



TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
OUR HISTORY

Norris Dam Construction near Norris, Tenn., June 1935





Severe erosion near Knoxville, Tenn., February 1939

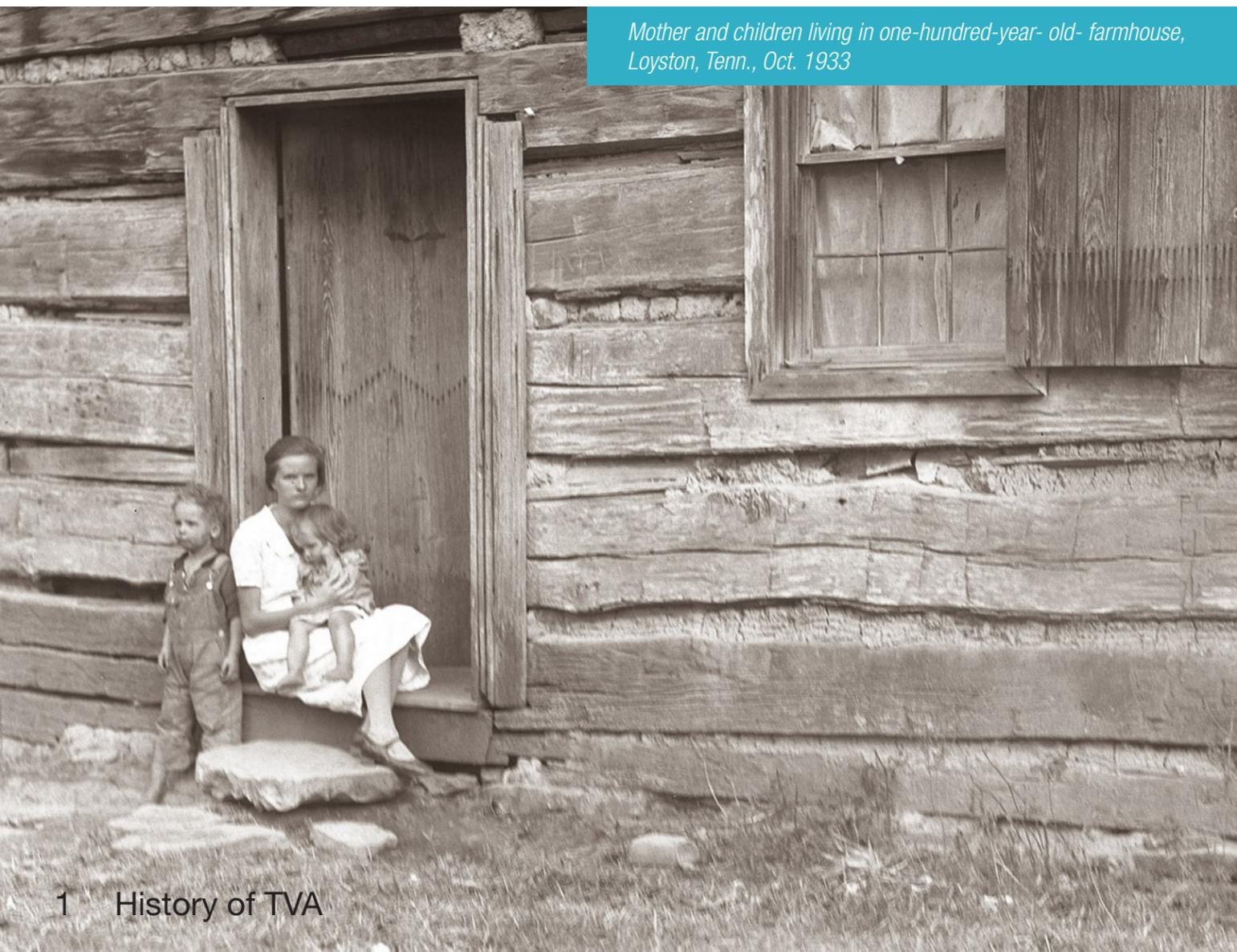
VALLEY HARDSHIPS

The Great Depression caused suffering across the United States. In the Tennessee Valley, families struggled to survive.

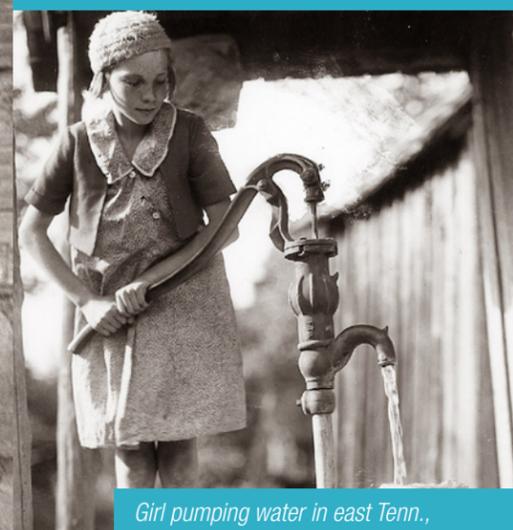
Conditions were bad nationally, but they were worse in the Tennessee Valley. The Tennessee River and its tributaries were a source of flooding year after year, wiping out homes and businesses. Due to river hazards and the shallow channel, the entire length of the River could not be traveled, making it hard to move and sell goods.

Primitive farming practices resulted in depleted soil as well as soil erosion. Only three farms in 100 had electricity. Fires burned 10 percent of the region's woodlands every year, and poor logging practices had nearly stripped forests of their once plentiful trees.

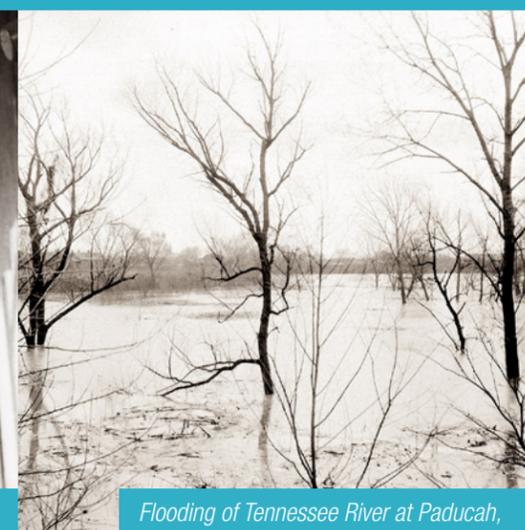
The Tennessee Valley Authority was founded to help the hard-hit Tennessee Valley, where it was tasked with improving the quality of life in the region.



