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TVPPA, Seven States Boards Set Major Change In Course
TVPPA News magazine thanks TVPPA Chairman Greg Williams, Seven States Power Corp. Chairman Rody Blevins and Distributors Insurance Co. Chairman Greg Fay for taking time to discuss significant events of the last couple of months—and what’s to come.

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TVPPA Brings Down Curtain On 2017 Conference Slate
A look ahead to speakers and topics on tap for TVPPA’s last two conferences of 2017—Utility Customer Service & Communications and Utility Human Resource Management, each of which is set for Nov. 15-17 in Nashville, TN.

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North Alabama EC’s Purdy: ‘We Have Some Momentum’
Once a solid, 74-megawatt system, North Alabama EC, Stevenson, AL, lost industrial load for years and was down to just 33 megawatts—until this year, when General Manager Bruce Purdy & Co. finally got a long-overdue, much-needed win.

Did you notice the address label on the cover of this edition of TVPPA News magazine? We imprinted your email address! That is, IF we have one. With the importance of email, it’s imperative that we have your email address.

If you didn’t see your email on the cover, scan the QR code or visit www.tvppa.com, click “Communications” and follow the link from there. It’s easy and only takes a moment to make sure you’re receiving all the information we are trying to send you.

about the cover:
Seven States Power Corp. Chairman Rody Blevins (left), Distributors Insurance Co. Chairman Greg Fay (seated) and TVPPA Chairman Greg Williams offer their thoughts on a dramatic change in direction for the associations representing the Valley’s 154 local power companies. (Photo by Mark Gilliland)
**The Hazards of Cell Phone Usage**

- Dumb things people do when they are distracted
- Linemen working on energized lines
- Office workers serving customers
- Driving company vehicles

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*The Hazards of Cell Phone Usage* shows how cell phones can be dangerous when working conditions demand full attention and concentration. This presentation “works” because it uses humor to make a serious point. This is the perfect video for a rainy-day safety meeting. 7-minute DVD $95

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**Do cell phones cause accidents?**

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**TVPPA Magazine**

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**Ask TVPPA**

“ASK TVPPA” is a regular feature *TVPPA News* magazine. Got a question for TVPPA’s Chattanooga, TN-based staff? Just e-mail TVPPA NEWS Editor Bob Gary Jr. at bgary@tvppa.com

**Question:** What’s TVPPA’s take on President Trump’s four nominees to the TVA Board of Directors?

**Answer:** President Donald Trump announced Sept. 21 the names of four individuals he’d nominated to serve on the TVA Board of Directors (see related item, page 26).

The nominees, each of whom faces confirmation hearings in the U.S. Senate are Skip Thompson of Decatur, AL; Jeff Smith of Oak Ridge, TN; A.D. Frazier of Atlanta, GA and Kenny Allen of St. Louis, MO.

TVPPA President/CEO Doug Peters issued this statement following President Trump’s announcement:

“TVPPA welcomes the announcement that the White House has nominated four individuals to serve on the TVA Board of Directors. We are eager to see the confirmation process move forward as expeditiously as possible.

“As the regional trade association representing the 154 local power companies that distribute power to nine million customers in the Valley, TVPPA and its members are paramount stakeholders in TVA policies and operations.

“During the confirmation process it is critical that a priority be placed on four essential criteria:

- Support for the public business power model in the Tennessee Valley
- A commitment to least-cost planning principles
- Support for TVA’s current overall direction
- Freedom from any conflict of interest

“We call upon the Senate delegation to consider these criteria as they participate in hearings and interviews with these nominees leading up to the confirmation vote,” Peters said.
EDITOR’S NOTE
I’m writing this in the predawn hours of Oct. 2 (very early on the clock, very late on the calendar), having just awakened to the news that somebody shot into a crowd at a Las Vegas music festival a few hours ago. Initial reports hold that more than 20 died and more than 100 were injured in that attack.

I have to admit that every time I see or hear a report of that type—the recent Nashville church shooting also comes to mind—I wonder whether the fractures in our civilizations may finally be beyond repair.

But if I take another moment and shift my focus, I think of the hundreds of highly skilled men and women who’ve been working—and continue to work—to restore power in locations devastated in recent weeks by hurricanes of epic proportion.

I won’t attempt here to list TVPPA-member utilities that have sent crews to do that vital work, simply because someone would be left out. What I will do is offer thanks to and for those utilities and those crews for their efforts.

Not only do you routinely undertake that work, which we tend to forget is as dangerous as it is vital, but you do it with utter selflessness—an eagerness, even—that’s heartening.

So I thank you for that; for reminding all of us that while there are people out there who do profoundly terrifying things, they are far more than outweighed by those who work hard, usually in terrible conditions, simply to help.

Bob Gary, Jr. | Editor

An electrical crew works to restore power to Corazon, Puerto Rico, after Hurricane Maria devastated the island on September 27, 2017.
Predictable Surprises Mark First Five Weeks As CEO

**TVPPA processes not perfect, but have never failed us**

I want to start my first column by stating that I am humbled to have been chosen to lead TVPPA, Seven States Power Corp. (7SPC) and Distributors Insurance Co. (DIC) at this very interesting time in our industry and in our relationship with TVA.

I have enjoyed no part of my career more than the 16-plus years I have spent working with you, for you—and, I like to think, serving you in ways that help you tend to your employees and the people of the Tennessee Valley. I believe I understand the import of this job and you have my commitment to doing this job every day to the very best of my abilities.

I am just starting my sixth week on the job, and the first five weeks saw some really interesting issues emerge. While the specifics were a bit of a surprise, the fact that there were issues to deal with came as no surprise.

TVPPA has always been and always will be the forum where differing ideas and interests are debated, the goal being finding the best solution for the common good. The state of the electric-utility industry today and the resulting challenges that members face will only up the ante on the sometimes-raucous tone and tenor of our interface with each other and with TVA.

With this in mind, I offer the following: I have seen tension and heated discussions on several fronts over the years. Our committee and advisory-group processes are not perfect. However, I want you to remember that the TVPPA processes have never failed us because the collective good protects so much more than just the issue at hand.

When we were six months out from the rate change in 2011, we were a collection of wildly divergent thoughts and ideas—and yet, we found consensus just a few months later. I remain confident that these processes will again get us to where we need to be in March even if the path is not so clear in September.

**Five Priorities**

The Executive Committee of the TVPPA Board of Directors have identified five areas that they want the TVPPA staff to focus on as we near the end of 2017 and look forward to 2018. Those areas are:

- Complete the negotiation process with TVA as it relates to TVA’s Strategic Price Plan.
- Begin executive-level discussions with TVA on how best to preserve the public-power model in the Tennessee Valley.
- Begin executive-level discussions with TVA on how to achieve flexibility in the wholesale power contract to allow members to self-generate.
- Participate with TVA in the development of its next long-range financial plan.
- Work with TVA to develop strategic goals and identify roles and responsibilities related to the creation and implementation of any new DER-related products and programs for the Valley.

The TVPPA staff is already working on plans across our many functions to ensure we are totally aligned with these initiatives. You are very likely aware of the negotiations between the Rates & Contracts Committee and TVA with respect to TVA’s Strategic Pricing Plan. You are unlikely aware of the work that has begun, in just the past couple of weeks, on the other four initiatives.

Unfortunately, the detail behind these initiatives far exceeds what I can cover here. Please know that you will be hearing much more about these initiatives in the coming days and weeks through our monthly District Report, our verbal reports in the district meetings, in our committee meetings and anytime you care to ask me.

