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## Full STEAM Ahead for Another 80 Years of Safety, Giving and Receiving in Tough Times and Education Innovation

Mayfield Electric and Water Systems (MEWS) and TVA were founded on a mission to serve — through reliable and affordable energy, a safe and protected environment and thriving economic development. June 11, 2022, MEWS will celebrate 80 years of partnership with TVA. Today they provide public power to 5,400 residents and businesses in the City of Mayfield and surrounding areas within Graves County, Kentucky.

“We at Mayfield Electric and Water Systems are proud to live up to our belief that a utility should not only continually find innovative solutions and offer the most advanced technology available, but also be a leader in the community. Our partnership with TVA allows us to keep infrastructure up-to-date, upgrading essentials such as substations and street and security lights to reduce maintenance costs, ensure reliability and create safe, well-lit neighborhoods,” MEWS general superintendent Marty Ivy said.

He added, “Operating under the public power model with TVA has also allowed us to go beyond utilities and enhance the lives of people in our area. It gives us great pleasure to be able to help residents thrive with community energy benefits such as educational programming, well-maintained outdoor recreation areas, relief funding, and hands-on disaster recovery assistance. We have been dedicated to supporting Mayfield for 80 years and look forward to seeing all that we can do together in the future.”

### Nationally Recognized for Safety Excellence

As an employer of utility workers who risk their lives handling high-voltage transmission wires from tall heights, MEWS knows danger is always on the line, and protecting employees and others nearby is their number one priority. American Public Power Association recognized MEWS’ dedication to occupational protections with eight Safety Awards of Excellence, and a first place title among utilities with 50,000 annual worker-hours of exposure for having the most incident-free records. (Incident rate, as defined by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses in relation to the total number of workers.)

Keith Cutshall, chair of the Association’s Safety Committee said, “Safety programs are paramount to the well-being of employees that work for electric utilities. The utilities receiving this award have proven that safety is of the utmost importance in the operation of their companies.”

“This award is a testament to the hard work everyone puts in, every day, on every job, to ensure that our team members go home to their families each day,” Brent Shultz, customer operations manager of MEWS said, adding, “MEWS is very proud of our safety record.”

“We push safety hard. We are going on 16 years without a lost time accident,” Ivy said.

MEWS’ relationship with TVA allows regular consultation about worksite safety protocol to ensure best practices are in place to keep not only workers but the public out of harm’s way.

### **Tornado Recovery is a Long Road, but not a Lonely One**

Mayfield was forever changed the night of December 10, 2021 when a tornado struck and devastated much of Western Kentucky. The next day, before anyone could grasp the gravity of the situation, first responders from all over the country showed up.

“We normally have 42 staff members. Starting December 12, we were feeding 250 people a couple times a day for weeks, figuring out the logistics of meals and housing. TVA was a huge help in converting their customer service center trailer into an operations hub,” Ivy said.

“This hub made it easier to coordinate all the people who arrived to pitch in. I’m proud of our folks for stepping up, not worrying about the cost or how we’re going to get it done,” Derrick Miller, customer service manager at TVA said.

“I’ve been very proud of our TVA team at large, and how much support we got from up top. They said—do whatever you think needs done. We’ve got your back. We were glad that we had the support behind us so we could really give our partner Mayfield Electric and Water Services what they needed most. We found those gaps that weren’t immediately being taken care of by other means,” Miller said. TVA made efforts to find out what was needed, then quickly procured fuel tanks to help crews get the lights on, a truck for the sheriff, tarps, hammers, roofing nails, and water.

Miller said, “We’ve learned a lot from this event and we’re going to try to figure out how best we can help in these types of situations.”

The MEWS office was destroyed by the storm, but TVA was also able to provide a trailer to keep the utility in operation. Ivy said, “That was huge.”

### Kentucky Tornado of December 2021: [TVA and Partners Tornado Response \(3:25\)](#)

Video by TVA, featuring MEWS general superintendent Marty Ivy, Warren Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation (RECC) president and CEO Dewayne McDonald, Graves County Sheriff Jon Hayden and Mayfield Mayor Kathy O’Nan.

### **Kentucky Science Center Visit to Mayfield Elementary School**

TVA was looking for a way to offer STEAM to communities served by smaller local power companies, and in the fall of 2021, joined forces with Kentucky Science Center, which has a mission to increase science literacy across the state. The Center’s team travels to every part of Kentucky to make science education programming accessible to all students and teachers. “No place in Kentucky is too far. And we love doing it,” Justin Magaw, manager of partner and program strategy at Kentucky Science Center said.

