

# TVA building railroad spur from Harriman to Kingston

By RICK HOOPER

Roane Newspapers

**HARRIMAN** — TVA is now moving ahead with its plan to build a new railroad spur from Harriman to the Kingston Steam Plant.

Following public hearings last year and approval from the TVA board of directors, property is now being purchased by TVA for the project.

"They've already purchased property from some residents," said Harriman Mayor Harold Wester. "So, it looks like they're going through with it."

"From what I understand, they think they can save quite a bit of money. And, hopefully, it will eliminate the crossing in South Harman that has given us some problems."

Indications from TVA are that the new 4.75-mile spur, which will run from the Bullard Crossing area of Harriman across the Emory River and through the Swan Pond area, would indeed eliminate the need for the South Harriman tracks, which have been the focal point of many delay complaints, both from residents and emergency agencies.

According to figures from TVA's Environmental Impact Study (EIS), although the new spur will cost an estimated \$13 million to \$17 million, it will save TVA an estimated \$7 million to \$14 million per year by eliminating the fee levied on all CSX-delivered coal, which now comes through South Harriman.

"Coal is currently delivered to Harriman by Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads, and then is transferred to a Norfolk Southern rail line and later a TVA rail line for shipment to the plant. This arrangement is inefficient and substantially increases TVA's fuel transportation costs," the EIS contends.

TVA was initially considering two alternatives for transporting coal to the Kingston Steam Plant. Although the option not chosen, which would have been railroad tracks run to the west of Swan Pond Church, would have been shorter and cheaper to build, the EIS reveals it would have had a more detrimental impact on the environment and caused more traffic problems than the preferred alternative.

The option chosen by TVA will not cross the Swan Pond embayment after passing under transmission lines. The route would continue along the east side of Swan Pond, cross Swan Pond Circle Road, bridge the narrow embayment fronting the steam plant's ash stack and run parallel with Swan Pond Road and the existing rail line to the steam plant rail yard.

Positive impacts for the option chosen include less parcels of private land crossed; little impact on area wetlands; 28,600 fewer vehicle crossings per day; less residential views affected; and the establishment of about 80 construction jobs for two years.

Although the project is to be done in different phases, TVA Electrician Foreman Bob Foster said the new spur is to be completed by the year 2000.

To minimize noise impacts in the Swan Pond Circle community, TVA reports the radius of the track curvature would be kept as high as possible to minimize wheel-squeal. Noise will also be reduced by use of welded rail.

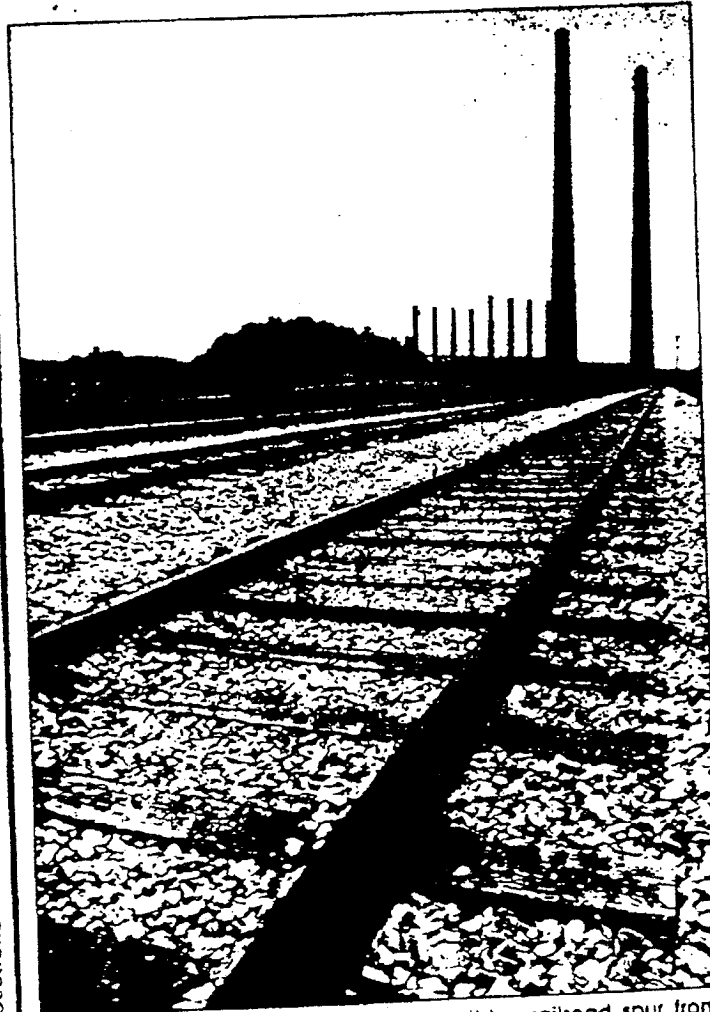
Additionally, direct impacts to forests at the Emory River bridge crossing will be minimized by crossing the river at a 90-degree angle. Also, wetlands will be avoided in Swan Pond embayment by keeping all construction for the rail spur above 750 feet elevation, except at stream crossings.

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY  
MAY 21 - MAY 22, 1997

Serving Harriman, Kingston, Oliver Springs, Rockwood and Roane County, Tennessee—Volume 43, Number 61

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50¢  
42 Pages  
Three Sections



TVA IS MOVING ahead with plans to build a railroad spur from Harriman to its Kingston Steam Plant, above. (PHOTO BY DARRELL G. RICHARDSON/Roane Newspapers)

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