With 7SPC in mind, we are working to identify and deploy a distributed energy-resource-management system. This system will initially allow participating members to better manage their peak loads and will set the stage for managing distributed energy resources in the aggregate in the future. We will also be responding, when appropriate, to proposals on projects like Wal-Mart’s desire for greater amounts of renewable energy serving its corporate load.

Thankfully for me, DIC remains a very well-run company and thus, a very successful member service. There are always issues that must be addressed in any company of DIC’s size, but none of those rise to the level of complexity that TVPPA and 7SPC face.

In closing, let me say you have given me the best job I could have ever hoped for. I will work diligently every day to earn it.
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The NISC iVUE® enterprise software provides fully integrated solutions for accounting, customer care and billing and mailroom services, as well as a suite of smart grid solutions like Meter Data Management, prepaid metering, web-based and mobile consumer presentation, reporting and payment tools, mobile workforce automation, mapping, outage management and distribution analytics. NISC is member owned and provides software and IT services to more than 750 utility and telecommunications providers in 48 states, Canada and the South Pacific.
In a changing electricity marketplace, many utilities have looked to the growing share of electric vehicles (EVs) on the roads as a potential source of load growth—and revenue. The cars’ battery technology could have significant implications for the electric sector, as well; economies of scale in EV battery production could make power storage cheaper, to the point where it could become a cost-effective solution for utility applications.

Those are among the reasons why organizations like TVA and APPA have entered into partnerships with government and private organizations to research, develop, and deploy EV infrastructure and technology. And as recently as a year ago, talk of EV charging infrastructure was booming, particularly in the Valley; utilities were sharing success stories about how they were preparing for future growth or got ahead of the trends by establishing programs to facilitate vehicle charging.

But even as utility groups have worked to take advantage of the potential for more EVs and looked for solutions to accommodate their entry onto the grid, automakers have quietly balked at regulatory pressure to produce more EVs. Automakers argue that consumers aren’t as interested in fuel economy now that gas prices are lower, and are looking instead for SUVs and larger vehicles while EVs are stranded in showrooms.

That argument fell on deaf ears with the Obama administration, which was focused on facilitating a longer-term vision in which vehicles would be largely autonomous, electric, and shared. But, like most Obama-era policies, the regulatory framework underpinning that vision is now getting a thorough review by the Trump Administration. That could mean utilities’ investments in the future of EVs are what wind up stranded.

The Big Deal
The growth in EVs can be traced indirectly to vehicle-emissions and fuel-economy standards promulgated by states, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). EPA and NHTSA follow separate statutes in setting their standards, and while they are instructed not to set them based on the fact that zero-emissions vehicles are technically achievable, automakers can choose to meet the standards across their fleet by manufacturing EVs to counter-balance more fuel-intensive vehicles like SUVs.

The most recent standards were set as part of a deal brokered in 2012 between the Obama administration, automakers, and the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which has led states in seeking the most stringent standards and won a waiver from federal preemption in 2009. The agreement would raise each automaker’s average fuel economy across its entire fleet by five percent each year between 2017 and 2025, with the ultimate goal of reaching 54.5 miles per gallon by the end of that period.

At the time, all sides lauded the deal. While no party got exactly what they had hoped for, all agreed the compromise was fair. Further, the agreement called for EPA, NHTSA, and CARB to perform a midterm review of the goals for the
furthest years no later than spring of 2018, after which EPA would determine whether any changes in the agreed-upon standards are warranted.

Reconsidering
That agreement began to go off the rails last summer, when the Obama administration began a concerted push to finalize numerous regulations across multiple agencies before leaving office. EPA had opened a docket for the midterm review called for in the 2012 deal, but gave stakeholders a narrow window to comment on an extensive technical record supporting the current standards. Shortly after the November election, EPA quickly proposed maintaining the existing standards and finalized its decision on January 13, 2017.

Automakers cried foul. Despite the extensive technical record, they said, new information showed significantly more electrification would be required to meet the standards. Based on the increased costs of EV production and the Obama EPA’s rushed determination, automakers petitioned the Trump administration to reconsider EPA’s decision and harmonize its process with NHTSA’s.

In recent months, both NHTSA and EPA have opened dockets suggesting they may roll back the model year 2022-2025 standards, as well as the 2021 standard. While the move hasn’t exactly been stealthy, it has largely escaped the radar of utilities and other EV proponents despite threatening to cut into expected EV production. However, the move has not escaped the view of California and the CARB.

From California To The Valley
California has long led the way in pushing for the most stringent standards possible, and it has won the benefit of a legal waiver from Clean Air Act to set its own standards if it is unsatisfied by those set by federal agencies. But it is far from the only state with a stake in the EV debate.

Thirteen other states have elected to follow California’s standard, even if it breaks away from the unified national program brokered with EPA and NHTSA. And while those states are mostly located on the coasts, the Tennessee Valley has its own special relationship with EVs.

The Nissan vehicle assembly plant in Smyrna, TN, produces the all-electric Nissan Leaf, and the company has a battery manufacturing plant in the state as well. Georgia boasts the third highest number of electric vehicles on the road.

And TVA has partnered with non-governmental organizations and cities to set up charging stations, as well as invested in battery research with Oak Ridge National Lab. In general, the region’s focus on innovation has inspired many local power companies to prepare intelligently for EV growth.

If NHTSA and EPA break from the agreed-upon vehicle standards, California would likely exercise its ability to set its own standards, leading to a split among the states—with EV-friendly states in the Valley caught in the middle.

Their state vehicle standards wouldn’t signal a strong market for EVs, so utility sector investments and expectations could languish. Alternatively, EPA could revoke (Continued on page 24)
When Should You Make Post-Accident Repairs?

Fixing an accident-causing problem admitting liability?

While not a regular occurrence, local power companies (LPCs) may occasionally find themselves in a quandary after completing an investigation of an incident occurring on its system.

The investigation may lead to a conclusion that the system was, in some ways, arguably deficient in its design or maintenance. If the deficiency possibly played some role in causing or contributing to the accident, a decision must be made as to whether repairs should be made—and, if so, how those repairs should be made.

A couple of simple examples illustrate the legal issues involved in these decisions:

■ A contractor’s employee inadvertently strikes your distribution line with a crane, and the employee is severely injured. While investigating the cause of the accident, you determine, for the first time, that the clearance between the distribution line and the ground is less than that required under the terms of National Electric Safety Code.

Do you repair the line and increase the clearance to what it should have been under the NESC, or do you leave the line alone? If you repair the line and increase the clearance, are you not admitting that your company caused the accident?

■ Your system is in charge of setting the timing sequences and maintaining the traffic control signals in your community. A wreck occurs at an intersection and, upon investigation, you learn that calculations made when initially setting the timing for the lights were in error.

Do you correct the mistake, and recalculate the timing sequences? If you do not correct the timing, what risks are there that another wreck may eventually happen?

There are clearly competing, and inconsistent, interests in play in both examples above. On the one hand, as a result of the post-accident investigation, you are now on notice that there is a problem within your system—a problem that you have the responsibility to address and repair, if necessary.

On the other hand, addressing and repairing the situation will likely provide clear evidence of fault in any subsequent lawsuit filed as a result of any injuries to the contractor’s employee, or any injuries resulting from the accident in the intersection.