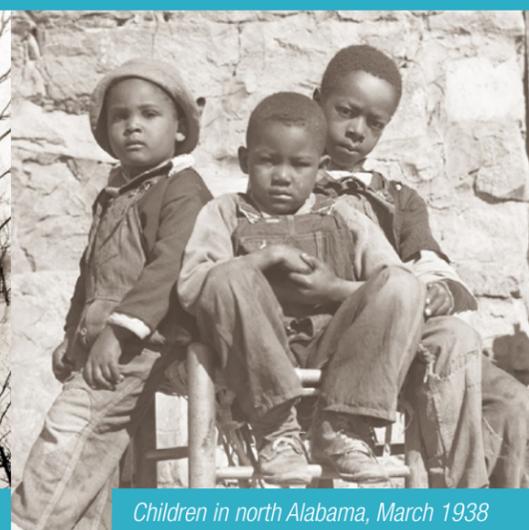
Mother and children living in one-hundred-year-old farmhouse, Loyston, Tenn., Oct. 1933



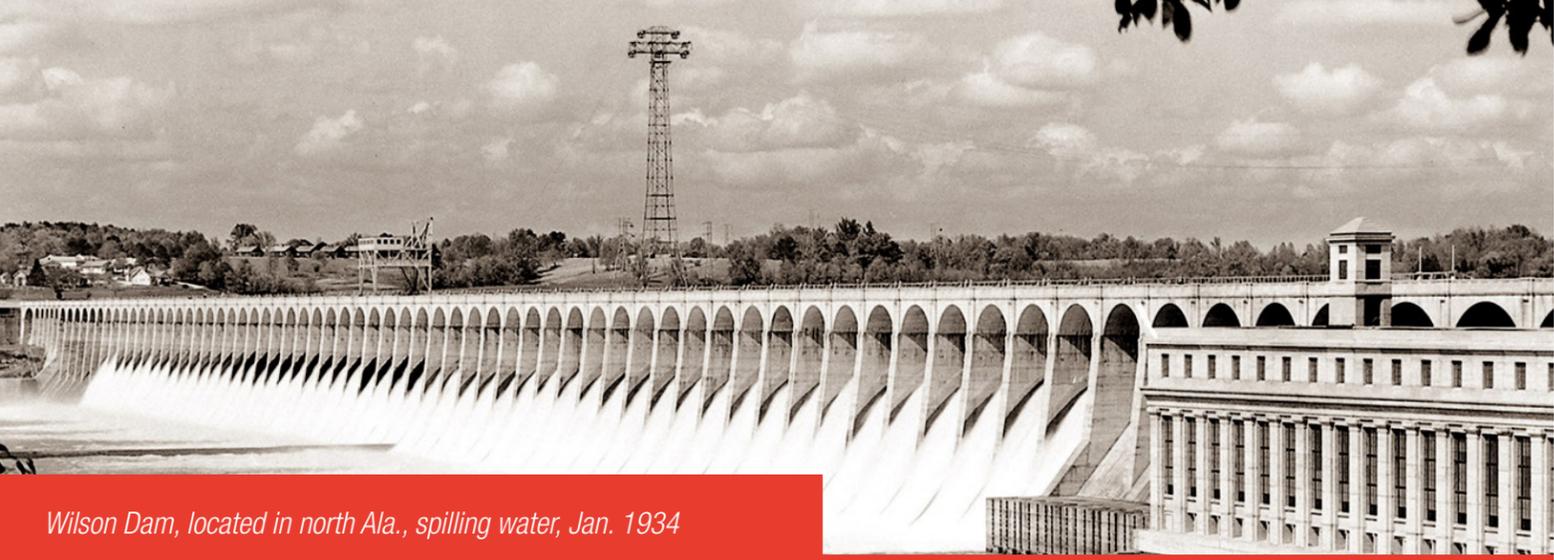
Girl pumping water in east Tenn., January 1934



Flooding of Tennessee River at Paducah, Kent., May 1935



Children in north Alabama, March 1938



Wilson Dam, located in north Ala., spilling water, Jan. 1934

1933-1940

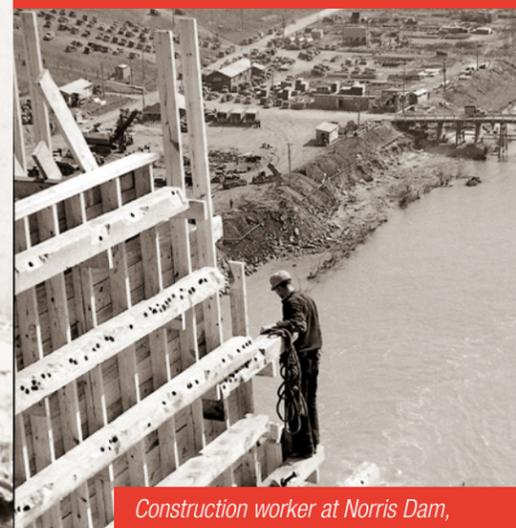


President Franklin Roosevelt signs the TVA Act on May 18, 1933

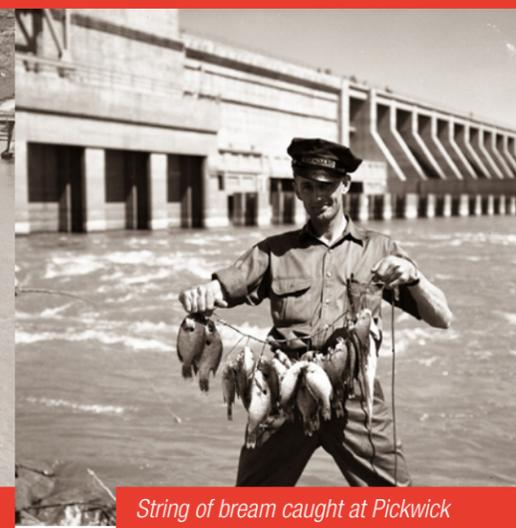
The Tennessee Valley Authority was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's most original and creative ideas. He knew his innovative solution could help the people of the Valley.

Roosevelt envisioned TVA as a totally different kind of agency. He asked Congress to create "a corporation clothed with the power of government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise." On May 18, 1933, Congress passed the TVA Act.

From the start, TVA established a unique problem-solving approach to fulfilling its mission: integrated resource management. Each issue TVA faced — whether it was power production, navigation, flood control, malaria prevention, reforestation or erosion control — was studied for how it related to other issues. TVA balanced each issue in relation to the whole picture.



