



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mayor Burchett outlines solar energy initiative

KNOXVILLE — Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett today outlined a solar energy initiative that will soon go before the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Board of Education for their consideration. He was joined at the announcement by Knox County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim McIntyre.

If the initiative is approved by the Board of Education and the Commission, it will create a revenue stream for both the Knox County Schools and Knox County Government while also generating solar energy that would be used on TVA's power grid.

"We all understand the importance of green energy and protecting the environment, but it is the financial return that is realized using this model that is the key to making this work," said Mayor Burchett. "I look forward to discussing this initiative further with the Commission and members of the Board of Education as they consider whether to approve it."

"We continually seek ways to effectively manage the resources of the Knox County Schools," said McIntyre, "and this solar initiative is attractive because it will guarantee significant financial savings, as well as provide a unique educational opportunity for our students and an important environmental benefit to our community."

As part of the project, Knox County and the Knox County Schools would partner with Efficient Energy of Tennessee to install solar panels on top of several Knox County and Knox County Schools buildings. The panels will collect solar energy, which Knox County and the Knox County Schools will sell to TVA.

The initiative is similar to one implemented in Campbell County several months ago. Since the panels were installed on a dozen Campbell County schools, the revenue generated has outperformed estimates.

Since 2011, the average price of solar panels has dropped by 60 percent, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association.

Knox County and the Knox County Schools would issue bonds to purchase the panels. The bonds would then be paid with revenue generated by the panels and sold to TVA. There would also be a 15-year performance guarantee backed by EETN, which would guarantee a minimum annual revenue amount to the County and the Schools.

Currently, several Knox County Government and Knox County Schools buildings are being evaluated for solar installations. Any facility identified and approved for installation would be fitted with a 49.5 kilowatt array.

The Knox County Commission and the Knox County Board of Education will consider the proposal at their December meeting.

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