



Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable

News

Fall 2011 ~ For Customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

BTES Reaches Out to Our Community

BTES employees work hard every day to provide reliable electric, Internet, telephone and cable television services to our customers. These same employees understand the importance of supporting their community and volunteering their time to help others. BTES employees take pride in being involved and continue to find ways to assist those in need.

BTES employees are involved in numerous volunteer activities around our region ranging from individual to group efforts, from cleaning up local lakes to donating blood and lending a hand in building Habitat for Humanity houses.



BTES employees and family members have participated annually in the South Holston Lake and River Cleanup since the first event in 1993. Employees spend the second Saturday in August along the shorelines of South Holston Lake picking up trash. This year's BTES team and family members (pictured above) collected more than two truckloads worth of garbage!



Several BTES employees jumped right in, got their hands dirty and helped build the Habitat for Humanity house in Bristol, Tennessee, this fall. They helped from the beginning of the project to its completion on their own time. Working Foreman Aaron Maxwell (left) nails up walls for the Habitat House located at 1217 Florida Ave.

Twice a year, BTES holds a blood drive at our office on Volunteer Parkway. Several BTES employees and members of the community who happen to stop by BTES donate blood. BTES has held blood drives for our community for more than 30 years. Director of Operations and Safety Kenneth King shows off the free T-shirt he received for donating blood.



BTES employees celebrated the 4th of July by cooking and serving hot dogs and chips to our community at Cumberland Square Park in downtown Bristol, Virginia. This year, the group served more than 3,000 hot dogs and more than 1,200 pizza slices at the event.



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US Post Office Changes Bill Payments



In the Tuesday, December 6, 2011 issue of "USA Today," it was announced that more than half of the 487 US Post Office Processing Centers would be closing in order to cut costs. It went on to say that it's goodbye for most one-day mail service.

This was not news in Bristol, Tennessee since we have already seen the mail processing moved to Johnson City. On December 2 BTES received 13 pieces of mail in our lock box which is used to take our payments to the bank for processing. The previous lows in pieces of mail with payments have been several hundred pieces. This delay, added to delivery time caused by taking mail to Johnson City and brought back to Bristol, has caused several customers to pay a late payment fee and, even worse, a few to be cut off because we did not receive their payments in a timely manner.

This also adds to additional delays for those who use a bill payment service that writes a check to BTES and mails it. These payments are regularly received late by BTES because the bill paying service will write a check, take the money out of the customer's account and then mail that check to BTES which is regularly received after the delinquent day, even though the money has been taken from the customer's account several days earlier.

The easiest, least expensive and most "green" method to pay your BTES utility bill is with automatic bank draft. Almost 5,000 BTES customers take advantage of this program. Payments will be deducted from your checking account on the due date which is the last day to pay without a penalty.

It is even a less costly, "more green" approach if you sign up for our E-Bill option where we e-mail your bill. We can even send an e-mail and/or text message alert to you as to when the bill is due and when your payment has been received. If you choose the e-mail only option, no paper bill will be mailed, therefore no trees are cut to make the paper, no gasoline is used to go to the post office or BTES' office or to haul the mail and no money is spent on stamps.

Details of these and other bill payment options are shown on pages 4 and 5. So, sign up today, reduce your carbon footprint and join our "green" mail team!

Good Luck!

Mike Browder

BTES News

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serving more than 33,000 customers

Dr. R. Michael Browder
Chief Executive Officer

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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.

Call BTES 968-1526 for these services!

- *Reliable Electricity
- *High-Speed Internet
- *Cable TV
- *Telephone
- *Surge Protection for Appliances and Electronics
- *Heat Pump Loan Program (Free Inspection)
- *Energy Savings Loan Program up to \$10,000
- *Water Heaters for Sale - \$325 *plus tax/fees*
- *Electric Grills for Sale - \$102.09 *plus tax*
- *Electric Smokers for Sale - \$59.89 *plus tax*
- *Bank Draft
- *Level Monthly Bill
- *Text Message/E-Mail Bill Alerts
- *Gift Certificates for Electricity
- *Help Your Neighbor
- *Power Outage System, call 968-BTES

**Thank you for allowing us
to serve you!**



Community Continued from Page 1



BTES employees volunteer many hours each year helping the United Way of Bristol. A group of BTES employees (left) volunteered at the 2010 One Enchanted Evening event at the Bristol Mall in support of the United Way. Employees were in charge of the very important door prize table!