Construction worker at Norris Dam, March 1936



String of bream caught at Pickwick Landing Reservoir in north Ala., May 1940

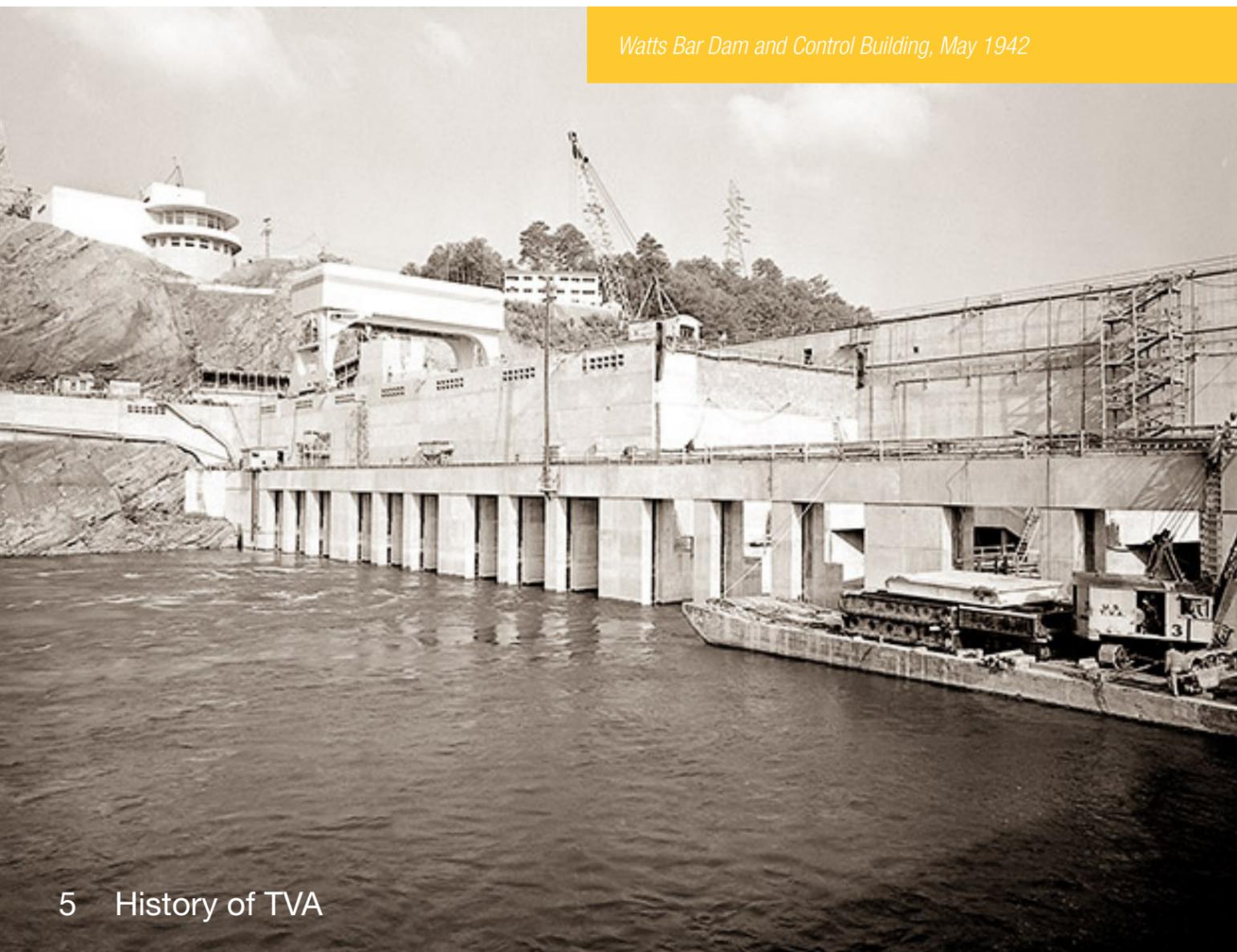


CCC boys planting trees, March 1933



Stereoscope mapping work, Maps & Surveys Unit, Chattanooga, Tenn., Sept. 1945

1940-1950



Watts Bar Dam and Control Building, May 1942

Against the backdrop of World War II, TVA launched one of the largest hydropower construction programs in the United States.

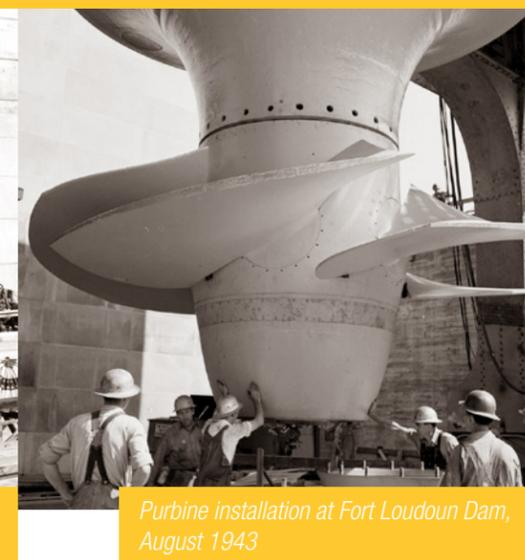
By 1942, 12 hydroelectric dam projects and a steam plant were under construction and design, and more than 28,000 people worked in engineering and construction at TVA.

During World War II, TVA supplied power for wartime industries. It also supplied more than 60 percent of the elemental phosphorus required by our armed forces for use in munitions. TVA's maps and surveys branch mapped nearly a half-million square miles of foreign territory for the Army. And TVA developed mobile housing for war workers.

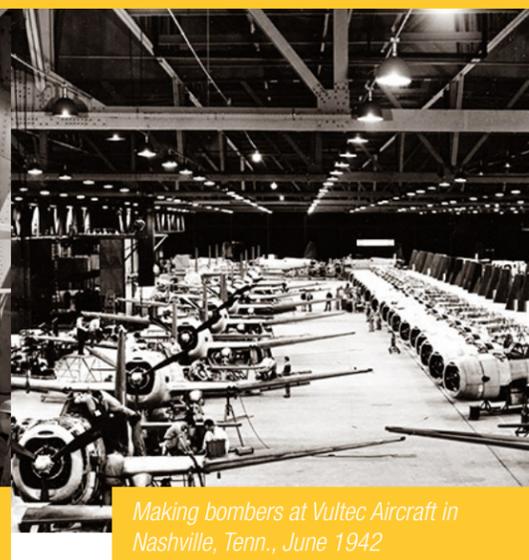
Many wood products critically needed for war and postwar programs were produced at the 3,500 wood-processing plants in the Tennessee Valley. And the Tennessee River system was used to transport crucial grain, coal, petroleum products, pig iron and military vehicles for wartime use.



