

A Letter from the ATVG President

It's March 2011 and the ATVG leadership transition is processing smoothly. Doug Weiland is winding down his outstanding role as the Executive Director for ATVG and has turned the reins over to Mike Arms as acting Executive Director. Brent Greer will take on an outreach role in concert with Mike's duties and Deborah Grubbs will handle program facilitation and marketing tasks. You may ask where we are heading with this unique multi-part yet unified leadership organization and you would be asking the right question to discover ATVG's immediate direction.

First, Mike, Brent and Deborah each live in three different regions of the Tennessee Valley. One of our most pressing issues with this new leadership is to provide a competent and geographically close representation for the communities we serve. This is critical at a time when we have a large number of newly elected government officials. Mike is in the Knoxville area, Brent in the western part of Tennessee, and Deborah is in the Nashville area, the middle of the valley and the center of political activities in Tennessee. Each of these individuals also has close access to the other states represented by ATVG. The membership present at the winter meeting and the Board of Directors agreed that this management approach gives our organization greater opportunity to communicate with local governments, associated partners and affiliates to meet the challenges facing the Valley today.

Next, and I believe the most important attribute, are the leadership skills this team provides. Each one has gained intimate knowledge of the issues faced by the ATVG membership. Those issues range from commitment to maintaining the "in lieu of tax" payments for local governments by TVA, to the support for River stewardship throughout the TVA region, to education on vital complicated economic or technical subjects. Also each brings a diverse portfolio of much needed knowledge to evaluate legislative movement on the local, state and national level.

This redesigned method of management will support the expanded information needs for the membership. For instance, through presentations at the past few ATVG meetings, TVA has presented segments of its strategic plan in meeting bulk generation and power supply needs for the future. Those plans can have dramatic impact on the debt and subsequently the costs of energy in all TVA service areas. Basically, every TVA consumer served will in some way be affected. A starting point for ATVG to be proactive would be a through review of the financial implications that result from the federal debt ceiling placed on TVA. The debt ceiling established more than 30 years ago, limits many cost effective options in the financing of future generation and mandated environmental controls.

Finally, TVA's debt ceiling is not the only regional issue to be studied. The Corps of Engineers has several lock and dam projects that remain only partially funded affecting transportation and portage capability in Tennessee and Kentucky. Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee are struggling with water and inter-basin transfer issues. North Alabama has ongoing serious aquatic vegetation issues affecting fishing and recreation. The coal industry is dealing with impacts resulting from the Kingston Steam Plant ash spill. Each of these issues is complicated further by the regional economic development competition from state to state. Then add competitive power supply issues and ... Well, you begin to see the need for information and hopefully cooperation among local governments.

Your redesigned ATVG Staff and Board of Directors will be available to support your needs. The dues letters are going out soon and one of us will try to contact local governments and industry partners that are not currently participating. As you can see, the need for ATVG is greater than ever to help protect and keep you informed on issues in the Tennessee River Valley. The following is a list of contacts for each of us. Please feel free to contact the staff or Board members with comments or suggestions.

I look forward to seeing everyone on April 5 & 6 in Chattanooga.

Sincerely,

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