**Driving Electric Just Got Easier**

 **Cullman County will soon connect to regional Fast Charge Network**

CULLMAN, Ala. – As automakers retool their factories to prepare for the age of transportation electrification, many travelers are going to be driving an electric vehicle (EV) in the next two decades. To make sure we are ready, Cullman Electric Cooperative has partnered with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Drive Electric Alabama, and Seven States Power Corporation to remove one of the biggest barriers to EV adoption in the U.S. – charging infrastructure.

On Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022, Cullman Electric will unveil the two fast chargers located on Alabama Highway 157 in Cullman which have been built through a partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and Seven States Power Corporation and Drive Electric Alabama, a statewide initiative coordinated by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). This installation is part of the regional Fast Charge Network that will cover major travel corridors across TVA’s seven-state service area and will complement the broader efforts of the National Electric Highway Coalition, which seeks to enable long-distance EV travel by placing fast chargers along interstates and major highways throughout the United States.

The new Fast Charge Network location in Cullman is currently operational and accessible to locals and travelers alike. Cullman Electric Cooperative CEO Tim Culpepper said the new charging location does more than charge vehicles. It plays an important role in growing tourism and economic development in the co-op’s service area.

“EV fast chargers are essential for travelers that drive an electric vehicle,” Culpepper said. “TVA’s Fast Charge Network will accommodate travelers coming through our area, giving them a reason to eat at our local restaurants and shop at our local businesses. It also makes Cullman County more than just a stopping point. EV fast-charging facilities give travelers a reason to stay in our hotels and enjoy the area’s tourist attractions, knowing they can charge their vehicle easily and affordably.”

Culpepper said funding from TVA and ADECA’s Drive Electric Alabama made it possible to add fast chargers in our community by covering 80 percent of the project cost.

“This new Cullman Electric Cooperative and TVA Fast Charge Network station is the latest demonstration of Alabama’s support for those who choose to drive electric vehicles as automakers continue to focus resources in that direction,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “ADECA is pleased to support this station which will provide a convenient point along Interstate 65 to charge EVs and will benefit the city by giving EV owners the opportunity to spend money with local businesses while recharging their vehicle.”

TVA has brought together local power companies, state and local government partners and others to pave the way for well over 200,000 EVs on Tennessee Valley roads by 2028.

“EVs use our low-carbon, affordable, reliable electricity to keep refueling dollars in the regional economy,” said Jared Mitchem, TVA South Region vice president. “Taking a leadership role in EV charging infrastructure allows TVA and local power companies to help drivers save money, attract good jobs and tourism, and reduce local and regional carbon emissions.”

The benefits that EVs bring to the Tennessee Valley region are significant:

* Attracting good jobs — $13.8 billion in EV and battery manufacturing have helped create over 10,000 EV-related jobs.
* Reducing carbon emissions from gasoline vehicles by almost 1 million metric tons per year or the equivalent of the carbon sequestered by 1 million acres of U.S. forests in one year.
* Reinvesting $120 million in the local economy every year from electric refueling by 2028.
* Saving drivers up to $1,000 in fuel and maintenance costs every year.

“Local power companies across the Tennessee Valley continue to trust Seven States to deliver EV charging technology for their consumers,” said Betsey Kirk McCall, President and CEO of Seven States Power Corporation. “Our relationships and experience are producing impactful results for communities like Cullman all across our region.”

To learn more about the Fast Charge Network, calculate how much money an EV could save you or locate EV charging stations on your travel route, check out <https://energyright.com/ev/>.

Cullman Electric Cooperative is a member-owned cooperative serving more than 46,000 member accounts in Cullman, Winston, Morgan and Lawrence counties.

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**Additional photos and B-roll can be found here**: https://energyright.com/ev/press-kit/