Douglas Dam Dedication celebration, March 1943



Purbine installation at Fort Loudoun Dam, August 1943

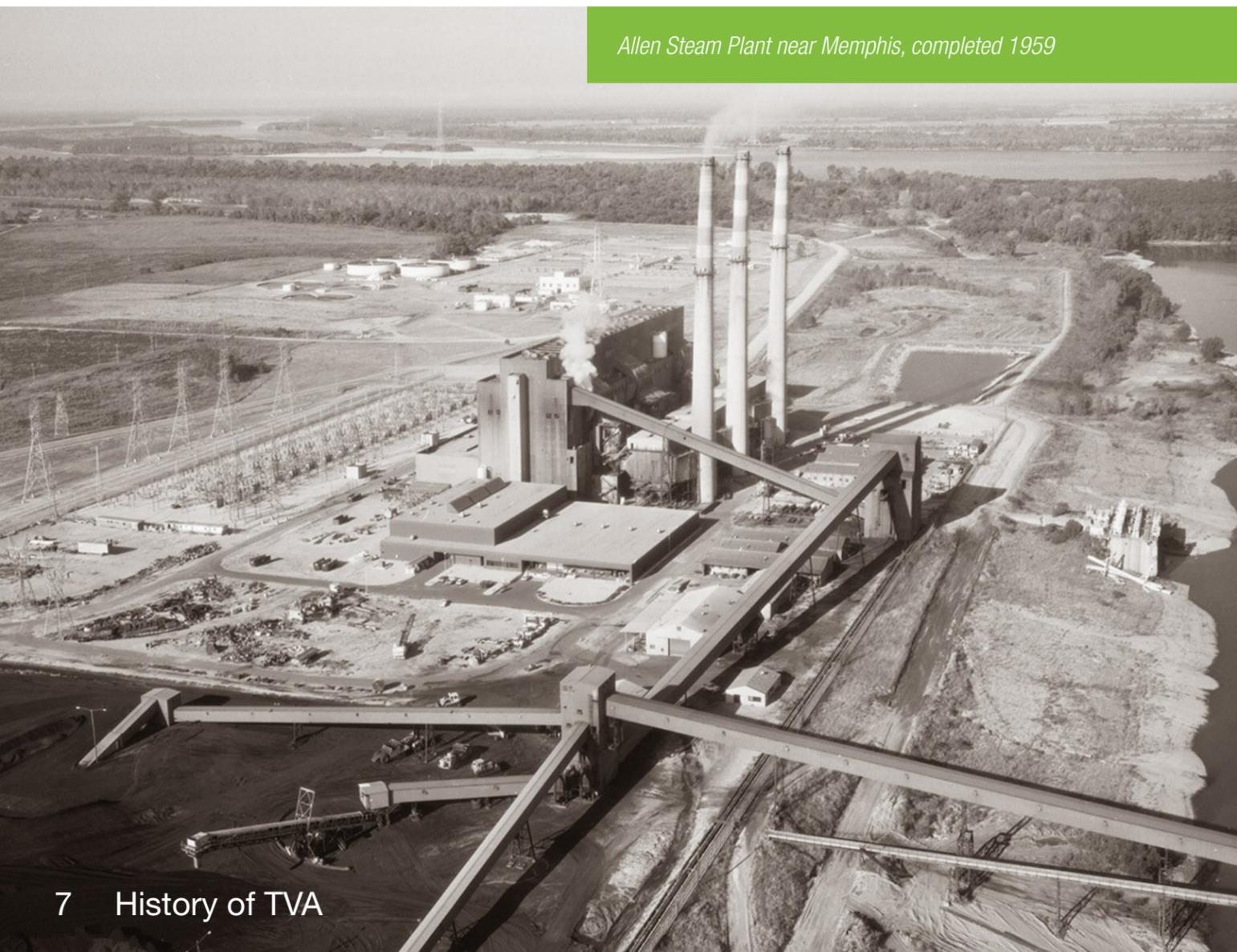


Making bombers at Vultec Aircraft in Nashville, Tenn., June 1942



Blissful Acres Farm, a TVA test-demonstration farm, located in Tenn., May 1959

1950-1960



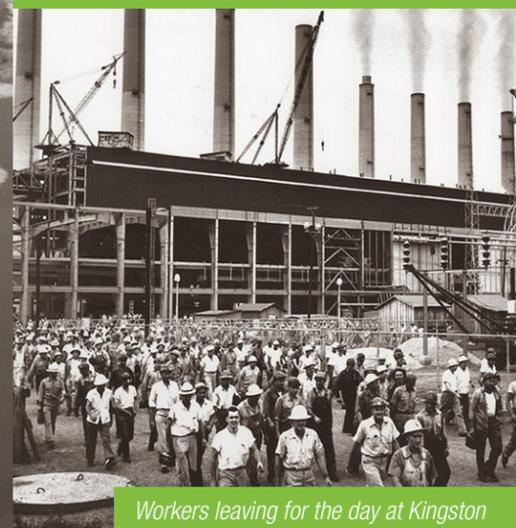
Allen Steam Plant near Memphis, completed 1959

Post-war prosperity came to the Valley as TVA completed the navigation channel for the entire length of the Tennessee River and became the nation's largest electricity supplier.

Affordable electricity, dependable year-round navigation, flood-free building sites and a cheap and abundant labor force led to industrial growth in the region throughout the 1950s. Soon the demand for electricity was more than TVA could produce from hydroelectric dams. So TVA began building coal-fired steam plants, and by 1955, coal surpassed hydropower as the system's primary power source.

Securing the additional federal money needed to build coal-fired plants became problematic, so TVA sought the authority to issue bonds to pay for construction. In 1959, Congress passed legislation making the TVA power system self-financing.

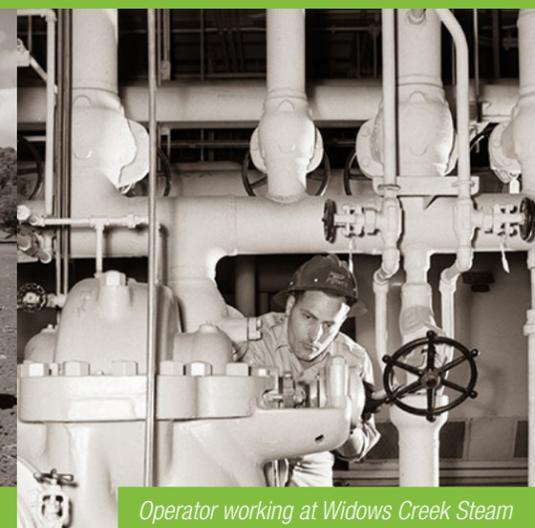
Meanwhile, TVA-developed fertilizers and improved management techniques revolutionized Tennessee Valley farms. TVA's agricultural programs became a model for today's agricultural extension services. Its new fertilizers and test-demonstration methods were adopted throughout the nation.



