to be spent on land, buildings, and other real property improvements.
- Additionally, more than 32,000 jobs are expected to support the construction period, with around \$1.87 billion in salaries related to construction activity.

TVA Partners with University of Tennessee Baker Center for Public Policy for Clean Energy Study

TVA touted plans for the Valley Pathway Study with the UT Baker Center for Public Policy during its last board meeting. The study will look at the electric power supply and other areas of the economy for ways to reduce carbon pollution that spurs climate change. According to TVA CEO Jeff Lyash, TVA plans to add 10,000 to 14,000 MW of new power generation by the end of the decade to meet growing demand. He also said the utility believes it can achieve up to another 1,000 MW in 2023 through initiatives to reduce customer demand.

<https://www.power-eng.com/ap-news/new-board-in-place-tva-turns-to-clean-energy-study/>



U.S. Department of Energy Funding Available for Building Upgrades

U.S. DOE’s Buildings Upgrade Prize (Buildings UP) is offering more than \$22 million in cash prizes and technical assistance to teams across America with winning ideas to accelerate widespread, equitable energy efficiency and building electrification upgrades.

In Phase 1 of Buildings UP, teams will submit innovative concepts to increase building energy upgrades, choosing to enter one of two pathways: “Equity-Centered Innovation” or “Open Innovation.” “Equity-Centered Innovation” teams focus on delivering upgrades to low- and moderate-income homes; small, disadvantaged businesses; and other equity-eligible buildings. Community-based organizations, state and local governments, Indian tribes, building owners, utilities, nonprofit organizations, energy efficiency program implementers, and other organizations are encouraged to team up and apply.

Up to 50 Application Support Prizes of \$5,000 and 10 hours of technical assistance are available to help new and under-resourced teams complete Phase 1 applications. The Application Support Prize will be awarded on a rolling basis until funds are expended. Follow [Buildings UP](#) on HeroX.com for all prize-related updates. Phase 1 submissions are due by **July 18**.

USDA Rural Development Announces Availability of \$1 Billion to Help Farmers, Ranchers and Rural Businesses Invest in Renewable Energy



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that USDA is accepting applications starting in April for \$1 billion in grants to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses invest in renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. USDA is making the \$1 billion in grants available under the [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP), with funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis.

Recipients may use REAP funds to install renewable energy systems or to make energy-efficiency improvements. Eligible applicants include rural small businesses and agricultural producers. USDA will hold competitions quarterly through Sept. 30, 2024. The funding will also include the creation of the first underutilized technology fund in the REAP program, with \$144.5 million available in dedicated funding.

USDA is particularly interested in REAP projects that will help rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and improved infrastructure, reduce climate pollution and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, conserve and protect farmland, and invest in underserved communities. To ensure that small projects have a fair opportunity to compete for the funding, USDA will set aside at least 20% of the available funds until June 30 of each year for grant requests of \$20,000 or less, including the grant portion of a combined grant and guaranteed loan request.

The maximum federal share which may be requested is up to 50% of the total project cost for all energy-efficiency projects and zero-emissions renewable energy systems. An award of up to 50% of the total project cost is also available for any project in a designated energy community and/or submitted by an eligible tribal entity. All other projects are eligible to apply for grants of up to 25% of the total project cost. The maximum grant is \$1 million for renewable energy systems and \$500,000 for energy-efficiency projects.

For additional information on application deadlines and submission details, see page 19239 of the March 31 [Federal Register](#).
