TVA NEWS RELEASE

TVA Funds Six Connected Communities Pilot Projects to Lower Energy Costs, Support STEM and Workforce Development

- Six pilot projects located across the region were selected for up to $2 million in TVA funding to help communities transition to a cleaner economy.
- Connected Communities is one of several TVA initiatives designed to help achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- To learn more about TVA's Connected Communities initiative, including resources and tools for communities to implement their own Connected Communities initiatives, please visit www.tva.gov/ConnectedCommunities or email your inquiry to ConnectedCommunities@tva.gov.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Connected Communities initiative announced today funding up to $2 million for six pilot projects that provide STEM education and workforce development training, increase connectedness, lower energy costs, deliver environmental benefits and increase community resiliency.

"Connected Communities is a unique initiative that helps communities improve the quality of life for their residents, and we're excited to see what impact the next round of pilot projects will have on the people we serve," said Joe Hoagland, vice president of Innovation and Research at TVA.

The six pilot projects awarded funding by the TVA Connected Communities initiative are:

- **Memphis, Tennessee.** *Engaging Children in the Power of STEM Education and the Career Pipeline*: Expanding the technologies at the Wang Experiential Learning Center to equip local students with workforce education and skill development.
- **Nashville, Tennessee.** *Connecting Families for Student Success*: Enhancing parental access to, understanding of and involvement in their children's academic journeys.
- **Ripley, Tennessee.** *Lighting the Way: Resilient Ripley Microgrid*: Building a resilient microgrid to lower energy costs for local city facilities and ensure reliable power during emergencies.
- **Memphis, Tennessee.** *Driving Tennessee Forward - EV Technologies*: Providing the community with equitable access to EV charging stations and developing a curriculum for students to learn job skills related to EV charging. Approval in process, expected to be completed this summer.
- **Kilpatrick, Alabama.** *High-Tech Connect Center*: Creating a community-based indoor/outdoor technology center in Kilpatrick, Alabama to provide access to fiber

internet, digital literacy training and more. Approval in process, expected to be completed this summer.

- **Guntersville, Alabama.** *Connected Community Through Sustainable Service*: Transforming an area into a sunrise-to-sunset district that offers a public education space, amenities for residents and guests and an opportunity for students to learn about new, clean technologies. Approval in process, expected to be completed this summer.

Connected Communities is one of several TVA initiatives designed to help achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This initiative enables communities' readiness for a future energy grid. Ensuring communities have access to amenities such as broadband internet, healthy environments, job opportunities and resiliency plans is important as the electric utility industry continues to grow and transition.

Hoagland expressed the importance of community participation in achieving a future low-emissions grid: "So many of our programs rely on things like the internet or innovative technologies. By working with communities to bring partners together to deploy projects that focus on these topics, we're ensuring our communities are better prepared for the future."

A total of 27 applications were submitted and evaluated by a diverse group of stakeholders. Of the projects submitted, six projects were awarded grants for the next round of pilot projects. These projects will share over $2 million in grant funding from TVA in 2024 through 2026.

The first call for pilots selected nine pilot projects that ranged in topics from digital literacy classes to professional children's videos for workforce development to a solar plus storage project. The profound impacts of these pilot projects have benefitted hundreds of people across the region, prompting TVA to release another call for pilots in 2023.

Georgia Caruthers, Connected Communities initiative lead, explained that continuing to work with communities on important pilot projects is making a significant difference in TVA's service region. "The first round of pilot projects produced such incredible projects around the region, and the entire Connected Communities team is excited for the new group of pilot projects to hit the ground running," said Caruthers. "Pilot projects are just one of the ways TVA supports communities, and the positive benefits from these projects leave lasting impacts on the communities they serve."

The Connected Communities initiative now has more than 20 pilot projects supporting one or more of the four focus areas:

- *Broadband and Digital Literacy:* Elevates digital equity and inclusion for everyone by supporting broadband expansion and access to modern technologies.
- *Economic Empowerment:* Supports economic security so the people in TVA's service region can contribute, to the best of their abilities, to the modern economy.
- *Energy & Environmental Justice*: Promotes access to healthy natural and built environments and reliable, affordable, clean energy for everyone in the TVA service region.
- *Enhanced Community Resiliency*: Enhances community resiliency through plans and resources that help communities minimize impacts, effectively endure evolving challenges and strengthen recovery strategies for the future.

The Tennessee Valley Authority is the nation's largest public power supplier, delivering energy to 10 million people across seven southeastern states. TVA was established 91 years ago to serve this region and the nation by developing innovative solutions to solve complex challenges. TVA's unique mission focuses on energy, environmental stewardship, and economic development. With one of the largest, most diverse, and cleanest energy systems – including nuclear, hydro, solar, gas, and advanced technologies – TVA is a leader in our nation's drive toward a clean energy future.

TVA is a corporate agency of the United States, receiving no taxpayer funding, deriving virtually all of its revenues from sales of electricity. In addition to operating and investing its revenues in its electric system, TVA provides flood control, navigation, and land management for the Tennessee River system, and assists local power companies and state and local governments with economic development and job creation. Learn more at Energy System of the Future.

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