Workers leaving for the day at Kingston Fossil Plant, July 1954



Liquid fertilizer applicator, Tennessee farm, May 1959



Operator working at Widows Creek Steam Plant, April 1954



Paradise Fossil Plant, July 1968

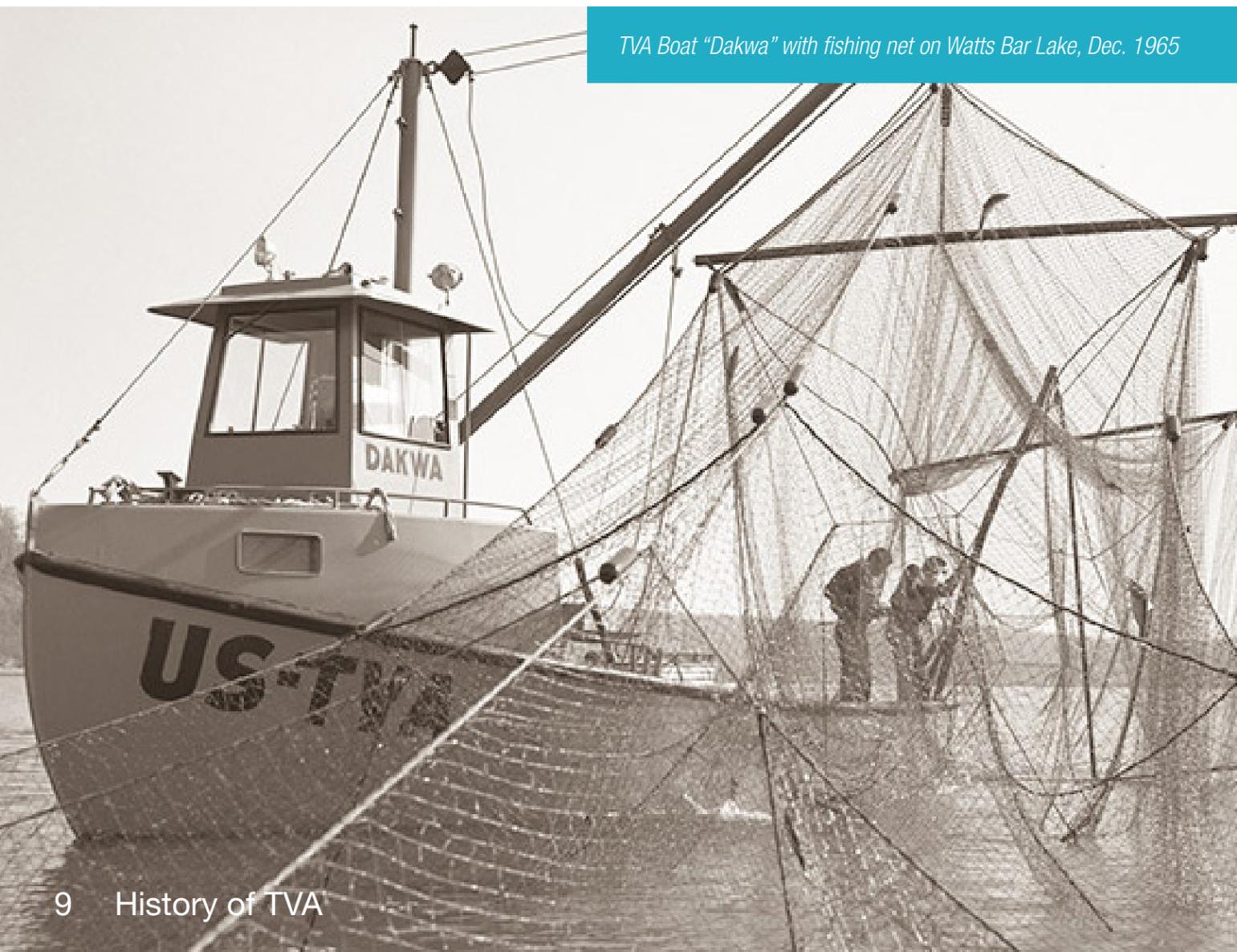
1960-1970

TVA continued the approach of integrated resource management during the 1960s, and this region saw unprecedented economic growth.

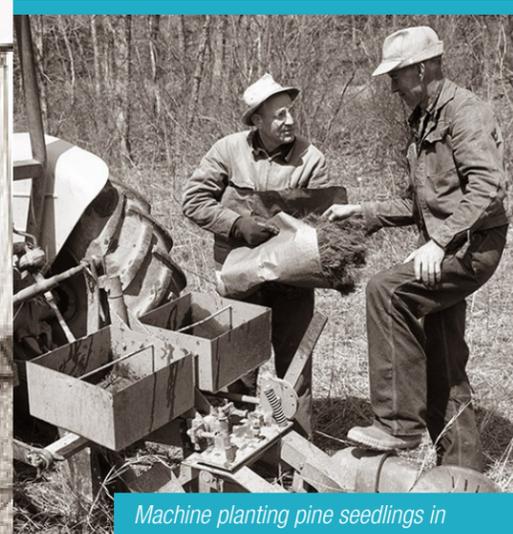
Freight shipped on the Tennessee River broke records, even as flood control averted millions of dollars in damages. Farms and forests were in better shape than they had been in generations. Electric rates were among the nation's lowest and stayed low as TVA brought larger, more efficient generating units into service.

While work continued in these mainstay areas, other TVA programs devoted to recreation, tributary area development, and fish and wildlife management gained recognition and importance.

Because challenges began to emerge with widespread coal use, and because energy demand was projected to keep expanding, TVA began to explore other methods for generating electricity. In 1966 in north Alabama, TVA undertook construction of Browns Ferry, its first nuclear power plant.



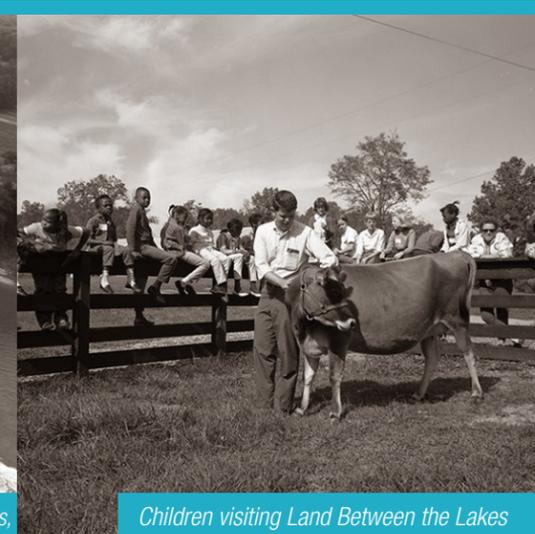
TVA Boat "Dakwa" with fishing net on Watts Bar Lake, Dec. 1965



Machine planting pine seedlings in Morgan Co., Tenn., March 1964



A tugboat navigating barges near Muscle Shoals, Ala., on the Tennessee River, June 1965



Children visiting Land Between the Lakes farm at Golden Pond, Kent., Oct. 1968



Construction of Normandy Dam on the Duck River in middle Tenn., Oct. 1973

1970-1990



Aerial view of Tims Ford Dam, July 1976

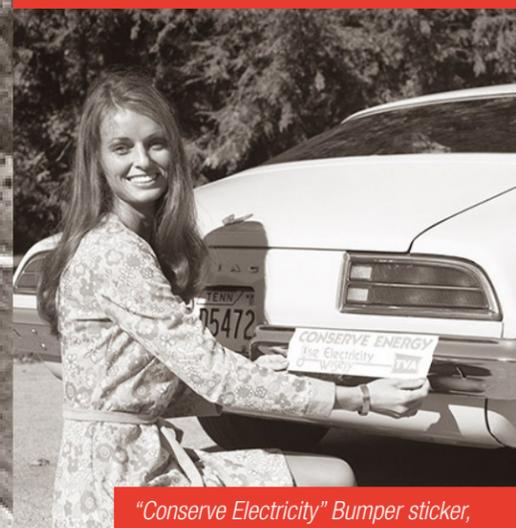
A difficult decade affected by rising fuel costs led to innovative thinking about energy conservation.

Significant changes occurred in the economy of the Tennessee Valley and the nation during this period, prompted by an international oil embargo in 1973 and rising costs for fuel. With energy demand dropping and construction costs rising, TVA canceled construction of several nuclear units, as did other utilities around the nation.

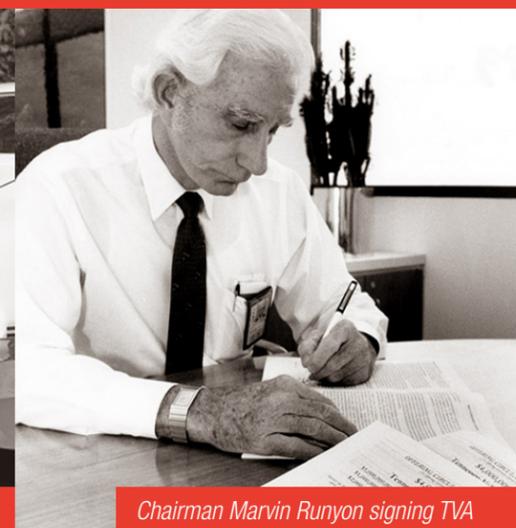
To become more competitive, TVA began improving efficiency and productivity while cutting costs. By the late 1980s, there was a shift within TVA toward a leaner, more corporate environment. Chairman Marvin Runyon put a stop to the increases in power rates and paved the way for a period of rate stability that would last for the next decade.

Energy conservation became an economic necessity for homeowners and businesses alike, and TVA became a national leader in promoting energy conservation.

