



**Bristol Tennessee Essential Services**

*Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable*

# News

Winter 2010 ~ For Customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

## Celebrate the Bristol Sign's 100 Years

On Friday, April 30, 2010, Bristol will hold a grand celebration of the 100th anniversary of the most famous landmark of the Twin Cities of Bristol, Virginia, and Bristol, Tennessee – the huge electric sign located on State Street in the oldest section of the city, above the line dividing Virginia and Tennessee.

The Bristol Gas and Electric Company (a predecessor of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services and Bristol Virginia Utilities) traditionally donated an advertising sign to the local communities in which they operated. Thanks to this company, 100 years ago in the summer of 1910, the original 60-by-35 foot Bristol sign was erected on the side of the Interstate Hardware Company building near the railroad tracks on the corner of Third and State streets in Bristol, Tennessee, at a cost of \$1,100. The sign read "BRISTOL VA – TENN – PUSH! THAT'S BRISTOL," coined by Charles M. Brown, president of the Bristol Board of Trade. The sign was dedicated on July 4, 1910, with more than 3,000 citizens in attendance.

Five years later, the owners of the hardware company asked that the sign be moved due to possible damage to their building. It was reconstructed by Greenway Advertising Company of Knoxville at a cost of \$500, which was paid by the two cities. The sign was moved to its present location on April 20, 1915, rising 25 feet above the street and was noted as one of the largest signs in the nation.



*The Bristol sign has proudly stood above Bristol, Virginia, and Bristol, Tennessee, for 100 years and says what residents believe: "Bristol VA – TENN – A Good Place to Live."*

The sign became the center for praise, ridicule and a good laugh on occasion. Robert S. Loving recounts in his book "Double Destiny" that "the sign began giving the town bad publicity when parts of the lights would go out making it appear that the town was either decaying or dead." The lighted sign would spell out "PU--! THAT'S BRISTOL!" or "--SH! THAT'S BRISTOL!"

In April 1921, the Bristol Advertising Club offered a \$10 prize for the best new slogan for the sign. James T. Cecil, president of Interstate Hardware, won the contest with the slogan "BRISTOL – A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE." Incidentally, Cecil also served as president of the Bristol Rotary Club in 1926-1927 and as president of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce

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## Serving You in Challenging Times



We have had a series of outages this winter that were unusual as to the amount of work required to get our customers' services restored. Our preparedness and resolve to make repairs quickly was tested.

This was the first time we had as much damage to our electric system and to our fiber system, which carries Internet, telephone, cable and electric data. On Nov. 11, 2009, a large tree on East Cedar Street fell toward the street and took down a main three-phase electric feeder. It broke a 216-count fiber-optic cable and a 12-count fiber-optic cable.

The fiber splicing was our largest splicing event with the most customers affected. We had to prepare 888 fibers and make 444 splices. We had to replace several poles and repair power lines. Most customer service was restored in a very few hours. All customers who could take service were restored in a few more hours. Repairs cost more than \$4,000, and all BTES employees were involved.

The downed tree had roots that were broken off near the tree trunk. Someone said this was damage caused by the recent extended drought we experienced. This was not the first tree that we had seen with that type of damage. Since then, we experienced a windstorm, snowstorm and a Christmas Day windstorm in which we saw many more trees with such damage. Many of these trees took down our poles, wires and fiber-optic cables. Our crews worked through the day and night to restore service.

I believe we will have more drought-damaged trees fall on our equipment. We don't know which ones are damaged. They appear to be healthy and are far enough from the power lines and, without the drought damage, would not cause any problems. Many of you have expressed your appreciation for our crews' hard work in cold, wet and dark conditions to restore your power. We thank you for your kind words. Serving you well is our objective.

In the first two weeks of January, a record was set for the longest consecutive number of days in which temperatures did not get above freezing. This has resulted in us selling much more power, which you have probably noticed on your bills. Where is global warming when we need it?

Thanks for letting us serve you! Have a great 2010 and...

Good Luck!

Mike Browder

## BTES News

Owned and published by  
Bristol Tennessee Essential Services,  
serving more than 32,500 customers

**Dr. R. Michael Browder**  
Chief Executive Officer

**BTES News** is published four times a year.

Address changes, news items and suggestions should be sent to  
P.O. Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621.  
BTES Web site: [www.btes.net](http://www.btes.net)

### Our Mission

To provide service to our customers, employees and community that exceeds their expectations.

### Our Vision

To be the best electric, Internet, telephone and cable television provider.

## Customer Quotes

"BTES knows what service is."

*Phillip Walling*

"I really like having everything on one bill. Thanks so much!"

*Nannie McMurray*

"When I called, the person I talked to was very helpful. The cable was turned on when they said it would be. Excellent service."

*Judy Quesenberry*

"Could not ask for a more polite or knowledgeable person!"

*Margaret Cooke*

"I just wanted to thank the BTES employees who sacrificed time with their families so that others could have electrical service in their homes for Christmas."

