

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

TREEDC Hosts Annual Conference/ Awards Reception



From left to right: Maris Masellis, Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC) Communications Dir, The Honorable State Senator /Former Oak Hill Mayor Heidi Campbell, Warren Nevad, MTAS Consultant and Jeff Barrie, TEC Executive Director received awards at TREEDC Annual Conference

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 smart distribution grid modeling from Dr. Ali Arzani of Tennessee Tech University Center for Energy Systems Research. Attendees introduced themselves and shared progress regarding their projects. Tennessee State Senator Heidi Campbell provided the keynote presentation regarding the benefits of Tennessee Waste to Jobs Act. The awards reception was sponsored by PATH Company, Tennessee American, Local Government Corporation, MTAS, TTU and Lightwave Solar.

Presentations were given regarding local future opportunities in infrastructure & economic development/energy by Upper Cumberland Development Director Mark Farley, Greater Nashville Regional Council Director Michael Skipper, and Dr. Janis Kyser, Sequatchie County/Dunlap Chamber of Commerce Director. The afternoon session consisted of presentations regarding best practices in community resiliency from Dr. Satish Mahajan, TTU Director for Energy Systems, Ripley Mayor Craig Fitzhugh and Dr. Kendra Abkowitz, Nashville Director of Sustainability and Resilience. Solar Alliance President Jon Hamilton and Dr. Bruce Guillaume gave an overview of the Maryville College Solar Plus Demonstration Project.

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

1. TREEDC Environmental Legacy Award: Gil Hough, TenneSEIA Director
2. TREEDC Environmental Legacy Award: Jeff Barrie, Tennessee Environmental Council (TEC) Executive Director
3. TREEDC Champion Award: Maris Masellis, TEC Communications Director
4. TREEDC Champion Award: Omar Watkins, Tennessee Tech University Student
5. TREEDC Champion Award: Jennifer Ponder, Tennessee American Business Development
6. TREEDC Excellence in Rural Economic Development: Dr. Janis Kyser, Sequatchie County/Dunlap Chamber of Commerce Director
7. TREEDC Excellence in Community Resiliency: Dr. Michael Aikens, Tennessee Tech University
8. Dr. Joe Johnson Legacy Award: Warren Nevad, MTAS Consultant



From left to right: TREEDC President Dwain Land, Gil Hough, TenneSEIA and Warren Nevad, MTAS

TREEDC LAUNCHES 2026 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN



Dr. Hannah Wright- UT Institute of Agriculture Director of Stakeholder Engagement and TREEDC President Land

TREEDC Chairman/Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President of the UT Institute of Agriculture Dr. Keith Carver and TREEDC President Dwain Land have officially launched our 2026 membership campaign. The TREEDC board has kept the 2026 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.

During 2025, 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. Spring City started an LED conversion program and Livingston commenced its Energy Infrastructure Project. TREEDC also partnered with the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) with its Rural Community Development Initiative Program to strengthen rural economies through outreach and resiliency. TREEDC West Tennessee Coordinator Bolivar Mayor Julian McTizic became President of the Tennessee Municipal League (TML). We also assisted TML and MTAS with informational workshops for its members and creation of the Middle Tennessee Mayors Association.

2026 promises to be another exciting year. Thanks to our 17 years of cultivating and building relationships among our clean energy stakeholders, we will continue working closely with our members to promote renewable energy with economic development. Please consider becoming a member or renewing your annual membership today.

TREEDC is a 501 C 3 charitable organization. For more information regarding 2026 membership opportunities click <http://treedc.us/membership/index.html>

EV CHARGING STATIONS OPENED IN SEQUATCHIE COUNTY

Two fast EV charging stations were recently installed at Sequatchie County/Dunlap Chamber of Commerce. These chargers are part of the East Charge TN Network, a statewide initiative in partnership with Tennessee Valley Authority, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and Seven States Power Corporation. These partnerships work to make long-distance EV travel easier across Tennessee and beyond.



Sequatchie County Executive Keith Cartwright

TREEDC Member Sequatchie County Executive Keith Cartwright and TREEDC President/Dunlap Mayor Dwain Land agreed the chargers not only benefits locals and visitors with electric vehicles but will give travelers the opportunity to shop while charging their vehicles and support downtown Dunlap.

SEQUATCHIE COUNTY'S PROPANE SCHOOL BUSES HAVE ARRIVED

Two new propane school buses will be used during morning and afternoon routes. Each Bluebird bus cost \$159,974 plus an additional \$10,800 for air conditioning, Grant funding for the buses totaled \$ 62,000. Propane gas buses have fewer emissions and are much quieter. According to Scotty Holland, Sequatchie County School's facilities and transportation supervisor, propane is less expensive than diesel fuel. Congratulations to Sequatchie County!

TREEDC MEMBER LIGHTWAVE SOLSR ANNOUCES SOLAR TAX CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES AND NON-PROFITS



While the 30% residential solar tax credit has ended for homeowners, the 30% federal commercial solar tax credit is still available – but only for a limited time. This remaining incentive represents a significant opportunity for businesses and non-profits to reduce energy costs and invest in long-term sustainability.