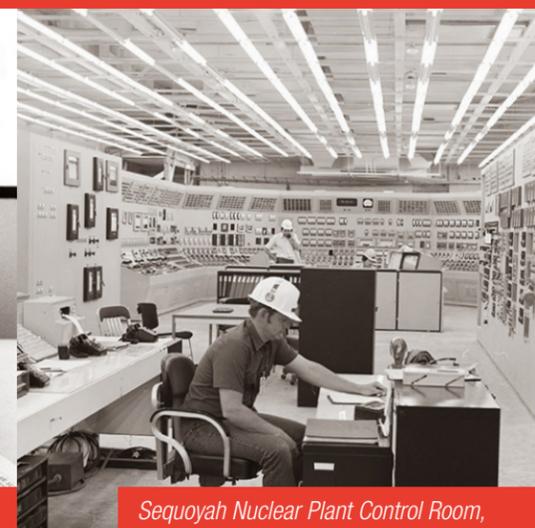
Tellico Dam was finished in 1979, providing many recreation opportunities for the people of the Valley and boosting the economy of the region.



"Conserve Electricity" Bumper sticker, Nov. 1973



Chairman Marvin Runyon signing TVA bonds, Oct. 1989

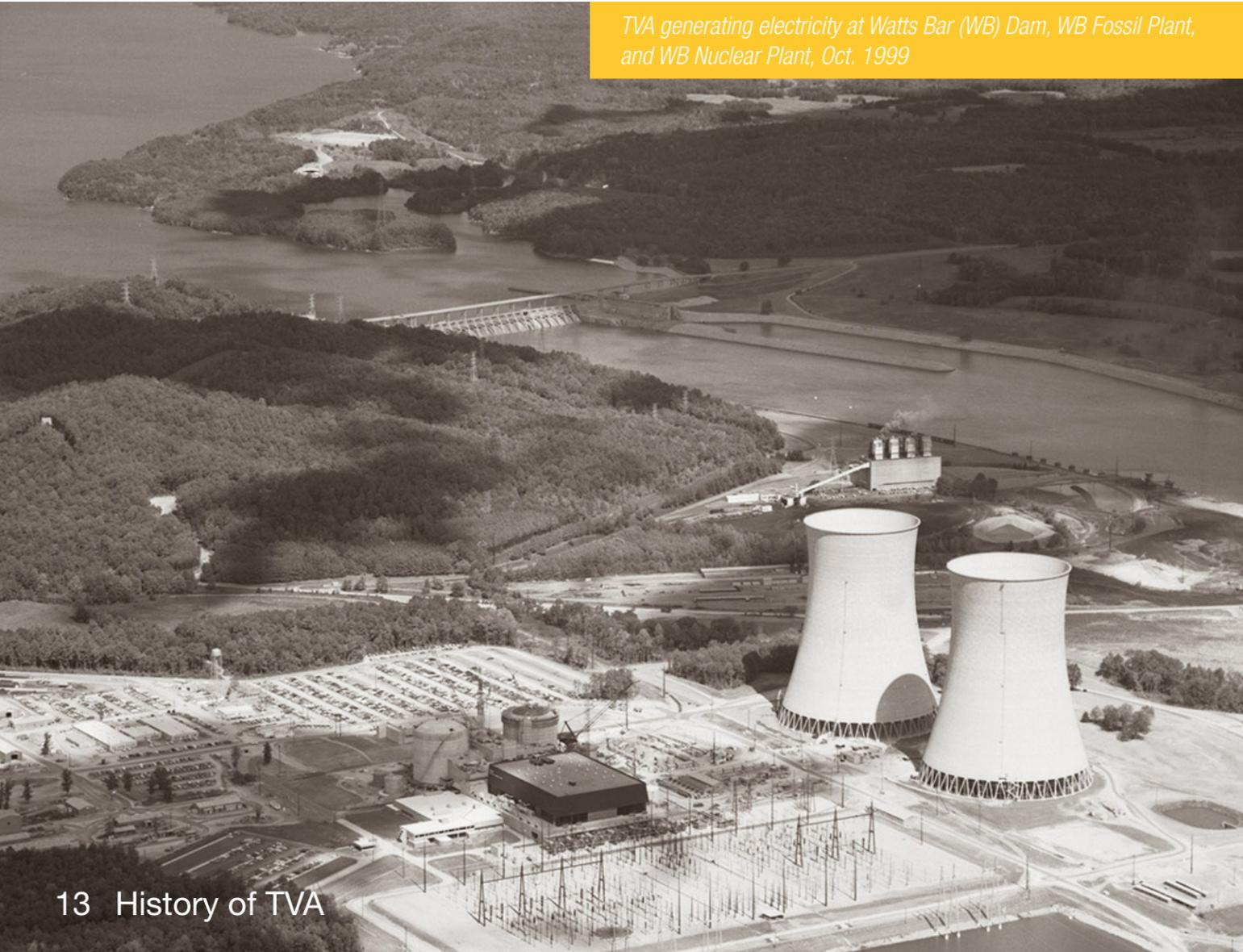


Sequoyah Nuclear Plant Control Room, May 1977



Elk release, Land Between the Lakes, Feb. 1996

1990-2000



TVA generating electricity at Watts Bar (WB) Dam, WB Fossil Plant, and WB Nuclear Plant, Oct. 1999

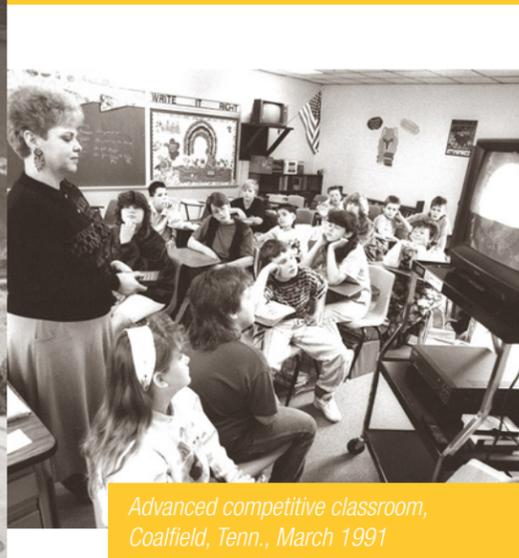
Through a period of restructuring, TVA kept electric power affordable and reliable while unveiling a new clean-air strategy.

TVA began preparing for competition. It cut operating costs by nearly \$800 million a year, reduced its workforce by more than half, increased the generating capacity of its plants, stopped building nuclear plants, and developed a plan to meet the energy needs of the Tennessee Valley through the year 2020.

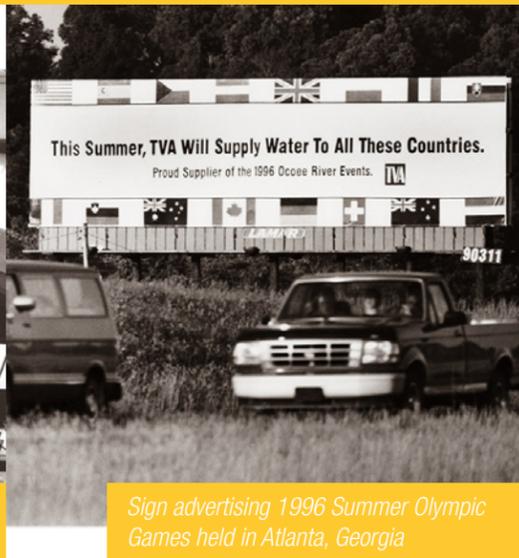
TVA continued to provide wholesale electric power competitively, efficiently and reliably. It moved to more flexible contracts with its local power customers to meet their needs in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

In 1998 TVA unveiled a new clean-air strategy to reduce ozone and smog pollution. New equipment was installed at power plants to help the Tennessee Valley meet new, more stringent air-quality standards while providing greater flexibility for industrial and economic growth in the region.