To Repair—or Not

Fortunately, the law recognizes these competing interests and provides an avenue for parties to make the necessary repairs without necessarily admitting fault in any subsequent lawsuit. Rule 407 of the Federal Rules of Evidence provides as follows:

When, after an event, measures are taken which, if taken previously, would have made the event less likely to occur, evidence of the subsequent measures is not admissible to prove negligence or culpable conduct in connection with the event. This Rule does not require the exclusion of evidence of subsequent measures when offered for another purpose, such as proving ownership, control or feasibility of precautionary measures, if controverted, or impeachment.

A principle argument in favor of the Rule is to encourage the making of necessary repairs in order to protect the public. If a company is faced with having those subsequent (but necessary) repairs admitted in a trial, such evidence might amount to, in effect, an admission of fault.

Out of fear of this admission, some companies might refuse to make the needed repairs. In order to provide safety to others, and to ensure that a similar incident does not recur, the general rule of law provides that any evidence of the subsequent remedial measures is not admissible. In other words, the repairs can be made without fear of having those repairs used as evidence of negligence in a lawsuit.

Note, however, that the Rule against admissibility is not without exceptions. For example, if there is a question as to control or ownership of the item that needs repairs, subsequent remedial measures may be admissible to prove ownership or control.

Take the second example above; if your system disputed its responsibility for calculating or maintain the timing sequences, but made the subsequent repairs anyway, evidence of those subsequent measures might be admissible on the issue of ownership or control.

Be forewarned, (Continued on page 29)
GOT A LEAK OR DRIP?

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Standards key to one electrical equipment lab’s service

FROM TONY SALVATORE: A major risk for all TVPPA members is mechanical breakdown to substation transformers. Although insurance is available to address this exposure, alone it addresses only part of the issue—that of reimbursing costs after a loss occurs. A key component should be transformer oil and dissolved gas testing, which can pinpoint problems and thus prevent a mechanical breakdown from occurring. Loss prevention is always a more cost effective and preferable alternative to loss reimbursement. The accompanying article provides some background on the testing process, and why it’s important to the maintenance of your transformers and the reliability of your service delivery.

Insulating fluid analysis is an important tool for transformer owners.

It provides a relatively inexpensive method to monitor the condition of the insulating fluids. It is considered a trending analysis and can be used to help facility managers or transformer owners prevent unplanned outages and schedule preventive maintenance operations more effectively.

The cost of replacement transformers along with the down-time associated with installing them is very high when compared with the annual cost of the insulating fluid analysis. Depending on the size of the unit, the lead time for a custom-built transformer can be as long as a year. Using the results obtained from the analysis, owners can often prolong the 30-to-40-year life expectancy of their units.

United Power Services uses basic ASTM oil quality tests including dielectric tests (D1816 and D877); acid content (D974); interfacial tension (D971); and relative density, color, and moisture content (D1533). Dissolved gas analysis (D3612) is a key component to the trending analysis for transformers and other electrical equipment.

The gases that are generated from operating equipment can indicate such things as partial discharge (the breakdown of a small portion of a solid or fluid electrical insulation system under high voltage stress), overheating, and arcing which could cause a potentially catastrophic explosion. Analysis lets us catch such problems before they reach this stage and prevent the unplanned shutdown of a plant or community when a transformer is lost. There are other analyses that can be done to provide even more information about the health of the equipment such as power factors (D924) and furan analysis (D5837).

ASTM Benefits

ASTM methods provide an invaluable resource to insulating fluid laboratories around the world by providing robust standardized test methods with which the insulating fluids are analyzed. But more than that, participation in ASTM meetings gives us the opportunity to network with other labs similar to ours. It allows us to have access to industry leaders—all the way from transformer manufacturers and insulating fluid producers to (Continued on page 18)
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Meeting Sept. 18, 2017, in Chattanooga, TN, the TVPPA Board of Directors sent what its chairman called a “very strategic message” to not only member-utility executives and staff, but to TVA as well.

The directors concluded a wide-ranging discussion by adopting, without dissent, this motion:

*The TVPPA Board of Directors empowers TVPPA staff and leadership (chairs and vice chairs of TVPPA and Seven States Power Corp., TVPPA President/CEO and General Counsel) to strategically communicate and execute concurrent negotiations with TVA, reaching a consensus on the parameters surrounding power-contract flexibility and local-power-company ownership and investment recognition, interdependent with the continued development of the Strategic Pricing Plan and Long Range Financial Plan.*

“This sends a very important message,” TVPPA Chairman Greg Williams told his colleagues immediately after the vote. “It’s a very strategic message: ‘This is the direction this board wants our association to take.’”

That step taken on Sept. 18 had its genesis on Aug. 9, when the top leadership of TVPPA and Seven States Power Corp. (7SPC) met in Murfreesboro, TN. The aim of the meeting was actually to prep for another meeting, immediately thereafter, with TVA representatives.

At one point in that first meeting, the issue on the table was the ongoing conversation involving TVPPA, 7SPC, TVA and retail giant Walmart. It was then that the assembled captains decided to change course—and significantly.

“They said, ‘We’ve been elected by our members to act on their behalf, and we are refreshing our authority to do that,’” TVPPA Vice President Danette Scudder recalled. “Both boards had discussed and resolved that we should take the lead in the Walmart talks.

“It was heartening to see the leadership stand with that kind of solidarity, conviction and assertiveness,” Scudder said. “They’re taking that step because they feel threatened. Revenue isn’t growing. Their livelihoods are on the line, and there’s an intensity that goes with self-preservation.”

Scudder said the doctrine regarding refreshment of TVPPA/7SPC board leadership established in that first meeting was given voice in the second—and wasn’t what the TVA staffers assembled thought they would hear.

“TVA’s not used to us asserting ourselves quite so firmly.”

‘TVA’s not used to us asserting ourselves quite so firmly.’
TVPPA Chairman Greg Williams, 7SPC Chairman Rody Blevins and Greg Fay, chairman of Distributors Insurance Co. and vice chairman of 7SPC, recently took time to articulate their views on these matters:

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STRAATEGICALLY ENGAGED WITH TVA by TVPPA Chairman Greg Williams

Meetings. Our work lives seem to be full of them. Most are pretty predictable in terms of how they’re run, and the outcomes are seldom noteworthy. But every now and then, a meeting changes... well, maybe not everything, but a lot.

That was certainly the case when it comes to a meeting I attended on August 9.

On that date, for the very first time in the history of TVPPA, we became strategically engaged with TVA in a whole new area; we are now positioned to directly face and deal with the impact of distributed energy resources (DERs) in the Valley.

Since DERs are, for the most part, being connected to local distribution systems, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation. Many traditional utilities outside our region are facing challenges to the central-station power-supply model.

Here in the Valley, we are feeling those same pressures to protect revenue and market share, but the solutions we seek must fit our own unique business model. I take great reassurance in the fact that TVA and TVPPA equally recognize the importance of local power company (LPC) engagement and direction.

It’s incumbent upon us as TVPPA members to step up and lead—creating guidance and developing answers that effectively integrate DER into our distribution systems. TVA’s role will be to assist and provide resources in helping to implement the solutions we craft.

To be sure, it’s an evolution in the relationship between TVA and TVPPA, specifically in how we envision working together going forward. The executive committees of both TVPPA and Seven States Power Corp., along with the chairs of each of TVPPA’s standing committees, have identified and tasked TVPPA staff with moving forward on five key objectives that are to be fully integrated into almost every discussion with, and aspect of, our relationship with TVA:

- Defining and creating power contract flexibility for LPCs
- Protecting the public-power model in the Valley
- Actively engaging in TVA’s next Long-Range Financial Plan
- Working collaboratively with TVA on the Strategic Pricing Plan
- Launching the DER Council and setting strategic objectives/initiatives

It’s important for us all to ponder the magnitude of how our approach and position are changing in regard to our partnership with TVA. We have intentionally placed upon ourselves the responsibility to define objectives, create initiatives, and produce solutions in collaboration with TVA, in contrast to what has often been the case in the past—namely, of simply being on the receiving end of the same from TVA.

