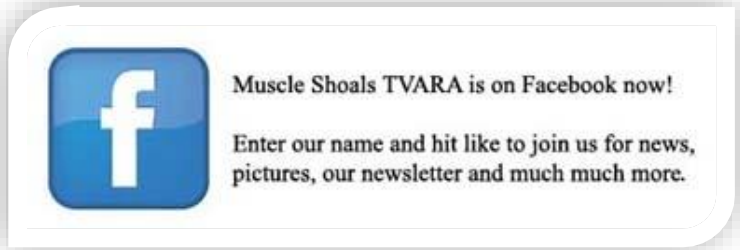




Muscle Shoals Chapter  
Spring 2026 Issue



**MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

Hello everyone,

As we all know, the weather for us this Spring has been mixed with up and down temperatures. Hope you have been able to enjoy the moderate days when they have occurred.

Our year started with us, requesting and receiving a \$25,000 grant from BVI for the Garden Program. Volunteers began by manning telephones to accept calls from families registering for this year’s Garden Program. This phase started in mid-February and continued until mid-April. There were almost 700 families registered this year.

The local Community Action Committee administers this program and reviews the registrants to assure that they meet certain requirements. Those that are approved are sent vouchers, the second week of April, to present at several pre-approved businesses in exchange for garden supplies. The families have until the last of May to use the vouchers, up to the amount of the \$40 voucher. Residents in Lauderdale, Colbert and Franklin counties were eligible to participate in the program.

In April, Power Service Shop Veterans’ organization and the Muscle Shoals retiree’s representatives met with Lt. Col McCann, professor of Military Science (ROTC) at UNA, to arrange for a new initiative; an annual recognition of an outstanding UNA Cadet in November.

After this, we immediately started doing preliminary tasks needed for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual June Picnic/Health Fair which is scheduled for June 16 at 10 am this year (doors open at 9:30).

Continued on page 3.

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## Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from President
- 2 Upcoming Events/Advertisers
- 3 Board Members
- 3 TVARA Board Meeting
- 4 2026 TVARA Picnic
- 5 Things to do in Retirement
- 6 Cooperative Garden Program
- 8 Endowed Scholarship
- 9 Help! We Need Your Help!
- 9 Suggestions

Special Thanks to non-advertising  
Supporters

TVA Power Service Shops

## Upcoming Events

Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
Annual Picnic and Health Fair  
Program: Health, Fitness, & More  
Great Door Prizes (thousands of dollars)  
Florence/Lauderdale Coliseum

Wednesday, September 9, 2026, 10:00 a.m.  
Scholar Recognition  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Wednesday, December 9, 2026, 10:00 a.m.  
Program TBA  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

Wednesday, March 9, 2027, 10:00 a.m.  
Program TBA  
Free Lunch and Door Prizes  
Wilson Dam Road TVA Community Credit Union

## Our Advertisers

*Our advertisers are contributing to our Muscle Shoals Chapter TVARA Endowment by advertising in our newsletter and at the Annual Picnic. When considering any of the services offered, please think first of our advertisers!*

### Gold \$1250

**TVA Community Credit Union**      **Alabama Health Guidance**  
**Alabama Hearing Care (Beltone)**

### Silver \$750

**Delta Dental**

### Bronze \$500

**Blue Cross/Blue Shield Alabama**      **Visiting Angels**  
**Morrison Funeral Home**                      **United Benefits**

### Copper \$300

### Aluminum \$100

**Lauderdale Christian Nursing Home**

## Meet your Muscle Shoals TVARA Board Members

President, Bob Atwell

Vice President,

Treasurer, Greg Vandiver

Secretary, Carol Sherer

Hospitality, MJ Ligon

Community Projects/Healthcare Advocacy/ Picnic Manager, John Blackwell

Scholarship Program/Communications/Newsletter, John Ingwersen

Directors, Billy Baggett, John Blackwell, Jim Green, John Ingwersen, Cameron Kay

Board Members, Delores Huzar, Anita Vandiver, Joan Marsh, Henry Long

Problems with benefits, pharmacy? Contact TVA HR Support Services 888-275-8094.

Comments/Recommendations/Articles for Newsletter? Send to [jlingwersen@gmail.com](mailto:jlingwersen@gmail.com).