*Barry Dutton*



## Celebrate Continued from Page 1

in 1941-1942. Both cities and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce marketed the city with the new slogan.

In 1969, the Bristol Chamber of Commerce led an unsuccessful effort to dismantle the sign because of safety concerns. However, in 1982, the Save our Sign Fundraising Committee, a community involvement project sponsored by radio station WFHG and the Bristol Jaycees, became active and – with tremendous publicity by the *Bristol Herald Courier* – launched a successful campaign that raised enough money to have the historic sign restored to safety. On Sept. 8, 1988, the sign was accepted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



It's highly likely that anyone who has ever visited Bristol has seen the sign. It is a tourist attraction, along with historic State Street and its brass markers identifying the states of Virginia and Tennessee. The state line divides the city down the center of State Street and passes directly under the Bristol sign. Many

photographs have been taken with tourists straddling the Virginia-Tennessee state line with their backs toward the sign so that in years to come they can remember the time they were standing in two states at the same time.

“Each year Bristol Tennessee Essential Services and Bristol Virginia Utilities take turns relamping the 1,322 light bulbs in the sign as part of the cities’ Street Lighting Program, but it is the responsibility of both cities of Bristol to keep the sign in good repair,” says BTES CEO Mike Browder. “Please put April 30 on your calendars to help celebrate the 100 years our sign has faithfully stood recognizing that Bristol truly is ‘A Good Place to Live.’”

Historic pictures of the Bristol sign will be displayed at the April 30 event. If you have images that you would like to exhibit, please take them to the Bristol Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce is located at 20 Volunteer Parkway, Bristol, Tennessee.

# THE ESSENTIALS \$99<sup>75</sup> plus tax and fees

## A complete package of services from BTES

- **Expanded Basic Cable**  
(Channels 2-82)
- **6Mb High-Speed Internet**
- **Basic Telephone Service**  
Caller ID w/Name and Number, Call Waiting/Cancel Call Waiting, Caller ID for Call Waiting,  
Unconditional Call Forwarding, Remote Access to Call Forwarding, Three-Way Calling, Speed Calling (One Digit)
- **Unlimited Long-Distance**

## Help Your Neighbor

**At BTES, our customers are our number one priority, and we believe that it is our responsibility to help you whenever we can.** This is why we implemented the *Help Your Neighbor* Program. This program is designed to help less-fortunate customers pay their winter electric bills.

*Help Your Neighbor* donations are collected from our customers throughout the year. The Salvation Army certifies the eligibility of the recipient, and the United Way of Bristol disburses the funds. The money goes directly toward helping less-fortunate residential customers. You can add \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10 or more each month to your electric bill or write a separate check to *Help Your Neighbor* and mail it to BTES, P.O. Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621.

If you have signed up for automatic bank draft, it's still easy to donate. Just fill out the form to the right and indicate if you would like to give a one-time donation or monthly gift, and then indicate the amount of your contribution and mail the form to BTES.

The number of people who can be helped depends on how much the rest of us are willing to give. BTES will match up to \$15,000 in customer contributions.

### Help Your Neighbor Donation Form for Automatic Bank Draft Customers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

One-time donation: ? OR Monthly donation: ?

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Not signed up for the BTES Automatic Bank Draft Program? Simply fill out the form below and mail it to BTES. We will set you up with the most convenient way to pay!**



### BTES Automatic Bank Draft Program

Our Automatic Bank Draft Program is the most convenient way to pay your bill — plus you save postage and/or gasoline charges and avoid any possible late fees. To start the Automatic Bank Draft Program, please read and complete the information below. You will still receive a copy of your bill each month. The draft is typically processed the day before the past due date.

#### Consumer Payment Draft Authorization

Fill out the information below or send a voided check to us so we can get your bank transit and bank account numbers.

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Transit Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned customer of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services hereby authorizes Bristol Tennessee Essential Services to make automatic withdrawals from the checking account designated above for the purpose of paying monthly electric bills.

Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Electric Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**For your convenience, an opportunity to donate to the *Help Your Neighbor* Program is provided below.**

Help Your Neighbor: ? One-time donation ? Monthly donation ? No thanks

Help Your Neighbor Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail completed form to:  
BTES, Customer Service Department, P.O. Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621  
or call (423) 968-1526 for more information.**



## BTES Employees Serving You

BTES employees work hard to keep the power on for all our customers, in addition to assuring that telephone, Internet and cable television services are functioning properly. If an outage occurs, employees from every department work to restore all services as quickly as possible.



Customer Service Representatives (L-R) Debbie Baker, Tracy Kilbourn, Amber Smith, Heather Sheets and Brenda Phipps answer phone calls to take care of customer needs as quickly as possible.



Supervisor of Engineering David Hacker and System Engineer Mary Seneker work at dispatch to send out crews to restore power during an outage.



Substation Technician Jason Olinger splices fiber to restore Internet, telephone and cable television services to customers during a storm.



Lineman Brian Harber works to set a new pole and watches closely as the derrick truck begins to lift the pole into place.



