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## A Spirit of Service and Readiness for the Future

[Boilerplate] Sevier County Electric System (SCES) and TVA were founded on a mission to serve — through reliable and affordable energy, a safe and protected environment and thriving economic development.

SCES provides electricity to 60,000 residents and businesses within Sevier County, Tennessee, serving Sevierville, Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Pittman Center. Located near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, approximately 15 million tourists visit the area annually for outdoor recreation and attractions such as Dollywood, SCES's largest customer.

### That Smoky Mountain DNA

Dolly Parton wrote “My Tennessee Mountain Home” about her own sweet memories of growing up in Sevierville, Tennessee. And throughout her life, the legendary singer, songwriter and actor has herself been a source of light in Sevier County. Her theme park, Dollywood provides both kids and adults with not only a source of fun and joy—but knowledge, too. Dolly has prioritized education for area youth in her philanthropic efforts, so it was a natural fit to weave learning into the park experience. For example, Dollywood leverages the roller coaster as an opportunity to teach the concept of potential and kinetic energy. The park works with education partners SCES and TVA to develop these integrated lessons in electricity, energy and conservation.

Classroom teachers and parents who home school their children can build on a day at the park by accessing [TVA's Dollywood-related science, technology, engineering and math \(STEM\) curriculum](#). Allen Robbins, general manager of SCES said, “A lot of elementary school students come to the park for spring field trips. During their visits, we emphasize the relationship between TVA and SCES.”

Dollywood also partners with SCES to bring electric vehicle (EV) chargers to DreamMore and the park itself. “They get used quite often there. We want to install more at the park and let people know that alternative transportation is important to SCES as a way to reduce the carbon footprint in the Valley,” Robbins said.

SCES wanted to add generating renewable energy with their own solar power to their offerings, too, but mountainous topography in the service area presents challenges. To determine the feasibility, SCES conducted an analysis with TVA and Seven States Power Corporation. “It turns out that there's too much shade because we don't get optimal sun. The only land in a location with sufficient, regular sunlight is already allocated, or on a flood plain,” Robbins said.

As a result, SCES focuses its sustainability work on bringing EVs to the region.

### Fire Rescue Efforts and Relief

Robbins had only been on the job as GM for four months when the Great Smoky Mountain wildfires of 2016 were burning through Eastern Tennessee. His initial response to the crisis was to dispatch linemen to outage areas, but as the fire intensified, wind-fueled flames knocked down power poles and lines. Crews changed course and used their trucks, tools, and talent to cut into wires and clear paths, including the mountain's evacuation exit for fire, emergency medical and police crews and visitors.

Robbins described the intensity of the scene. “Imagine a bucket truck rising 50-something feet in the air, a roaring fire on either side of the parkway, and 90 mile an hour winds.” He said people had abandoned their cars and were running to escape the flames. SCES linemen helped as many folks as would fit into the trucks and drove them to safety in Pigeon Forge. Then they returned on the already challenging mountainous terrain through the fire, in the dark—to pick up more evacuees.

When Robbins later realized the vast number of lives the SCES linemen saved, he decided it was important to share this perspective of what happened that night, and wrote “Trial by Fire: A True Story of Courage and Bravery, a Story Not Often Told.” The book has since paid for itself and is in its second run. All net proceeds go to local organizations whose funding was depleted by their fire recovery efforts, including the Gatlinburg Fire Department. Thus far, sales have generated \$30,000 for the community.

### **Project Round Up**

Customers can support their fellow community members with Project Round Up, which lets them round up their electric bill payment to the next dollar to provide assistance to others. The maximum annual cost per household is only \$11.88, but the micro donations go a long way. SCES is proud to serve customers who share in the spirit of giving.

## **Economic Development**

[Boilerplate] SCES works with [TVA Economic Development](#) to attract new companies and bring more jobs to the area and to help existing businesses and industries grow in a sustainable way.

Through partnerships, SCES helps to actively prepare younger generations to develop the tools needed to fill positions with the local power company that will soon be vacant when employees retire. They have built curriculum with Sevier County Economic Development Council, Walter State Community College and trade school institutions. Those interested in becoming a lineman can enroll in a 6-to-10 month program with Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) to earn apprentice-level skills. Robbins said, “We have hired several TCAT graduates.”

TVA Economic Development serves the seven states that make up the TVA service area—almost all of Tennessee and parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky. TVA partnerships with other economic development organizations help to foster capital investment and job growth in the region.

[Boilerplate] [Discover all the resources designed to help you manage your energy use and boost your bottom line.](#)