If ever there was a time when the members of TVPPA are center stage—literally the bull’s eye, in terms of how we will shape and determine our future—it’s now. The opportunities and tests we face are extraordinary, yet so are the resources that we bring to bear.

I am confident we will find a way forward that will draw upon our various strengths and perspectives to develop appropriate, innovative, and collaborative solutions of which we can all be proud.

---

Distributors Insurance Co. Chairman Greg Fay: ‘This is our last, best chance’

Greg Fay is renowned throughout TVPPA for his wit, but the chairman of Distributors Insurance Co. could hardly be more serious about the future of public power in the Valley.

“For 20 years, the greatest threat to the 9 million Valley residents we serve is the federal government’s ongoing desire to sell TVA,” said Fay, general manager at Clinton, TN, UB since 1999.

“We have to work with TVA to permanently remove that ‘For Sale’ sign. Failing that, and speaking for myself, we’d need to protect ourselves another way; that is, to position ourselves to facilitate the transfer of TVA and its assets to stakeholders in the Valley—and exclude external investors.

“I believe this is our last, best chance to do that,” Fay said.

Fay, who also serves as vice chairman of Seven States Power Corp., is pinning his hopes on exchanges he had with TVA President/CEO Bill Johnson at TVA’s Aug. 8 All-Customer meeting in Murfreesboro, TN.

“He committed to me publicly and personally that TVA was ready to move past ‘talk’ and partner with the LPCs (local power companies) to move forward to protect the public-power model and the Valley’s 9 million ratepayers,” Fay said. “We’ve never had that public commitment before.”

In Fay’s estimation, moving past a talking stage would be a triumph in itself. He likened two decades’ worth of discussions with TVA regarding some form of asset ownership to a Bill Murray movie.

“It’s like we’re living Groundhog Day,” Fay said. “Equity ownership has been on the table since 1999. We have talked. We have discussed. We’ve had dinners. We’ve had retreats—talk, talk, talk.

“Then, every time we get close—and we’ve been close—TVA does a reorganization, and we’re back to square one, with new people needing time to get their arms around the issue,” he said.

“We need action,” he said. “Not more talk.”

Fay said the Aug. 9 declaration by TVPPA and Seven States leaders that those boards of directors would “refresh their authority” was a necessary first step.

“TVA is not going to put its CEO and top management in a room with 40 LPCs, let alone 150,” he said. “We cannot work with those numbers. We need to meet
with their decision-makers.

“We’re not a democracy; we’re more like a republic. We’ve now empowered our top leaders to meet with their top leaders and forge a strategic plan that will help us permanently take that ‘For Sale’ sign out of TVA’s front yard,” Fay said.

Seven States Power Corp. Chairman Rody Blevins: ‘We Have To Be Engaged And United’

TVPPA NEWS: Talk a bit, please, about the significance of the TVPPA and Seven States boards “refreshing” their authority to represent their members.

RODY BLEVINS: I think a lot of that discussion has been driven by comments we hear from TVA—when there’s an issue TVA doesn’t want to discuss, they’ll say, ‘Well, we’re not sure you have 100 percent of your membership in line on this.’ TVA uses that to stop major discussions.

We’ll probably never have 100 percent agreement, especially on major issues, but that can’t stop us from moving forward. In electing us to serve on these boards, the members have tasked us to represent them.

I think we had a clear consensus on that point [on Aug. 9], so that’s the direction we’re going in, and we clearly delivered that message to TVA.

TVPPA NEWS: What do you feel are the main issues on which TVPPA/Seven States and TVA need to come to terms?

BLEVINS: There are some issues that have been brewing for a while. One is TVA’s financial plan; this is the fifth straight year they’ve raised rates. Most of us are okay with TVA paying off some debt, but many of us feel like TVA needs to slow down [on rate increases].

Another issue is an equity position with TVA. People in the Valley have been paying for TVA for the last 80 years, but have no equity ownership in TVA. There were discussions about equity in the late 1990s and in the 2000s . . . promises were made at different times, but we’re in the same place today we’ve always been, with no equity position.

And in the last few years, an issue that’s come to the forefront is flexibility in the all-requirements contract. We need flexibility there so that we can offer a distributed-energy solution to our members.

TVPPA NEWS: Do you feel as though progress is being made, either on the issues you’ve mentioned, or others?

BLEVINS: We’ve seen some progress on TVA’s side . . . I feel good about that right now.

The financial plan, with the rate increases every year; I asked [TVA CFO] John Thomas on three or four occasions about having discussions. The first couple of times I did that, I got, ‘No, that’s the plan’ . . . TVA needs to take a serious look at that plan and make some modifications.

The equity piece is a tough piece. Can we do this legally? And contract flexibility is going to have to come in some shape or form because the market will drive that, whether TVA wants it or not. The market’s going to drive it for all of us.

I’m optimistic overall, but can we be successful on all three of these? That remains to be seen. In order to push forward and get good results, we have to keep our members engaged and united. //

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Cover

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TVPPA NEWS SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017
TVPPA Brings Down Curtain On 2017 Conference Slate
Customer Service & Communications, HR set for Nashville

President Donald Trump will be a front-and-center topic of conversation at TVPPA’s 2017 Utility Human Resource Management Conference.

That conversation will have nothing to do with North Korea, Russia, or Ivanka Trump, of course; rather, attorney Kim Vance is scheduled to break down the significant effects the current administration has had on HR and related workplace issues.

“One way to look at it,” said Vance, “is that we’ve gone from the [Barack] Obama administration, which was employee-focused, to a Trump administration that’s employer-focused.”

As in past years, the Utility HRM Conference will be conducted alongside the TVPPA Customer Service & Communications Conference. Both events are scheduled for Nov. 15-17 at Nashville, TN’s Music City Sheraton, and online registration is open at www.tvppa.com.

While agendas were still being finalized at press time, Utility CS&C Planning Committee Chairman Bill Anderson said highlights of that meeting include a pre-conference rollout of TVPPA’s first class in its new Utility Marketing Certificate.

Marlin Williams of North East Mississippi EPA, Oxford, MS, is set to talk about how to manage workplace stress.

“Everybody loves Marlin, and he always does a great job,” said Anderson, the customer-service manager at Glasgow, KY, EPB. “We’ll also be talking about the impact of solar, particularly in terms of protecting customers from scams—just because people say they can install solar at your home doesn’t mean they can. It’s like a guy with a chain saw and a pickup truck telling you he’s a certified tree-trimmer.”

Anderson said the Utility CS&C slate will also include a focus group made up of Nashville-area electric customers, assembled in the hope that they’ll talk candidly about what they like—and what they don’t—about their service.

“It’s always really interesting to see what people really like,” Anderson said. “You try to imagine what a certain kind of person would want, but you often find in a focus group that those stereotypes don’t hold up very well.

“I think the cool thing about having a planning committee made up of people from different utilities—large and small, cooperatives and municipals—is that you get all those different perspectives,” Anderson said.

Markets Up, Unemployment Down
Vance, a shareholder at the Baker Donelson firm and longtime Utility HRM Conference favorite, said the Trump administration’s take on workplace issues is based on the premise that lightening the regulatory burden, particularly for small business, will spur hiring.

“Take employee compensation,” she said. “Under Obama, the Department of Labor was instructed to make more workers eligible for overtime.