BTES partners with local schools to help students see the importance of using what they learn today for their future workplace. Students visit BTES annually to tour the building and talk with employees about the skills they need. Shown above - Supervisor of Engineering David Hacker talks with students about what it takes to become a lineman at BTES.



In support of the United Way of Bristol, three BTES employees annually visit United Way agencies to see firsthand how contributions to the United Way of Bristol from BTES employees and others makes a difference in our community. BTES is recognized as being a Pacesetter organization, with every employee donating at least at the Extra Mile Level. Above (L-R): Apprentice Lineman Tony Carr, Customer Service Representative Nola Jessee and Systems Engineer Chris Gass visited the YWCA, Girls Incorporated and Salvation Army in 2011.



To celebrate Earth Day, BTES donated 13 trees to Fairmount Elementary School. BTES CEO Mike Browder (left) helps students plant a Southern Red Oak tree.



BTES sponsors the annual Teacher/Industry Day for teachers in our service area to get the opportunity to see firsthand the educational requirements for job positions in the market. Above (L-R): Director of Management Services Tara Gemmill, Anderson Elementary Teacher Jenny Dyer, Haynesfield Elementary Teacher Donna Hales and Director of Engineering Clayton Dowell participated in the 16th Annual Teacher/Industry Day at BTES.



BTES employees participated in the United Way and YMCA's fifth annual Bristol's Health Challenge, which was intended to spur healthy habits within the community and support the United Way of Bristol. Within the two-month span of the challenge, BTES employees lost more than 150 pounds! BTES employees were divided into two 15 member teams — Team Power House, made up of all men, and Team Transformers, made up of all women. The teams were given points for daily workouts and weight loss and competed on the final day of the challenge against other organizations across the area in competitive events. Points were awarded based on how teams finished in each competitive event. Events involved eight members from each team and included a sack race, tricycle relay race, parachute football toss, water relay race and others. Both BTES teams were strong competitors with Team Power House taking the top prize for the day for the competitive events. Team Power House (top left) participates and wins the sack race! Team Transformers (bottom left) takes a break to pose for a picture.

BTES Bill Payment Options

BTES strives to provide the best customer service and offers numerous ways for you to pay your bill. Choose the method that works best for you and meets your needs!

Mail

You may mail your payment to us in the envelope provided with your bill. **However, this may not be your best option due to recent changes to the United States Postal Service, which have drastically delayed delivery of payments to BTES.** For example, on Dec. 2, BTES only received 13 payments through the mail, whereas we normally receive up to 850 payments per day. Please see the other payment options listed to choose a better alternative that will benefit you the most.

Bank Draft

BTES' most convenient and least expensive way to pay is through our bank draft option. You never have to worry about writing a check or paying late fees. The amount due is drafted out of your bank account on the last day to pay before receiving a penalty. To sign up for bank draft, stop by our office, enclose a voided check with your next payment or visit our website at:

www.btes.net/index.php/electric/bank-draft-program/

Check-by-Phone

BTES offers an automated check-by-phone system that allows you to not only pay your bill using the information from your check and your BTES account number, but also lets you check your balance, due date and last payment received. There is a \$1.50 fee per payment transaction. To access the automated check-by-phone system call:

1-855-575-9998

Drop Boxes

We have three drop boxes that you may use to make your payment. Two are at our office on Volunteer Parkway (one located in the parking lot between Avoca Elementary School and the BTES office, and the other in the drive-thru lane, on the side closest to the drive-in theater). The third drop box is in downtown Bristol next to the Courthouse. The Courthouse is located at 801 Anderson St. Our drop box faces 8th St.