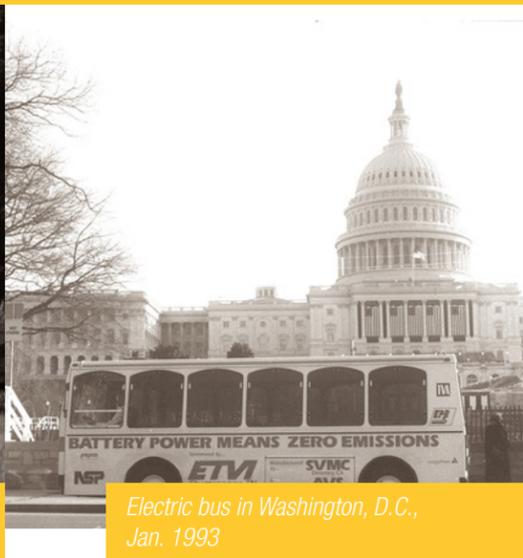
The 1996 Olympic Games used the Ocoee River for all of its whitewater sports, relying on TVA to provide the whitewater at the right time. That same year, TVA began commercial operation of Watts Bar Nuclear plant unit one, providing clean, reliable power. And it exceeded 16,000 miles of transmission lines throughout its seven-state region.



Advanced competitive classroom, Coalfield, Tenn., March 1991



Sign advertising 1996 Summer Olympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia

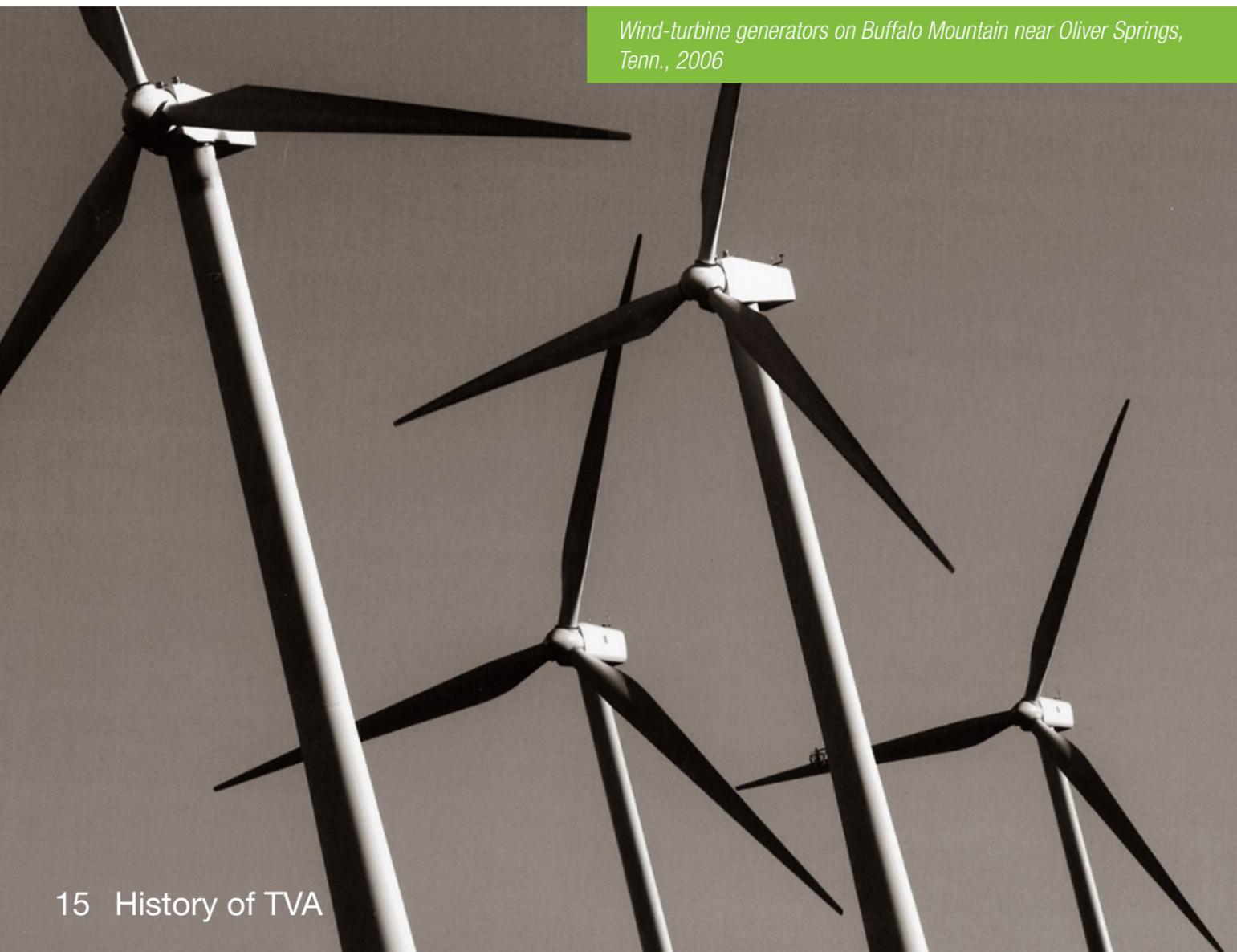


Electric bus in Washington, D.C., Jan. 1993



Sam E. Hill Preschool, Knoxville, Tenn., Oct. 2005

2000-2010



Wind-turbine generators on Buffalo Mountain near Oliver Springs, Tenn., 2006

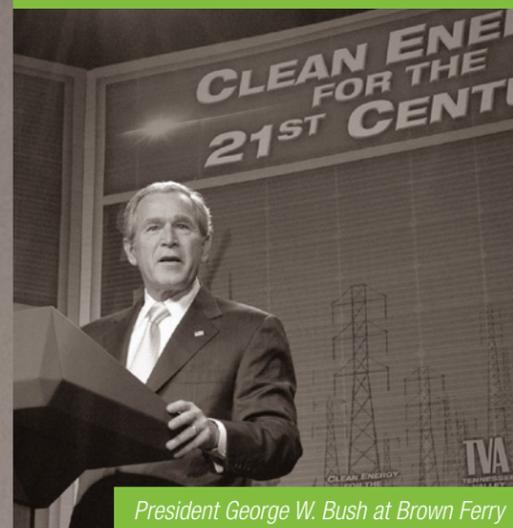
With power demand growing, TVA turned its attention back to clean nuclear energy. We also launched the first green power program in the Southeast.

TVA continued to focus on energy, environment and economic development while adapting to changes in its business environment. TVA introduced Green Power Switch® on Earth Day 2000, allowing customers the option of power produced by solar, wind or methane.

To meet growing demand, the last of the three reactor units at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant was returned to service in May 2007. The plant was visited by President George W. Bush, who spoke about the importance of nuclear power in the nation's energy future.

In 2008, TVA established an environmental policy supporting the production of cleaner and still-affordable electricity. Its objectives were to lower carbon emissions and work in partnership with stakeholders to further the region's environmental quality.