“That was set to take effect Dec. 1 of last year, but it was held up in court and eventually thrown out,” she said. “The Trump administration has no intent of bringing that up again, ever.”

Vance also cited pay equality, explaining that under President Obama, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission required employers with at least 100 workers to break down compensation by “wage bands” based on gender and ethnicity.

“So the federal government was able to look at that form and tell what you’re paying minorities and women,” she said. “The Trump administration has done away with that.

“Small business felt Obama-era regulations were killing them financially, because compliance was very expensive,” she said. “Larger companies take that more in stride.”

Vance said the current administration’s approach is likely to continue, given the fact that it’s working in an economic context.

“The market’s up, unemployment’s down and more new businesses are opening,” she said. “The big thing about this for utilities isn’t just how they deal with their own employees, but whether their communities prosper.

“If the community prospers, if new businesses open, then utilities benefit from all those new customers,” she said.

FLASH POINTS
TVPPA will conduct its Utility HRM and Utility CS&C conferences Nov. 15-17 at the Sheraton Music City in Nashville, TN.
Registration for each conference is available at www.tvppa.com.
users of the insulating fluids. ASTM’s committee on electrical insulating liquids and gases (D27) works closely with the transformer committee of the IEEE Power and Energy Society, which writes and publishes the standards on acceptable limits for insulating fluids—both new fluid and in-service fluids. This helps to keep us informed of developments in transformers and insulating fluid analyses.

Another area where ASTM participation has benefited our company is in proficiency testing. In our industry, there are no standard reference materials for the types of analyses performed on insulating fluids. For instance, you cannot buy a transformer mineral oil with a 50kV ASTM D1816 dielectric. That makes it particularly difficult at times to be certain that your lab is performing reliably.

At the request of Committee D27, the ASTM Proficiency Testing Programs group developed a program to help laboratories make sure they are testing insulating fluids properly. The program is composed of two parts—insulating fluid quality and dissolved gas analysis. Subscriptions to both are available from ASTM.

When you do not have readily available reference materials, this is one of the best ways to assure your lab management and your clients that your lab is performing proficiently. PTPs give your customers confidence in your ability to provide them valuable services. Participating also gives you the information necessary to make changes if your lab is not performing properly.

Being as ASTM member has been very beneficial to United Power Services Inc. The cost of the annual membership is minimal, and being an active member gives us invaluable information about where our industry is headed and a voice in standards development and review.

Nashville, TN-based UNITED POWER SERVICES (UPS) conducts chemical analysis of transformer oil samples for a large number of TVPPA-member utilities. Many of those tests come at the behest of Hartford Steam Boiler, a long-term DIC business partner that includes the cost of such testing in its insurance premiums. In each case, TVPPA members are, to a significant extent, aware of the service provided by UPS and the importance of this service to the maintenance of their substation transformers.

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Faced with having to hire someone to run TVPPA’s Education & Training operation, Doug Peters did what one might expect of a smart CEO. He picked a teacher.

“He has the right background,” Peters said of Kim Culpepper, who’d been TVPPA’s Technical Training manager since 2013. “He’s got a degree in education and a 33-year career in public power.”

The twist is that Culpepper didn’t start working on that degree until after that 33-year run at East Mississippi EPA, in his hometown of Meridian, MS. He enrolled at Mississippi State University after his retirement, earned a four-year education degree in three, then spent the next four years teaching high-school social studies classes.

“His personality jumps out,” Wyche said. “His ability to work with people to get a job done.” Indeed, Culpepper has cultivated relationships Valleywide and is busy building bridges outside the Valley as well—he and TVPPA Training Coordinator Caleb Hall spent considerable time in August in Florida, where TVPPA was to have debuted its Foreman Academy in October, as well as Indiana and Illinois.

“Building relationships isn’t something I do because I need to,” Culpepper said. “I do it because I want to. I enjoy building relationships.

“The whole idea of electric service, whether it’s customer service or work in the field, is based on relationships. The fact that I was a lineman helps me speak that language,” he added.

Culpepper comes to his new job having already established surpassingly important relationships—those he has with his Chattanooga, TN-based staff, which is comprised of Wyche, Hall and Kaitlin Plaster.

“It’s all about ‘team,’” said Culpepper, who played high-school football and basketball.

“Jim is known throughout the Valley. Caleb is gifted in terms of his organizational skills and Kate is the person who makes it all happen; when Caleb arranges training for one of our member utilities or a utility outside the Valley, Kate handles the logistics and makes sure all the materials are in place and on time,” he said.

In choosing to continue in E&T, Culpepper chose to put off his scheduled 2018 retirement.

“The reason,” he said, “is that I believe we have several chapters still to write in this story. There are more things out there we can do with TVPPA Education & Training.”
There’s no question that TVPPA’s foundation is comprised of its 154 Regular Members.

But who stops with the foundation? A foundation is something upon which you build - so that you can be more and do better.

And when you build on that foundation, you look to do so with components of only the highest quality – so that you can be more and do better.

That’s TVPPA – with a foundation of 154 Regular Members, but 118 total Associates and Affiliates as well, each of which is of the highest quality. Goods, services, associations … their roles vary, but they’re all vital to the success of TVPPA and, by extension, to the quality of the work done by TVPPA and its Regular Members for the Tennessee Valley’s 9-plus million customers.

So we say this word of thanks to those 81 Associates and 37 Affiliates – not only for their support of TVPPA, but for the good work they do every day, right where they live.

If your organization’s name isn’t on this page, but you’d like for it to be at this time next year, please e-mail TVPPA Marketing Manager Tim Daugherty at tdaugherty@tvppa.com, or call him at 423.490.7930.
As a zealous University of Alabama football fan, Bruce Purdy is well-acquainted with what it feels like to win on Saturdays. For years, though, his day job was a very different story.

The Stevenson, AL, native joined that area’s electric cooperative, North Alabama EC, in 1992 and became its general manager a decade later. There was a time, he said, when the cooperative boasted a solid 74-megawatt system.

But in the 2000s, North Alabama EC started shedding industrial load—a single aluminum plant closed, taking 20 megawatts with it. By the time a Shaw carpet plant in Stevenson closed during the Great Recession of 2008-09, Purdy said, the system was down to just 33 megawatts—less than half of what it had been at its peak.

“It’s been a struggle,” Purdy said. Those hits just kept coming earlier this year, when another carpet maker, Beaulieu, announced it would shutter two plants in nearby Bridgeport, AL, that employed more than 500 workers.

“Losing those plants would have had the same effect on Bridgeport as losing that Shaw plant had on Stevenson,” Purdy said. “It would have been a blow. Those families live paycheck-to-paycheck,” he added. “Missing a check or two gets real serious real quick.”

‘Brightest Moment’
Help was on the way, though—Mohawk Industries was interested in buying the Beaulieu plants, and TVA’s Huntsville, AL-based Economic Development staff was interested in helping make that deal.

Time was short, though—Purdy said TVA’s Huntsville office engaged him on March 9, and the Beaulieu plants were set to close on April 7.

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There were a number of things Mohawk had to have happen, so everyone associated with making those things happen had to go into action immediately,” Purdy said. “We had lots of conversations, lots of meetings, because everyone knew what was at stake for those families.”

At day’s end, that coordinated effort paid off for North Alabama EC’s service area—Mohawk has taken over the former Beaulieu plants, and has one up and running. It employs about 450 workers, but Mohawk officials have indicated that that number will go higher.

Purdy said the new load is only about 9 MW so far, but is ramping up and could top out at around 18.