Online Bill Pay

Our Online Bill Pay option offers two methods of payment by either using your debit/credit card or an e-check. You will need your account number — located on your bill — and your password. Your first password is located on your bill until you change it. Once your password has been changed, it will no longer appear on your bill. A convenience fee of 2.45 percent will be charged for each transaction when using your debit/credit card. When paying using an e-check, you will need the information printed on your check. You will be charged a \$1 fee for each e-check transaction. Payments using both methods will be automatically posted to your account! To sign in to your account, visit:

billing.btes.net/bpp/

Other Locations

Payments may also be made at several local banks, including Bank of Tennessee, Regions Bank, Citizens Bank and First Tennessee. You must pay before the due date and have your bill stub and full payment amount.

In Person

You may pay your bill at our office at 2470 Volunteer Parkway from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Cash, check or money order is accepted. Debit/credit cards are not accepted in our office.



Join our Green Team!

BTES is starting a new initiative called our "Green Team." Being a part of this team is easy — all you have to do is agree to try to save energy and help our community become "green." BTES offers many ways to join our Green Team and help our community go green! Below are just a few examples of things you can do to join our Green Team at BTES.

Sign up to go paperless for your BTES bill through our **E-Bill option**. You will receive an electronic version of your bill through the email address you provide. You can also sign up for text message or email bill alerts that will let you know the balance of your bill, your due date and when payment has been received! Just think of all the trees we can save by not printing paper bills!

Sign up for BTES' **bank draft program!** Your payment will be automatically drafted each month on your due date — without the hassle of mailing a check or stopping by our office to make a payment. You will save paper, stamps and fuel!

"I love having my bill set up through BTES' bank draft program," says BTES customer Bridget Wright. "Not only do I not have to worry about forgetting to pay my bill each month because it automatically drafts my payment, but I save money by not having to buy stamps or write a monthly check."

BTES also offers a **Water Heater Program** that monitors water heater usage to move load to off-peak times of generation. This helps reduce generation costs and the amount of capacity needed to generate electricity. BTES can cycle off water heaters during peak generation times with a reduced chance that customers will run out of hot water.

Through our **Energy Savings Loan Program**, you can make your home more energy efficient to help save you money and make your home more comfortable. This program provides easy terms so you can improve your home without breaking the bank. Items eligible for financing through this program include inspected electric heat pumps, attic and floor insulation (R19 minimum), insulated replacement windows, and exterior doors and garage doors, among other items. Participants may borrow as much as \$10,000 up to a 10-year term with no down payment, and payments are added to your electric bill! Participants must qualify under a BTES/TVA financing plan.



BTES is also working to become a greener organization through numerous efforts. These include our **Voltage Control Program**, which allows us to lower our peak demand to save current and future generation costs. BTES has also been installing **LED traffic lights**, which saves 850 kWh for each light per year compared to incandescent lights. This is a savings of 6,800 kWh per typical intersection per year. The savings from three intersections would provide enough energy to run an average home for a year!

Many industries around our area are doing their part to go green by installing more energy efficient lighting.

"Several industries in the BTES service area have implemented energy efficient lighting and equipment," says BTES Business Development Manager April Eads. "We are excited that these companies are doing their part to reduce their carbon footprint."

"Energy efficiency initiatives by BTES, TVA and other local power distributors reduced power consumption in the Tennessee Valley by 559 gigawatt-hours in fiscal year 2011 — a 270 percent improvement in power savings over last year," says TVA.

To find other easy tips on how you can save energy by going green, visit our website at www.bttes.net/index.php/electric/energy-savings-tips/.

"BTES will continue to look for more ways to go green," says BTES CEO Mike Browder. "By participating in our Green Team initiatives that we already offer, BTES customers can play their part in helping our community go green. If we *all* play our part and take these small steps, we can make a difference."



Preparing for Winter

Winter storms and cold temperatures can be hazardous, but if you plan ahead, you can stay safe and healthy.

Winterize your home. Install weather stripping, insulation and storm windows. Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.

Check your heating system. Make sure that your heating system is clean, working properly and is free of debris on the outside. Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.