In December, Kentucky Science Center held their first program at Mayfield Elementary School, a three-hour drive from the Center’s location in Louisville. The day started with an assembly featuring Captain Current versus Electricity Vampires. “It’s a full-blown performance, and the characters ham it up with a lot of science.” The superhero teaches kids how electricity works, safe use practices and ways to conserve energy at home and school.

After the show, they set up 10 interactive stations where two-to-three classes at a time engage in activities that reinforce the messages presented by the superhero. Students see how electricity flows through objects as they learn about insulators and conductors and connect wires on a large battery. To better understand the mechanics of electricity, they handle artifacts such as the tools linemen use when working on power lines. And they have a chance to ride the energy bike. “The goal is to see how much energy it takes to run electronics. The screen displays the number of watts the student’s pedaling generated, and a volunteer tells them what could be powered with that many watts, such as running an Xbox. The kids are having fun the whole time, and don’t even realize they’re learning. And teachers see creative ways to share content and expand upon the concepts, each of which are tied to Kentucky Academic Standards,” Magaw said.

To help make all the facets of the day happen, MEWS staff volunteered at the stations. “We need extra people to add to the community engagement component, and they know first-hand a lot of the content we are delivering about electricity and energy,” Magaw said.

TVA paid the visit fees and helped coordinate logistics with the school and MEWS. “TVA helped us figure out how to set this up for future success. None of this would have been possible without their interest in our program and the fact that the communities they serve know they are invested. We hope to continue this partnership with TVA and other local power companies,” Magaw said.

MEWS and TVA also made it possible for 127 Mayfield Middle School students to get to participate in an exciting day of STEM learning. They visited the Challenger Learning Center in Paducah, Kentucky, where students formed teams, cooperating to orchestrate a simulated space mission to the moon.

### **COVID-19 Relief Funding for PPE, Basic Needs and Safe Harbor**

While lately MEWS has been on the receiving end of care and support, they are also always eager to help others when possible. Via two rounds of funding, they donated \$20,000 on top of TVA’s matching COVID-19 Community Care Fund gift, bringing a total of \$40,000 to distribute to local nonprofit organizations.

MEWS gave \$5,000 to the City of Mayfield for fire, emergency medical service and police. Assistant Fire Chief Darin French said, “The Mayfield Fire Department responded quickly to a looming COVID-19 pandemic. While our preparedness response was necessary, it was costly. Atypical spending on personal protective equipment (PPE) and decontamination equipment (as well as) abnormal amounts of overtime have burdened our budget. Funding from this program helped our department purchase isolation suits, N95 masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, and face shields to help ensure the safety of our personnel.” He said keeping staff safe also ensures they are able to continue to serve the community.

The Graves County Health Department was also able to use their \$2,500 award for PPE to sustain response capabilities. Director Noel Coplen said, “PPE protects our workers (who deliver) much needed services, as well as sharing with other facilities who care for many of our most fragile in our community.” Graves County Sheriff Department had the same idea, spending their \$2,500 gift on PPE. Spokesperson Jeremy Prince said the deputies were regularly using gloves, masks and face shields and the grant provided “extra items so no one had to worry about going without or running out” to keep them protected. They also purchased Tyvex suits, due to a surge in COVID cases in Graves County.

To offset the increase in need for utility, rent, and mortgage assistance, MEWS granted the Annie Gardner Foundation \$17,500. Organization representative Teresa Cantrell said they were “inundated with even more assistance requests during this unprecedeted time with people being off from work because of COVID-19.”

MEWS and TVA gifted \$2,500 to West Kentucky Allied Services Inc. to assist low income families throughout the county. West Kentucky Allied Executive Director Janna York said, "West Kentucky Allied Services, Inc. appreciates the opportunity to better serve the clients of Graves County during the COVID-19. We will gladly utilize the funds we receive to assist individuals and households with the cost of rent, mortgage, car payments, groceries, and sustaining medications."

\$7,500 in funding also helped Mayfield-Graves County Needline & Food Pantry. Needline Director Jackie Herndon said, "We serve the residents of Graves County with qualifying income non-perishable food items. We also assist with utility bills, doctors' visits, and prescriptions, and distribute senior commodities."

The Lighthouse Women & Children's Shelter received \$2,500 from MEWS. Marc Buford, volunteer accountant said during lockdowns, when schools were closed, and many of the women's jobs sent them home, more clients were in the building at once. As a result, costs were higher at a time when donations had decreased. They used the funds to pay staff, utility bills, household items and food.