“We’re back up to about 60 [megawatts system-wide],” he said. “If we can get somebody in the [former] Shaw plant, we’ll be back to 2000 levels.”

Purdy called landing Mohawk the “biggest win” he’s had at North Alabama EC and was quick to acknowledge the role played by John Bradley’s TVA Economic Development team, particularly
MEMBERSHIP PROFILE: North Alabama EC

FOUR QUESTIONS with Bruce Purdy, general manager at North Alabama EC, Stevenson, AL

1. First things first, especially for anyone who was born in, lives or works in the state you do . . . Alabama or Auburn?
Roll Tide! I grew up in the 1970s, with Bear Bryant and national championships. Every T-shirt I had when I was a kid was an Alabama T-shirt.

2. Is there a particular Alabama game that’s particularly memorable for you?
Yes, but it’s negative . . . when Notre Dame beat us for the national championship (24-23, in the 1973 Sugar Bowl). I was a kid, and I was so mad. I took down all the Alabama stuff I had on the walls of my room. I put it back up later, because that’s the way human nature works, but I took it down because I was so mad.

3. Okay . . . is there a positive counter to that memory?

4. Other than Alabama football, what do you enjoy away from the office?
I fish . . . I’m a sportsman and environmentalist. I like to bass fish at Lake Guntersville, and I used to fish some local tournaments, but our fiber project pretty much killed that. [Fiber] was seven days a week for a few years, and that’s not easy when you don’t have a large staff.

Optimistic, But Wary
It’s not as though North Alabama EC went 15 years with no bright spots; Google, for instance, is building a data center at the former Widows Creek site in Stevenson.

“That’s big for our image,” Purdy said. “Now it’s not just an old coal plant—it’s Google.”

Purdy also managed to parlay a $19.6 million federal grant into a 2011 fiber buildout.

“We couldn’t incur any more debt than was absolutely necessary,” he said. “Because we had the right people in place, we were able to do it for $24.4 million.

“Now, every account I have—with the exception of a small telephone company whose footprint we agreed to leave alone—has fiber in front of it,” he said.

The fiber buildout led to an automated metering system that Richard Ballard, the cooperative’s electric superintendent, called a “game-changer.”

“That system tells me when the power’s out before the room goes dark,” quipped Ballard, who’ll mark 43 years at North Alabama EC in November.

“We also spend a lot of time on right-of-way, especially getting lines to where we can reach them more easily. We’re pretty rural, of course, so we have a lot of lines in swamps, and even some on islands around Lake Guntersville, but we’ve really renewed our emphasis on right-of-way in the last few years,” Ballard said.

Between fiber, AMI and landing Mohawk, the future looks better to Purdy than it once did—but that doesn’t mean he and his staff can relax.

“We have some momentum,” Purdy said, “but if you’ve been around long enough—and hammered long enough—you know momentum can swing. You can lose it quickly.

“So I’m very optimistic but, at the same time, I’m wary of losing that momentum,” he said.

FLASH POINT

North Alabama EC, Stevenson, AL, serves nearly 18,000 electric customers in a two-county footprint, which includes Lake Guntersville shoreline at one end and more rugged terrain on the other.

North Alabama EC struggled for years with losing industrial load—at one point down from a peak of 74 MW to just 33.

WARREN HICKS AND ROBBY JONES

“You always have peaks and valleys in life,” he said, “but 15 years of trying as hard as you can and always coming up short . . . that’s a pretty deep valley, but [winning Mohawk] was probably the brightest moment of my 25-year career.

“I really felt TVA was my partner—their staff coordinated everything, because Beaulieu had been a direct-serve customer. TVA brought me into the mix when Mohawk got in the game—Warren Hicks did a lot of the heavy lifting, and Robbie Jones was heavily engaged as well.

“I’m quite sure that TVA was recruiting other projects around that time that were bigger, but none of those was here. For us, in our little, rural area—this was huge,” Purdy said.

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FLASH POINTS

» Growth in electric vehicles has been a source of increasing revenue for utilities.
» That growth could be threatened, though, by new regulatory actions.
» The transportation sector, which is now the nation’s largest source of emissions, should follow the electric sector’s lead in cutting emissions.

Washington (Continued from page 9)

California’s waiver and set up a pro-longed legal battle that would leave the future of EVs in limbo nationwide.

The Path Forward

At the moment, EPA and NHTSA’s rulemakings are the first indications that something could rattle the growth of EVs. A decision to break from the current course of emissions standards could create shockwaves in the industry, especially if consumer interest is not yet strong enough to drive increased production based on demand.

The market is another unknown factor. It is not yet clear whether the Obama administration’s vision of driverless, shared EVs is close at hand, but it appears that autonomous technology is rapidly advancing. While autonomous cars need not be electric drive, many of the leading designs are. The two technologies seem to be intertwined, for better or worse.

Congress could also get involved. The House recently passed an autonomous vehicles bill that will establish NHTSA as the lead agency for regulating the safety of driverless cars, and a Senate committee is giving it a close look.

A bipartisan pair of senators also introduced a bill to “harmonize” EPA and NHTSA’s standards-setting roles, which could cut California—and its emphasis on stricter standards—out of the process. Neither of those measures is “must-pass,” however, and the 115th Congress has struggled mightily to advance major legislation.

Ultimately, the market trends could continue, with EVs continuing to occupy a larger market share and potentially seeing a boost from autonomous vehicle technology coming on the market. But changes to vehicle-emissions standards would shake the regulatory foundation on which those trends are built.

Curtailing the potential of EVs would be a shame for the electric sector, which has dramatically reduced its own emissions even in the absence of carbon regulations. Now that the transportation sector accounts for the largest share of greenhouse gas emissions, perhaps it’s time for automakers to follow the electric sector’s example.
1987 – Mr. Campbell Goes To Washington

50 YEARS AGO – 1967
Albert Sanders
Tullahoma, TN, UB Manager Albert Harrison Sanders passed away in a Chattanooga, TN, hospital at the age of 64. He had been employed by the city of Tullahoma for more than 30 years.

Accountants Turn Out
An all-time record crowd of more than 400 turned out in Gatlinburg, TN, for a joint TVPPA/APPAA accounting workshop. Calvin Henze of Memphis, TN, LG & W and chairman of the APPA Accounting and Finance Section, joined TVPPA Accounting Section Chairman M.C. Butler of Greeneville, TN, L & P in presiding at that meeting.

40 YEARS AGO – 1977
Grissom Takes Charge At Duck River EMC
Charles Grissom was named acting general manager at Duck River EMC, Shelbyville, TN, following the early retirement of GM C.M. Lawrence. Grissom had been the cooperative’s chief engineer for the decade prior to his appointment.

Fayetteville Taps Laughlin
Fayetteville, TN, ES named William Laughlin to succeed the late Floyd Nelson as general manager. Laughlin came to Fayetteville ES from Bowling Green, KY, MU, where he’d been deputy general manager for the past two years.

Craig Addresses TVPPA EO & S
William Craig, an executive in General Electric’s Fast Breeder Reactor department, was scheduled to speak at TVPPAs Engineering, Operations & Safety meeting in Nashville, TN.

30 YEARS AGO – 1987
Mr. Campbell Goes To Washington
TVPPA Executive Director Jerry Campbell was among several individuals testifying in Washington, D.C., before the Tennessee Valley Congressional Caucus. At issue were a number of proposals to reorganize TVA and/or open the TVA Act.