Lineman Josh Cunningham works the controls to the auger to dig a 10-foot hole for a new pole to be set.



Network Supervisor Michael Parker makes sure that the fiber-optic cables are securely in place and working properly.



## Life Lessons

*Life isn't fair, but it's still good.*

*Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.*

*Pay off your credit cards every month.*

*You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.*

*Make peace with your past so it won't mess up the present.*

*Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.*

*Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.*

*Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.*

*No one is in charge of your happiness but you.*

*Forgive everyone for everything.*

*What other people think of you is none of your business.*

*Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.*

*However good or bad a situation is, it will change.*

*Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.*

*All that truly matters in the end is that you're loved.*

*If we all threw out our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.*

*Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.*

## The Lighter Side

*I needed some supplies from a Sunday School cupboard that was seldom used and secured with a lock. I didn't know the combination, but our clergyman offered to give it a try. Father Jack placed his fingers on the lock's dial and raised his eyes heavenward for a moment. Then he confidently spun the dial and opened the lock. Seeing how impressed I was with this demonstration of faith, he smiled and confided, "The numbers are written on the ceiling."*



# Favorite Recipes of BTES employees and customers

## Chocolate Chip Reese's Cookies

By Customer Service Representative Diane Smith

- 1 bag of mini Reese's
- 1 package of mini-muffin liners
- 1 package of break-and-bake chocolate chip cookie dough

Drop one square of cookie dough into each lined mini-muffin spot. Start unwrapping the Reese's while the oven is preheating. Bake at 350 degrees for seven minutes.

Remove from oven and press Reese's into cookies. Return to oven and cook an additional two minutes. Let cool before removing from pan. Since the cookies are slightly undercooked, they will be really mushy if you try to take them out of the muffin liners too early.

## Banana Pudding

- 2 large boxes of instant vanilla pudding
- 6 cups of two percent milk
- 1 box of vanilla wafers
- 3-4 sliced bananas

Mix the vanilla pudding and milk with a wire whisk until smooth. Line bowl with the vanilla wafers. Alternate vanilla wafers, sliced bananas and pudding, then repeat. Add crushed vanilla wafers on top. Refrigerate until cold.





## Energy Savings Tips

**Here are a few tips and ideas to help us all not only save energy, but also save money at the same time!**

**Put your computer monitor on sleep.** Screen savers – those moving images you get when your monitor is kept on – cost you an extra \$50 or more in electricity per year.

**Switch on the compact fluorescents.** Make the switch from incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescents. They use 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer. That adds up to more light for less money.

**Turn off the faucet.** An open faucet lets about five gallons of water flow every two minutes.

**Chill out.** Let cooked foods cool to room temperature before putting them in the refrigerator. Hot foods – and their containers – will raise the temperature in the fridge, making it work much harder. But be careful not to leave food out too long, or it will spoil. Follow recipe instructions.

**Close the door.** Your garage doors could be the last line of defense between you and the great outdoors. During the winter months, keep your garage doors shut. Also, consider insulated doors for even more efficiency.



**Don't go to the extreme.** Your home warms up at the same speed, regardless of the temperature setting – so you won't reach your desired temperature any sooner by setting the thermostat to a higher setting than you are actually seeking.

**Leave it be.** Leave your oven door closed while cooking and baking. When you repeatedly open and close the oven, the warm air escapes. Use the oven light to check on foods.

**Keep it indoors.** Whether you're heating or cooling, you don't want your energy going out the door. Caulk and weather-strip around doors and window frames. Closely check any area where pipes go from the outside of your home to the inside. If you have operable storm windows, make sure those are shut, too.



**Turn it off.** Make sure to turn off any lights or appliances when not in use. Small things add up!

**Be a STAR.** Look for the ENERGY STAR® label when replacing large or small appliances.

**Keep the dust and lint away.** Make sure your dryer's outside vent is clear, and clean the lint filter after every load. Also change your air filters monthly to ensure that your heat pump is running efficiently.

**Get a tune-up.** Have your heating and cooling system checked annually to keep it running as efficiently as possible.

## Energy Savings Loan Program

### Items Eligible for Financing Through the Energy Savings Loan Program



- Insulated exterior doors



- Storm doors



- Inspected electric heat pump



- Insulated garage doors



- Insulated replacement windows

For more information and loan terms, please call 793-5547



**Bristol Tennessee Essential Services**

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U.S. Postage Paid  
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Permit 72  
Bristol, TN



TENNESSEE FIBER OPTIC COMMUNITIES



**Your Comments Are Important**

Please list the articles you found most interesting in this issue of **BTES News**, then clip out this form and mail it with your electric bill to the address below. (Winter 2010)

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments, story ideas or questions.

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Please return to:  
**BTES News**, P.O. Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621  
Phone (423) 793-5531

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and address (Optional)

# Power Out?

Simply call ...  
**968-BTES**  
**(968-2837)**

**Our automated outage system helps us respond to power outages quicker to restore your power.**

**For other BTES business, call 423-968-1526**