President's Message continued from page 1

All TVA retirees are welcome to the picnic, please register with Greg Vandiver (see contact information below). We only mailed out invitations to the members of the Muscle Shoals TVARA and the BFN TVARA members. We would encourage all TVA retirees that are not TVARA members to join by contacting Greg Vandiver, 256-810-8106, [gvandver@bellsouth.net](mailto:gvandver@bellsouth.net) or Richard Wilson, membership-TVARA Knoxville, at 865-632-8542, [rtwilson@tva.gov](mailto:rtwilson@tva.gov).

Hope to see you at the picnic June 16.

Bob Atwell

President TVARA – Muscle Shoals

256-710-5826

### Highlights of the TVA Retirees Association Board Meeting May 7

Darren Crutcher, manager of the Tennessee Valley Authority Cumberland Fossil Plant. Discussed Future of Coal at TVA. He discussed the future of coal generation at TVA and the changing direction of the utility's power portfolio

- Crutcher noted that because the plant had originally been scheduled for closure, some preventative maintenance projects had been delayed or not performed. At Cumberland, TVA is
- now conducting extensive studies and evaluations to determine what repairs,



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upgrades, and equipment will be necessary to safely and reliably continue operations for the extended period.

- The plant must continue meeting all environmental and air quality regulations while extending operations.

Liberty Phillips, retiree communications specialist for TVA, presented an update on several retiree and public outreach initiatives.

- Announced the opening of an on-line TVA retiree apparel store where employees and retirees can purchase TVA-themed caps, shirts, and other items.
- TVA is developing employee-focused presentations and materials highlighting members of the TVA workforce and their experiences in hopes of encouraging more young people to consider careers with TVA.
- TVA visitor and information centers, including facilities at Kentucky Dam, Norris Dam, and Fontana Dam, will receive upgrades and new displays.

Vickie Ellis discussed the recent selection of Mike Skaggs as TVA's new CEO.

TVA Retirement System remains in a strong financial position, with approximately \$8.4 billion in assets and funding at approximately 90 percent.

Suzanne Bowman will now serve as TVARA newsletter editor. Beginning with the June issue, printed newsletters will only be mailed to retirees who specifically request a printed copy or who do not have internet access. Retirees wishing to continue receiving printed editions were asked to contact Richard Wilson.

## **Friends, Good Food, Great door prizes- Don't miss the Annual TVARA Picnic.**



**Good**

The Muscle Shoals Chapter of the Tennessee Valley Authority Retirees Association invites all TVA retirees, spouses, and retired friends to attend the **24th Annual Picnic and Health Fair on June 16** at the **Florence-Lauderdale Coliseum, 709 Veterans Drive, Florence, Alabama.**

This popular annual event offers retirees an enjoyable opportunity to reconnect with former coworkers and friends while also receiving valuable information from a variety of vendors and organizations.

The Health Fair will feature representatives from hospitals, healthcare providers, insurance agencies, investment firms, and other businesses that specialize in services important to retirees. Vendors will be available throughout the day to answer questions and provide helpful information about health care, retirement planning, financial services, and related topics. Also, several local charities will be in attendance expressing appreciation for your support.



As always, attendees will also have opportunities to win numerous door prizes during the event, including the grand prize drawing for a **\$1,000 Visa Gift Card.**

We strongly encourage everyone to **come early and stay late** so you can fully enjoy the fellowship, visit with vendors, and spend time with fellow retirees and friends. Spouses are especially encouraged to attend and take part in the day's activities.

All TVA retirees are invited. However, if you did not receive an invitation in the mail, you are likely not currently a member of the Muscle Shoals Chapter of TVARA. Since this mailing only goes to current TVARA members, we encourage everyone to help spread the word to other TVA retirees and their spouses so no one misses this special event.

The meal cost is only **\$15 per person**, and that price has remained unchanged for several years despite rising food costs everywhere. In fact, the cost of the meal is now less than many casual meals at restaurants in the Shoals area, making this event one of the best values around.

Most importantly, the annual picnic is about maintaining the friendships and connections built during years of service with TVA. We hope you and your spouse will make plans to join us for a wonderful day of fellowship,

food, information, and fun.

We look forward to seeing you on June 16, 2026 at the Florence Lauderdale Coliseum.

## **THINGS TO DO SINCE YOU HAVE RETIRED:**

Laugh until you gasp for breath.