Seale Takes The Wheel At Plateau EC
John Seale, a 15-year veteran at Plateau EC, Oneida, TN, and the cooperative’s director of engineering, was named its manager. He succeeded Roy Purkey, who left to take a job with the Tennessee Electric Cooperatives Association.

20 YEARS AGO – 1997
EPB Promotes Fugatt
Ron Fugatt was promoted to executive vice president at Chattanooga, TN, EPB. Fugatt, who’d logged 27 years at the utility, was set to take charge of its burgeoning fiber operation.

Board Appointments
The TVPPA Board of Directors made three committee appointments – Jimmy Sandlin of Scottsboro, AL, EPB to Operations Coordination; Joe Boehms of Okolona, MS, ED to Electricity Marketing and Phillip Bare of North Alabama EC, Stevenson, AL, to Rates & Contracts.

10 YEARS AGO – 2007
Morristown UC Names Wigington
Jody Wigington was named general manager at Morristown, TN, UC. Wigington had served previously as the utility’s engineering manager and succeeded Bill Swann.

Barnes Succeeds Stone
Raymond Barnes succeeded the retired Gary Stone as general manager at Benton Co., TN, ES. Stone put in 40 years at the utility, having started as an apprentice lineman. He was named GM in 1999. Barnes joined Benton Co. ES in 1978 as a right-of-way laborer.

Seven States Hires Adams
Retired from TVA after a 31-year career in its water-systems operation, Steve Adams signed on as the first-ever project manager for Seven States Power Corp.
Former TVPPA Vice Chair Collins To Retire

Jerry Collins, president of Memphis, TN, LG & W for the past decade, has announced his intention to retire, effective Dec. 19.

Collins is a former TVPPA vice chairman and secretary/treasurer. He also sits on the Seven States Power Corp. Board of Directors.

“Working for MLGW and the City of Memphis has been a great experience,” Collins said. “However, after 30 years of public service it is now time for me to spend time with my family.

“I’d like to thank the 2,500-plus employees who I have enjoyed serving with to improve the quality of life for residents through the efficient and safe delivery of electricity, natural gas and water the last 10 years,” he added.

A Memphis native, Collins previously served as that city’s Public Works director. He also served as MLGW’s interim chief utility officer from June 2007 to that December, when he was named MLGW’s CEO.

Morgan Succeeds Burt at Philadelphia, MS

Kirk Morgan has succeeded the retired John Burt as general manager at Philadelphia, MS, Utilities.

With his July 1 retirement, Burt closed the book on a career of 36 years as Philadelphia Utilities’ chief executive—the longest such run in that organization’s history. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Mississippi State University and served for 12 years, including three as chairman, on the board of directors of Distributors Insurance Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of TVPPA.

As did his predecessor, Morgan earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Mississippi State. He joined Philadelphia Utilities in 2008, after a run of 20-plus years with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and was designated Burt’s successor soon thereafter. Morgan has earned TVPPA’s Advanced Certified Power Executive designation.

Stone Takes Over At Holly Springs

Bill Stone has left the Mississippi Senate after nearly a decade to take the reins as general manager at Holly Springs, MS, UD.

Stone was serving as leader of the Mississippi Senate’s Democrats at the time of his resignation. In taking over at Holly Springs UD, he succeeds Mayor Kelvin Buck, who’d served for a year as interim manager. Stone is also a former mayor of Ashland, MS.

Trump Taps Four TVA Board Nominees

President Donald Trump has nominated four individuals to serve on the TVA Board of Directors.

Among the nominees, each of whom faces confirmation hearings in the U.S. Senate, is Skip Thompson, who sits on the Decatur, AL, Utilities Board of Directors. The University of Alabama graduate is a partner at Corporate Billing LLC and a former CEO of First American Bank in Decatur.

President Trump also nominated Jeff Smith, deputy for operations at the Oak Ridge, TN, National Laboratory. Smith coordinates overall operations at ORNL. He’d served previously in the White House Transition Planning Office and as an operations deputy at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. He holds an undergraduate degree in ceramic engineering from Ohio State University.

The President also nominated A.D. Frazier of Atlanta, GA, and Kenny Allen of St. Louis, MO. Frazier spent 35 years as an executive manager in the for-profit, not-for-profit and public sectors, and serves at present as president emeritus at Georgia Oak Partners. He is also a former president/CEO of INVEESCO, Inc., and a former chairman/CEO of Danka Business Systems. He holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of North Carolina and has completed the Harvard Business School’s Advanced Management Program.

Allen is executive vice president for operations at Armstrong Coal Co. Inc. in St. Louis, MO. He has more than 40 years of experience in the coal industry, including at Peabody Coal. A former member of the Kentucky Coal Council and the Kentucky Consortium for Energy and the Environment, Allen attended the University of Evansville and the University of North Carolina.

Johnson City Utility’s New Name: BrightRidge

The TVPPA-member utility formerly known as Johnson City, TN, PB has a new name—BrightRidge.

The new name completes a transformation of the former JCPB; it became an energy authority in March 2017, but continued to do business under its original name. The new name, BrightRidge, was adopted effective Oct. 3.

“All public-power providers operate in a rapidly evolving marketplace,” BrightRidge President/CEO Jeff Dykes said. “Despite our brand change, BrightRidge and its [more than] 175 employees will continue to [serve our customers], with the top priority being to provide safe, affordable, reliable electric service.”

Fortune, Marsh, Brandt, Rodamaker Win Power Play

The team of Dan Rodamaker, John Fortune, Michael Marsh and Carl Brandt combined to win the 2017 Power Play Golf Tournament, conducted Oct. 2 at Bowling Green, KY.

Rodamaker and Fortune, the chief executives at Gibson EMC, Trenton, TN, and Bolivar, TN, EA, respectively, teamed with Marsh and Brandt for a 12-under-par 60 at The Club at Olde Stone. Marsh is the power superintendent at Albertville, AL, MUB, while Brandt is a retired general manager from Upper Cumberland EMC, Carthage, TN.

In second place, with a 10-under-par 62, were Decatur, AL, Utilities General
Manager Ray Hardin; retired Sevier Co., TN, ES GM Rick Harrell; Harrell’s wife, Tamara, and Cullman, AL, PB Vice Chairman Steve Murphree. In third place, one shot further back, were Russellville, KY, EPB GM Dale Vowell; Oxford, MS, ED GM Rob Neely; Shawn Rohan of Whitehead & Associates and Mark Nichols, director of administration at Northcentral Mississippi EPA, Byhalia, MS.

The prize for the longest drive went to Keith Hayward, general manager at North East Mississippi EPA, Oxford, MS, while Rick Harrell won the closest-to-the-hole competition. Some 85 players turned out to take on Olde Stone, which is a consensus pick as one of the top three courses in Kentucky. Including entry fees and a pre-tournament silent auction and raffle, Power Play raised about $7,000 for the TVA Power Play Scholarship Fund. Since its 1995 inception, that fund has provided more than 500 scholarships, totaling more than $2.1 million, to children of TVPPA-member utility employees.

TVPPA Directors Ratify Nominations
Meeting Sept. 18 in Chattanooga, TN, the TVPPA Board of Directors ratified several nominations to two advisory groups and a committee:

Confirmed to serve on the Energy Programs Advisory Group were Brent Duggar (Greeneville, TN, L & P/Appalachian District), Jeff Brockett (Middle Tennessee EMC/Central District), Corey Belcher (West Kentucky RECC/Kentucky District), Tyler Jones (Sheffield Utilities/Alabama District), Eddie Howard (Alcorn Co. EPA/Mississippi District),

Tim Henderson (Cleveland, TN, Utilities/Southeastern District), Terry Wimberly (Paris, TN, BPU/Western District) and Becky Williamson (Memphis, TN, LG & W/chair-appointed at-large).