For more information about commercial solar opportunities click here: [The Clock Is Ticking on Commercial Solar Incentives](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: MARCH 31, 2026



Mark your calendar for TAEBC's Annual Meeting on March 31. This virtual meeting will gather TAEBC members and stakeholders across the state to celebrate our growing advanced energy economy. For more information click here: [Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council — Championing Tennessee's advanced energy economy](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 2-3, 2026

The 2026 conference will be held at the Chattanooga Hotel, 1201 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402. The focus of the Tennessee Valley Solar Conference is to bring together people who are interested in growing the solar and storage market in the Tennessee Valley to discuss strategies, market trends and policies that impact solar and industry. Attendees will participate in in-depth and forward-looking discussions on TVA policy and process and evolving technical opportunities facing the industry in the Tennessee Valley region. For more information click : [Conference – TenneSEIA Solar Association](#).



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: MAY 13-15, 2026



The [Tennessee Environmental Network Show of the South \(TENSOS\)](#) will be held in Chattanooga, May 13-15, 2026. The three-day event will host environmental professionals seeking to exchange knowledge and share ideas. The educational program offers over seventy unique courses in nine educational breakout sessions, allowing attendees to design their own personalized curriculum.

SAVE THE DATE: TDEC OEP: K-12 ENERGY CAMPS FOR EDUCATORS

OEP's K-12 Energy Education Program is excited to announce that [Energy Camps for Educators](#) will return in Summer 2026. These immersive, hands-on professional development experiences are designed to equip teachers with tools, resources, and inspiration to bring energy education into the classroom. Whether new to energy topics or looking to deepen your expertise, these camps offer engaging content, expert-led sessions, and practical classroom applications.

Camp Locations & Dates:

- [Montgomery Bell State Park](#): June 9-11, 2026
- [Fall Creek Falls State Park](#): June 16-18, 2026
- [Paris Landing State Park](#): July 14-16, 2026



To apply for Energy Camp, complete the K-12 Energy Education Camp Application [available here](#) and email the finished application to Angela.McGee@tn.gov and Alisha.Brewer@tn.gov. Applications are due April 3, 2026.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE TENNESSEE SMART MOBILITY EXPO

The [Tennessee Smart Mobility Expo](#), presented by [TennSMART](#) in partnership with the State (TDEC, TDOT, and TNECD) and [Tennessee Clean Fuels](#), will take place at GEODIS Park in Nashville on May 12. The Expo is a celebration of the latest transportation technologies, innovations, and research that make Tennessee an emerging leader in mobility solutions. With thought-provoking sessions, tech demonstrations, and networking, the expo celebrates the state's position in automotive manufacturing and as a generator of smart mobility solutions.

Starting in 2023, the Smart Mobility Expo joined with the [Tennessee Sustainable Transportation Forum & Expo](#). The joint event aims to promote greater networking and educational opportunities for mobility stakeholders.

The Expo is attended by leaders from vehicle manufacturers and suppliers, Tennessee-based research institutions and universities, fleet operators, utilities, municipalities, state agencies, and the advanced transportation ecosystem, fostering valuable connections. Sign up for the [email list here](#) to stay up to date. Registration and a detailed agenda will be released soon.

U.S. DOE ANNOUNCES REORGANIZATION



U.S. DOE recently announced an organizational realignment, reflecting federal administrative priorities. An updated organizational chart is available here. Additionally, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory has been renamed the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR) to reflect the broader vision for the lab's applied energy research and to honor its location in Colorado.

ENERGY STORAGE INNOVATIONS PRIZE

The U.S. DOE Office of Electricity recently announced that it has reopened the Energy Storage Innovations Prize Round 2. The one-phase competition is a call for new, innovative, and promising energy storage solutions to address niche markets and to grow a community of energy storage innovators. The competition offers a total of \$300,000 in prizes.



Round 2 focuses on less conventional use cases (e.g., remote communities, extreme operating conditions) and innovative energy storage technology solutions, across all duration scales, to advance the market landscape. Individuals, academia, non-federal government entities, small businesses, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and other inventors in the U.S. working on nascent or emerging energy storage innovations that address less conventional use cases are eligible to apply. Applications are due by March 13, 2026.

TVA ENERGYRIGHT LAUNCHES RESILIENCE 360 PROGRAM FOR DISPATCHABLE ON-SITE POWER FOR BUSINESSES



TVA EnergyRight recently launched Resilience 360, a program that utilizes vetted, third-party developers to install, operate, and maintain backup generators on-site for businesses. Backup generators support business operations during outages and during grid peak demand. Participants will work out an agreement with the generator installer and operator, as well as TVA, to cover project costs. Whenever a qualified resiliency event occurs, the system automatically activates backup power, allowing the business to continue operations. [Learn more about Resilience 360.](#)

TDEC SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR 2026 GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation recently announced the 2026 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 2026 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.](#)