And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with THEM!

The tears happen so:

Endure, grieve, and move on.

The only person who is with our entire life is ourselves.

LIVE while you are alive.

Keep learning! Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop!”

Enjoy simple things.

Laugh often, long, and hard.

Contributed by Joan Marsh

## 2026 Gerald G. Williams Cooperative Garden Program



Preparing mail outs to recipients who qualified for the garden seed program. Henry Long, Jim Green, Robert Atwell, Carley Ashe who administers the program for community action, Joan Marsh.

See our article on next page as it appears in *TVARA Magazine*.

# Fifty Years of Growing: The Gerald Williams Garden Program

| Articles of Interest

What started with \$6,000 worth of seeds and fertilizer has grown into one of the most enduring community programs in Northwest Alabama, and BVI has been proud to be a part of it.

In December 1974, TVA launched the “Win-Garden Program” in Northwest Alabama, providing qualifying residents with seeds and fertilizer to help them grow their own gardens. The response was immediate and overwhelming with more than 500 families signed up. In February 1975, Dr. Gerald Williams of TVA stepped in to provide fertilizer for the program, and his commitment to the community left a lasting mark. Several years later, the program was renamed the Gerald Williams Garden Program in his honor, a name it proudly carries to this day.

Like so many things, COVID brought a change to how the program operates. Rather than distributing seeds and fertilizer directly, the program shifted to a voucher model, allowing recipients to take their voucher to a local co-op and select what works best for their own garden. The change has been a success and remains in place today.

To qualify for the program, residents must live in Lauderdale, Colbert, or Franklin counties and meet household income guidelines. This year alone, the program served approximately 700 families with \$25,000 in support — a remarkable impact that speaks to just how much this program means to the region.

Each year, the program kicks off around mid-February and runs for approximately five weeks. BVI volunteers play an important role throughout, answering phones, gathering applicant information, and mailing vouchers to families across the three-county area.

Now in its fifth decade, the Gerald Williams Garden Program is a testament to what a little ‘seed’ money, and a lot of community commitment, can grow.



Pictured (left to right): Delores Huzar, Joan Marsh, Carol Sherer, Anita Vandiver, Greg Vandiver, Bob Atwell, and Billy Baggett. Not pictured: Lile Bickley, Tim Cornelius, Jan Corneilus, and Cameron Kay.

## Endowed Scholarship - Your Support Needed!

*We have several businesses and charities who have been supporting our endowed scholarship by providing financial support through the purchase of ads for our newsletter and booths at our Annual Health Fair/Picnic. We thank them for their generous support, and hope that each of our members will look at their advertisements in this, and future newsletters, and support them as they support us.*

As of March 31, 2026, our scholarship endowment totaled \$142,830.54. We have made great strides toward making our \$150,000 goal – your help in pushing us toward it appreciated greatly!

The endowment for 2025-2026 supports two scholarships. These awards are nearly \$2,000 each with the expectation that the awards will climb to near \$2,800 each next year. The scholarship award gives preference to relatives of active (paid) Muscle Shoals TVARA members. In addition, your TVARA Board has approved an award of \$200 for the winning essay.

Please make our endowed scholarship a priority for your charitable giving. Donations are tax-deductible. Following is a link and QR code for the endowment.

<https://www.givecampus.com/sf12gp?designation=tennesseevalleyauthorityretireeassociationendowedscholarship&>

You may also donate by check. Make your check payable to Muscle Shoals Chapter, TVARA/UNA Endowed Scholarship and mail it to:

UNA Foundation Office (Attn: Endowed Scholarships)  
Box 5113  
Florence, AL 35632-0001



## **Help! We Need Your Help!**

Do you enjoy writing or photography? We're working to make this newsletter the best and your talents are needed. If you would like to occasionally write an article on your experiences, or on a TVA person who deserves recognition, please let me know; and I will schedule your article for a future newsletter. Do you enjoy photography? We could use a designated photographer to get pictures at our various events. We have been somewhat haphazard at this, and would like to get better. Call John Ingwersen at 256-757-5325; or email him at [jlingwersen@gmail.com](mailto:jlingwersen@gmail.com).



## **Suggestions?**

We want your feedback, comments, and suggestions. Let us know what you would like for TVARA programs, for our newsletter, and/or ways we can improve, in any way, our service to you.