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**TenneSEIA Names 2020 Tennessee Valley Solar Champions**  
***Solar association presents awards to TVA's Hansen, Knoxville Utilities Board***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Today the Tennessee Solar Energy Industries Association (TenneSEIA) presented its 2020 Solar Champion Award to **Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Chris Hansen** and to the **Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB)**. The annual award recognizes individuals or entities that demonstrate leadership in support of solar energy deployment in the region.

The ceremony took place during TenneSEIA's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tennessee Valley Solar Conference, which was held virtually this year due to COVID-19. More than 250 people participated in the webinar event to hear insights and perspectives from a wide range of policymakers, industry participants, and utility leadership, including TVA's President and CEO Jeff Lyash and the TN Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Commissioner David Salyers.

"On behalf of our membership and all those with an interest in expanding solar energy in the Tennessee Valley, I want to thank all who participated for making this year's conference a success," said **Chris Koczaja, President of TenneSEIA**. "The diverse group of attendees reinforces the broad support for solar + storage and its role in the Valley."

At the conclusion of the conference, TenneSEIA announced its selection of TVA's Chris Hansen and the Knoxville Utilities Board (KUB) as winners of its 2020 Solar Champion Award. Both recipients were recognized for substantial contributions expanding solar in the region most recently through TVA's Green Invest program, a renewable energy tariff that enables large customers to access renewable energy from new projects in the Valley.

As TVA's Vice President of Origination and Renewables, Hansen was credited for his leadership role in the development of TVA's portfolio of renewable options including the Green Invest program. His work with local power companies (LPCs) has helped them leverage low-cost solar energy to meet customer needs and recruit new business.

"While we honor Chris Hansen for his leadership and vision for how renewable energy procurement plays a vital role in economic development, this award also acknowledges the work of many at TVA for the Green Invest program, the LPC flexibility provision, and the shared commitment to improve the quality of life in the Tennessee Valley," said **Matt Beasley, TenneSEIA Board Member and past President**. "Today TenneSEIA honors the virtues of diplomacy and mutual respect that have underpinned our ongoing dialogue with Chris and his team at TVA to serve the best interests of our region."

"TVA is building the energy system of the future and it takes a team of professionals to bring our vision to life," said **Chris Hansen, vice president, TVA Origination & Renewables**. "This award recognizes the efforts of TVA's Origination and Renewables team, as well as TVA's

customers, suppliers and other stakeholders like TenneSEIA, that have leaned-in to develop, and continue to mature, a great suite of renewable products.”

Just as Hansen was honored for his role in the development of the Green Invest program, KUB was recognized for participating in the program to secure 212 megawatts of new-to-the-grid solar power for its customers. KUB’s new investment in solar will generate an anticipated 465 million kilowatt-hours per year, an amount equal to approximately 8 percent of KUB’s annual electric load, the equivalent of powering 35,000 average homes.

“KUB’s meaningful commitment to the Green Invest program marked the first such agreement between TVA and a local power company,” said **TenneSEIA Board Member Forrest Forster**. “As other LPCs follow KUB’s leadership, TenneSEIA expects to see a substantial increase in solar demand across the Valley.”

“KUB is committed to sustainable practices that help ensure the well-being of our current and future customers,” said **Gabriel Bolas, President and CEO of Knoxville Utilities Board**. “As technologies advance, and the needs and desires of our customers change, we continue to listen and adapt. We appreciate TenneSEIA for recognizing that commitment and are happy to make solar energy more accessible to all of our customers.”

#### **About TenneSEIA**

TenneSEIA is the state affiliate for the national Solar Energy Industries Association and represents the interests of the solar energy industry in Tennessee. The mission of TenneSEIA is to promote the development of solar energy and complementary technologies, including storage, positioning the Tennessee Valley’s residents and businesses as leaders in clean energy deployment and economic development.

For more information about TenneSEIA, please visit <http://www.tenneseiasolar.com/>

#### **Annual Solar Champion Award Winners:**

2010 Governor Phil Bredesen  
2011 Tennessee Solar Institute  
2012 Ted Wampler of Wampler Farm Sausage  
2013 Volkswagen N.A.  
2014 Greg Williams of Appalachian Electric Cooperative  
2015 John Bowers of Pickwick Electric Cooperative  
2016 Knox County and Knox County Schools  
2017 Dr. Stephen Smith of SACE  
2018 City of Lebanon and Jeff Dykes, BrightRidge CEO  
2019 Facebook and Google

#### **Annual Lifetime Achievement Award Winners:**

2015 Thomas Tripp  
2016 Dean Solon, Founder of Shoals Technologies Group  
2017 Steve Johnson, Founder of LightWave Solar  
2018 Gil Hough, Executive Director of TenneSEIA  
2019 Matt Kisber and Reagan Farr, Co-Founders of Silicon Ranch Corporation

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