Roane County Joint Information Center
Kingston Ash Release

Press Release Number 013, 09 Jan 2009

Agencies Prepare to Transition from Unified Command to Ongoing Recovery

The local, state and federal agencies involved in the Unified Command responding to the TVA coal ash slide are preparing to transition from the formal unified command phase to ongoing recovery efforts with continued state oversight. The transition marks progress in the initial phases of cleanup at the site, and plans are in place to guide ongoing efforts.

The Joint Information Center and Joint Operations Center will each close at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2009. TVA's operations center will continue to operate uninterrupted with cleanup work and outreach to affected citizens, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) will continue to have staff at the site for oversight and independent sampling activities to monitor air, water and soil quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to continued coordination with TDEC and TVA on further characterization of the site and long term cleanup activities.

The TVA Outreach Center continues to operate at 509 North Kentucky Street in Kingston for residents to file claims or report damages of any kind.

An overview of state, federal and TVA activities is included in this release, and agency contact information for media and the public is attached.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Air monitoring continued in the work zone and surrounding residential areas. EPA has taken approximately 200 readings with hand held instruments. EPA data indicates that particulate levels have remained below EPA standards for ambient air quality throughout the monitored periods of the response.
- EPA provided training to TVA river water sampling teams to improve data collection.
- EPA is posting data as it becomes available at http://www.epaosc.net/site_profile.asp?site_id=4642

State of Tennessee

There are several state agencies coordinating ongoing cleanup, recovery and outreach efforts.

Department of Environment and Conservation

- The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation will continue to have personnel on the scene coordinating state oversight of the cleanup to ensure it is done effectively and with the health of area residents and the environment as the primary focus.

- The department is coordinating closely with the Tennessee Department of Health to ensure the ongoing health of citizens remains a priority during the cleanup process. Both departments are looking at options for setting up a joint office in the community until no longer needed to oversee TVA's cleanup.
- Environment and Conservation has developed and is implementing plans for the ongoing sampling of air, soil and ash, river water, drinking water intakes and treated drinking water. Analytical data is reviewed as received to insure any results that indicate are recognized quickly and appropriate response may be taken.
- The plans, as well as sample results, are available at www.tn.gov/environment.
- Samples at the Kingston and Rockwood water treatment plants are collected daily and analyzed at the state lab in Nashville operated by the Department of Health. This daily sampling will continue. All sample results to date indicate drinking water continues to be safe.
- Well water sampling continues within a four mile radius of the site. Fifty-six wells have been sampled to date, and sampling will continue today. So far, results for 31 wells are back from the lab and indicate all parameters tested meet drinking water standards. Residents in the area may call 865-594-6035 or 1-888-891-8332 to request well sampling. Department personnel will call individual property owners with sample results and follow up with a letter to the residence.
- Environment and Conservation is collecting river samples above and below the impact site twice per week or more often as conditions warrant. Analysis will be at the state lab and data will be posted on our Web page.
- The department has collected soil and ash samples from yards. Results will be posted to the Web site when they are received from the lab. TDEC will use the soil and ash data to help determine the direction of soil and ash remediation.
- Environment and Conservation will review and approve all TVA air monitoring efforts and split air samples with TVA and evaluate all air monitoring data generated from the TVA air monitoring system. The Department will also operate an independent air monitor which will serve as a reference for air data. The department will continue operation of its air monitor in Harriman.

Department of Health

- In keeping with its mission to protect, promote and improve the health, the Tennessee Department of Health is working to complete routine health surveys of residents living near the spill site. This effort is aimed at ensuring there are no unexpected health effects being experienced in the community, answering any health questions one-on-one, reminding the public of health messages that have been issued and educating people about resources available for health-related concerns or questions.
- The state Department of Health also is analyzing water samples collected by Environment and Conservation to determine the safety and quality of drinking water and the effects of the release to bodies of water in the area. Additionally, Health staffers have assisted at the incident command center to offer expertise and guidance related to public health issues.
- For more information about the health surveys or other activities of the Department of Health, call 1-800-404-3006, or send an e-mail to TN.Health@state.tn.us.

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

- The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) advises until further notice that fishing should be avoided in the lower section of the Emory River, and that existing advisories for Watts Bar should be followed.

- TWRA will be collecting bass and catfish and comparing fish tissue results to existing data for those species. TWRA expects to resample on a semiannual basis, probably January and October, and will evaluate findings with the other resource agencies. Environment and Conservation will issue advisories if fish tissue contaminant levels exceed protection criteria.

Roane County

- The Roane County Government is committed to serving and protecting the residents of Roane County by working with and gathering information provided by Federal and State agencies.
- The Roane County Government will oversee the recovery and complete clean-up efforts of the Tennessee Valley Authority.
- The Roane County Government will listen and pay close attention to the residents' concerns. Residents may voice their concerns by calling (865) 717-4212 or emailing tvarecovery@roanegov.org
- The Roane County Government will be the "mouthpiece of people" if the residents are not receiving results in a timely manner.

Tennessee Valley Authority

- TVA's extensive recovery effort continues at the site.
- More than 1,200 mobile air monitoring samples have been collected. All samples have registered within the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter.
- More than 80 pieces of large equipment are now working on the project.
- TVA has almost completed seeding and fertilizing in the area to provide temporary ground cover and control dust. Workers will begin today to cover to cover the seeded areas with straw.
- 18 tons of cenospheres have been recovered using floating booms, 30 boats and more than a dozen vacuum suction devices.
- Construction has been completed on the rail lines damaged at the time of the spill.
- The TVA Outreach Center continues operations at 509 North Kentucky Street in Kingston for residents who have a property damage claim or other questions or concerns. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sunday. The local phone number for the Outreach Center is 865-632-1700; the toll-free number is 1-800-257-2675.
- All other members of the public should continue to call 865-717-4006 if they have questions or concerns.
- Weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., TVA will staff a local information center at 2919 Roane State Highway for news media inquiries. The local information center phone number will be 865-590-7001, previously the phone number for media inquiries to the Joint Information Center. Media calls can also be made to TVA at 865-632-6000.

Editors Note: A list of agency specific contact information for the public and media follows on a separate page.

###

Roane County Joint Information Center
Kingston Ash Release

Each agency involved in the ongoing cleanup and recovery effort is committed to sharing timely information with the public and the media. Agency contact information is as follows:

Tennessee Valley Authority
Public outreach - 865-632-1700
Property damage assessments - 1-800-257-2675
Media – 865-590-7001 or 865-632-6000

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Public – 888-891-8332 or ask.tdec@state.tn.us
Media - Tisha Calabrese-Benton 865-594-5442 or tisha.calabrese@state.tn.us / Meg Lockhart 615-253-1916 or meg.lockhart@state.tn.us

Tennessee Department of Health
Public - 1-800-404-3006 or Roane County Health Department at 865-354-1220
Media - 615-741-3111

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Public/Media - Dan Hicks – 1-800-262-6704

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Public - 1-800-241-1754 or 404-562-9900
Media - 404-562-8327

Roane County
Public - 865-717-4212 or email: tvarecovery@roanegov.org
Media - 865-717-4440 or scottstout@roanegov.org

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency
Public - 1-800-262-3300
Media - 615-741-0482