

## TVA gives glimpse into future of generating power

For the first time in over 10 years Norris Dam opened its doors for a tour of the facility. Though the structure hasn't changed since it was completed in 1936, the Tennessee Valley Authority's vision for the future has greatly changed.

Senior Vice-President of River Operations John McCormick said by 2020 TVA plans on being one of the nation's leading providers of low-cost energy. Norris Dam has 129 miles of reservoir extending up the Clinch and Powell River. Two hydroelectric power generators supply about 111 megawatts of energy. But hydroelectricity is one small part of supplying power to the Tennessee Valley. Coal plants and nuclear plants play a large role in generating power. And TVA sees itself moving away from coal and more into nuclear. Nuclear power plants are considered cleaner and more cost efficient than coal generated power.

The vision for 2020 is to have more small modular nuclear reactors, says McCormick. But while more power is generated from nuclear power plants than coal, the plants can be very costly to build, he added. Customers of TVA power frequently see rates increase because of fuel cost. By moving away from coal, a costly fuel, TVA can provide low cost energy.

"We want to be leaders," said McCormick during a presentation by TVA officials Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. The future of TVA power seems centered on nuclear energy. While the energy produced at Norris Dam falls short in comparison, the role it plays is much greater. Norris Dam was originally constructed to supply power and flood control for the valley. It has since become integrated in the way recreational sport fisherman plan trips and it provides clean water to local communities.

There is no question about the social and economical impact of large scale dams. Plus the Norris Dam water reserve is important in reducing floods for the Clinton and Chattanooga area, according to TVA Project Manager of River Scheduling David Bowling.

To provide recreation, power, water and flood control to surrounding areas TVA is constantly monitoring rainfall and water to insure adequate supply. Right now TVA is aggressively holding on to water because of low run off amounts, according to Bowling.

Ken Ellis, laborer with TVA, provided one of the tours through the dam and of the generators. Ellis recalled giving many tours of the dam prior to Sept. 11, 2001. Since then the federal government cancelled tours for security reasons.