Confirmed to serve on the Fiber Deployment Advisory Group were Clayton Dowell (Bristol, TN, ES/Appalachian District), Mark Cook (Cumberland EMC/Central District), Teresa Newman (Bowing Green, KY, MU/Kentucky District), Philip Chaney (Scottsboro, AL, EPB/Alabama District), Todd Gale (Columbus, MS, L & W/Mississippi District), Erik Brinke (Blue Ridge Mountain EMC/Southeastern District), Keith Johnson (Pickwick EC/Western District), Katie Espeseth (Chattanooga, TN, EPB/chair-appointed at-large) and Kevin Doddrige (Northcentral Mississippi EPA/chair-appointed at-large).

Ernie Bowles of Clinton, TN, UB was confirmed to succeed Jack Suggs of Oak Ridge, TN, ED in representing the Appalachian District on the TVPPA Research & Development Committee.

TVA Directors Approve 1.5-Percent Rate Hike
Meeting Aug. 23 in Knoxville, TN, the TVA Board of Directors approved a fiscal 2018 budget of $10.37 billion, including a 1.5-percent effective retail rate increase.

Calling the rate increase “modest,” TVA President/CEO Bill Johnson said the hike “recognizes the need for TVA to continue to build on the financial and operational performance improvements we have made over the past three years.” TVA’s directors also approved a one-time, $500 million contribution to the TVA Retirement System—in addition to the yearly contribution of $300 million.

“A major focus on TVA’s financial health has been to attend to long-term liabilities, especially related to debt and pension,” Johnson said. “The board has taken steps today to reduce both of those through the . . . base rate increase and the pension contribution.”

Johnson and new TVA Chair Richard Howorth also took time during the meeting to note the changing of the guard at TVPPA. Each man recognized new TVPPA President/CEO Doug Peters and his predecessor, Jack Simmons, whose retirement took effect Oct. 1.

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Chairman Greg Williams addressed the TVA board as well, saying Johnson and his team “have worked very hard to build credibility and trust within the Valley” and highlighting several “challenging, but timely issues” that serve as “key objectives” for TVPPA:

- **Strategic Pricing Plan:** “Discussions continue to be robust and productive.” Williams said. “The staff [and] our Rates and Contracts Committee are working fundamentally change our wholesale rate structure to include a fixed-cost component.”
- **Distributed Energy Resource Council:** “As more and more energy sources are connected to the distribution system, we must work together to construct appropriate rate structures and consider the impact of the power system,” Williams said. “The DER Council will be the platform through which we conduct strategic planning around subjects like renewables, energy efficiency, demand response and even fiber deployment.”
- **Contract Flexibility:** “Given the changing landscape of distributed energy resources and the infiltration of third parties to meet renewable power supply needs, it is truly time to consider flexibility in our power requirement contracts,” Williams said.
- **TVA’s Long-Range Financial Plan:** “It’s tough to deal with rate increases . . . at the local level [and] communicate that to the folks we serve,” Williams said. “TVA has done well in balancing those increases with lower O&M and [a] mix in generation, [but] what we consider to be the most important thing is being able to be at the table with you for those discussions going forward. We very much want to be part of the planning and fully engaged in providing relevant input in the future of our power suppliers for cost and ultimate rates.”

**Legal (Continued from page 10)**

however, that the issue is not always as clear as the Rule seems to read. TVPPA’s new president/CEO cringes (good naturedly, I trust) every time I suggest it, but legal counsel should be contacted prior to the making of any such repairs to ensure that the subsequent repairs are appropriately made and documented.

**FLASH POINTS**

- The Federal Rules of Evidence holds that the act of fixing a problem on your system that caused an accident is not admissible to prove negligence in connection with that accident.
- While state rules vary in some respects, the general rule is similar in all Valley states.
- As there exist exceptions, though, utility executives are well-advised to consult with counsel before making any such repairs.

This article is for informational purposes and does not constitute legal advice. TVPPA-member systems are encouraged to consult their primary counsel to discuss the matters addressed in this article.
WHAT IS RE100 AND DO I CARE?

Because of our low electric rates in the Valley, the proliferation of distributed renewable energy resources, such as solar and wind, that is occurring in other parts of our country isn’t as dramatic here—and many may say they are not seeing any appetite at all.

But what about large companies that have decided it’s important for their brand to purchase 100 percent of their electricity from renewable sources? RE100 is a collaborative initiative of influential businesses committed to doing just that. Currently 87 of the world’s leading companies are now members with 34 of them joining in the last year.

Do you have a Walmart or Starbucks in your area? They are members of RE100, as are many other familiar names like Microsoft, Apple, Google, Nestle, and Nike, to name a few. So even though the current economics of renewables for our territory may delay wider adoption, other factors could likely drive renewables to a business near you soon.

Besides RE100, there are the Business Renewables Center, which is working to streamline and accelerate corporate purchasing of large-scale wind and solar, and the Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance, which is focused on growing corporate demand for renewable power. So there are many organizations working with corporate America in this space.

It can be argued that the question isn’t “if” but “when” will distributed energy resources become common in the TVA region so we must ask ourselves the question, “What should we be doing today to prepare?”

Local power companies and TVA have begun to work on how to proceed together in this evolving marketplace. In the near future, there will be additional opportunities to engage together to work on how we must evolve with changing customer needs and the coming of distributed energy resources so we can continue to serve our customers through the lens of the public-power model.

If you would like additional information, please contact Gary Brinkworth at 423.751.2193/gsbrinkworth@tva.gov, David Smith at 423.751.4785/dsmith@tva.gov or any of the TVPPA-member experts who usually serve in this space as EPRI Distribution Program advisors: John Bowers and Joey Lawson of Pickwick EC, Selmer, TN; Philip Lim of Murfreesboro, TN, ED; and TVPPA’s Clint Wilson.

Brought to you by EPRI Distribution Program advisors John Bowers and Joey Lawson of Pickwick EC, Selmer, TN; Philip Lim of Murfreesboro, TN, ED; and TVPPA’s Clint Wilson.

EPRI

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Well Said... Worth Repeating

‘The war on coal is over.’
— EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, telling miners in Kentucky Oct. 9 that he will move to repeal a rule limiting greenhouse-gas emissions from existing power plants
Plan now to attend TVPPA’s 2017 CUSTOMER SERVICE & COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE at the beautiful Sheraton Music City in Nashville, TN, where there’s a very special guest on this year’s agenda! Two pre-conference classes as well as an open forum provide additional content. ...AND TVPPA’s 2017 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE where you’ll also have an exceptional pre-con “Employment Case Studies and HR in Film” option and a fantastic, educational agenda.

Through The Eyes of a Patient

Rebekah Gregory is a simple small town wife and mother whose life was forever changed due to the events of the Boston Marathon Bombings on April 15, 2013. This horrible act of terrorism left her as one of the names of the seventeen amputees, and therefore permanently handicapped at the young age of twenty six years old.

Instead of being bitter, Rebekah has used her platform in a huge way by encouraging others worldwide. Speaking out about her story and own daily obstacles, she believes that life’s struggles are not only meant to teach us lessons, but make us better versions of ourselves than before. Rebekah’s delivery with her quick wit and contagious optimism is sure to leave you feeling inspired and ready to make your own life changes.

Outlining her popular phrase, “with every new day comes new hope,” she will leave you ready to “change the world.”

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