On Dec. 22, 2008, a storage pond dike failed at Kingston Fossil Plant, releasing about 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash. The ash covered about 300 acres, mostly TVA-owned land, and spilled into the Emory River. TVA and other agencies responded to restore and improve the affected area and eliminate the wet storage of ash at all TVA fossil plants.



President George W. Bush at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, June 2007



Green Power Switch Generation Partnership ceremony, August 5, 2003

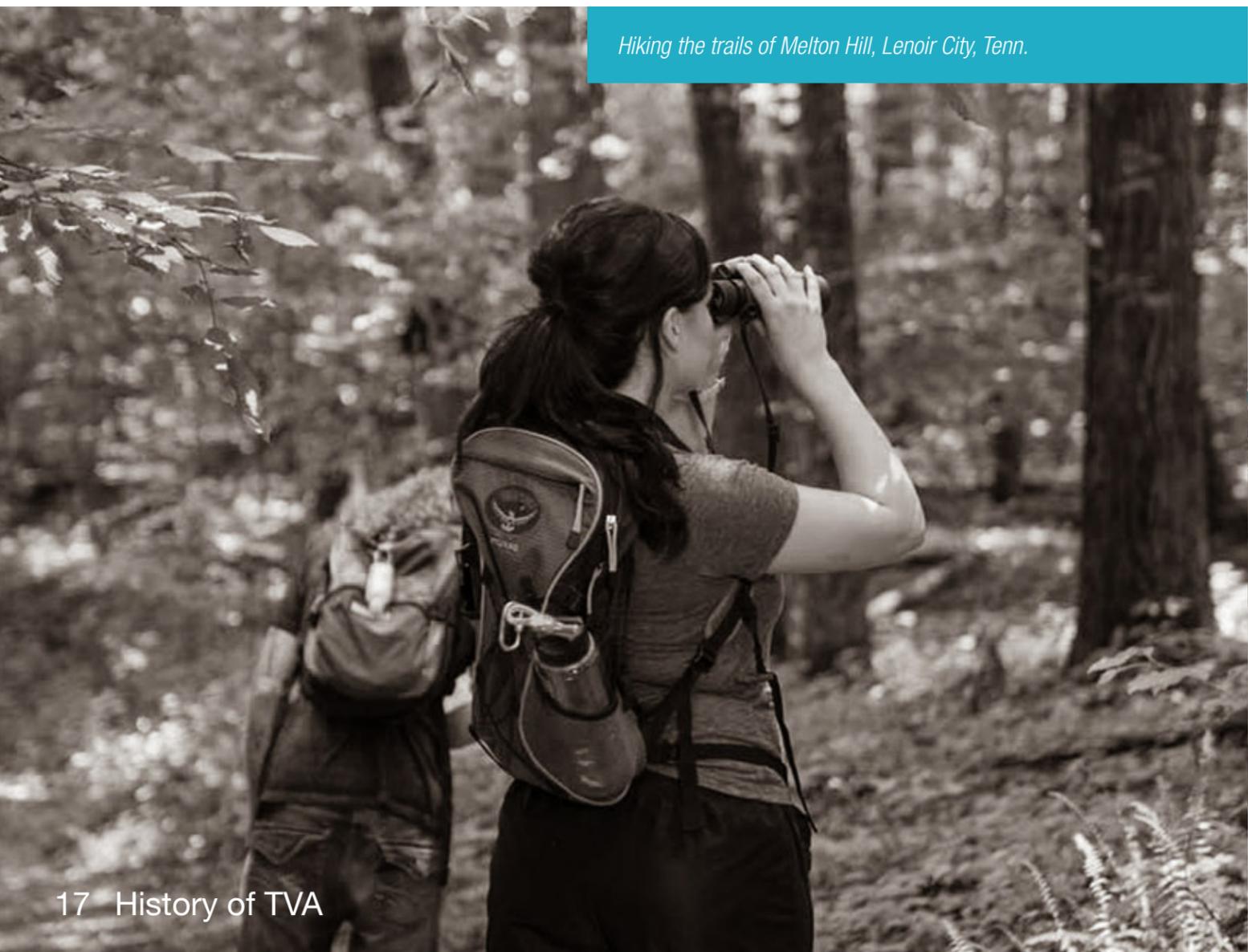


Swearing in of new, part-time board of directors, March 2006



Widow's Creek Fossil Plant, a coal-fired unit retired in 2015

2010-2020



Hiking the trails of Melton Hill, Lenoir City, Tenn.

We continue to carry out our mission of serving the people of the Tennessee Valley region, to make life better through our work in energy, the environment and economic development.

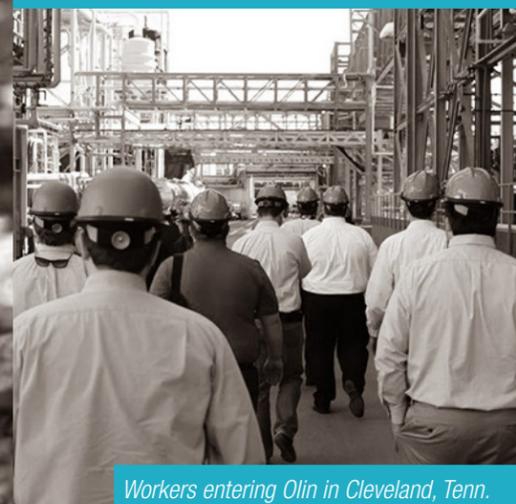
TVA reaffirmed its mission to make life better for the people of the Tennessee Valley by providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable energy; being a good steward of the environment; and working in partnership with others to bring good jobs and investments to our region.

TVA continually invests in new transmission lines and facilities to ensure we can deliver power reliably, regardless of fluctuations in demand or weather. The transmission system has achieved 99.999 percent reliability for the past 20 years.

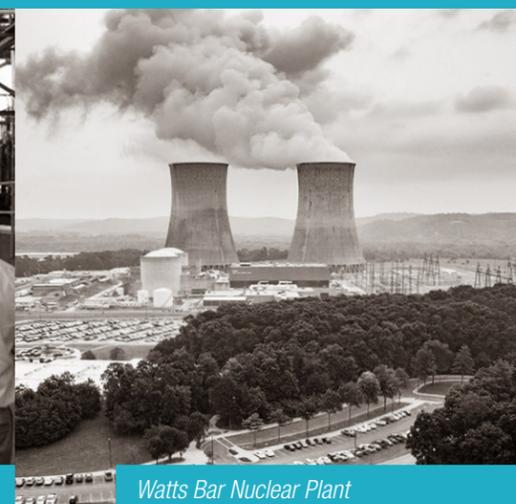
In October 2016, Watts Bar Nuclear Plant brought Unit 2 online, bringing the Valley, and the nation, the first new nuclear generation of the 21st century.

TVA's commitment to the environment continued as it adopted plans to retire 18 of TVA's 59 coal-fired units by the end of 2017. By investing in emissions-cleaning technology, TVA has reduced sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions by 94 percent since regulations began in 1977. Nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions have been reduced by 91 percent since 1995.

TVA continues to support new and expanding businesses. In 2019, TVA worked in partnership with communities and businesses to spur \$8.9 billion in business investments in the Tennessee Valley region and helped attract and retain more than 65,000 jobs.



Workers entering Olin in Cleveland, Tenn.



Watts Bar Nuclear Plant



TVA employees working on a transmission tower