Be prepared for emergencies. Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration and store water in clean containers.

Keep an up-to-date emergency kit. Stock your kit with battery-operated devices such as a flashlight and a weather radio. Include extra batteries and a first-aid kit.

Prepare your car. Check the antifreeze level and tire tread. In case you become stranded, keep an emergency kit in your car that includes blankets, booster cables, a flashlight and a first-aid kit.

Be a good neighbor. Check on family and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards.

Courtesy of the CDC

The Lighter Side

Jenny invited some people over for dinner. At the table she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," replied the little girl.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother replied.

The little girl bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"



Blueberry Dump Cake

By BTES Customer JoAnne Harbour

- 4 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1½ sticks of butter

In a 9x13 baking dish, dump blueberries and sugar. Mix together. Prepare cake mix as directed on box, excluding the butter. Pour mixture on top of blueberries and sugar. Slice butter and place on top of cake mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve with vanilla ice cream and enjoy!

Crockpot Hawaiian Chicken

- 1 package of boneless, skinless chicken breast (3-4 pieces)
- 1 bottle Hawaiian BBQ sauce
- 1 can Pineapple chunks, drained

In a crockpot, lay chicken breasts on bottom and cover with bbq sauce and pineapple chunks. Cook on high for 2-4 hours or on low for 4-6 hours, until chicken is fully cooked. Serve whole or shred and serve over rice.





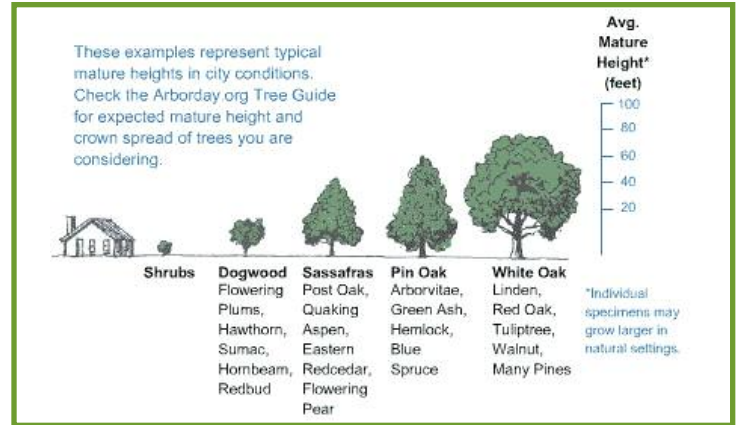
Save Energy by Choosing the Right Tree

A healthy community forest begins with careful planning. With a little research and a simple layout, you can produce a landscape that will cool your home in summer and tame the winter winds. Your well-planned yard will contain trees that grow well in the soil and moisture of your neighborhood. Your trees will be properly placed to avoid collisions with power lines and buildings, and the aesthetics will increase your property value.

Choose tree planting sites to maximize energy conservation. Deciduous shade trees on the south and west sides of your home make hot summer days cooler and let in warming sunlight when the leaves are gone in the winter. Coniferous evergreen trees in groups on the northern and western sides provide a winter wind break.

Choose the size based on how the tree will look when it is fully grown. Make sure to give the tree plenty of room to grow, above and below ground.

Plant tall trees well away from power lines, never directly under them and a sufficient distance away, so that branches do not tangle in the wires.



Avoid planting trees too close to driveways, walkways, sewer and water lines, or septic systems to prevent damage caused by roots.

If you receive your electricity from underground lines and are not sure of their location, call BTES before you begin digging to avoid costly — and potentially dangerous — accidents. You can also call the Underground Cable Locating Service at 1-800-351-1111 to locate all underground utilities.

Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines

Tall trees, such as:

- Maple • Oak
- Spruce • Pine

Medium trees, such as:

- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenrain tree

Small trees, such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple

Arbor Day Foundation™
arborday.org

BTES Tree Trimming Program

Our statistics show that the largest individual cause of interrupted electrical service is tree related. We have an ongoing program designed to prudently clear trees, limbs and brush away from power lines. Our goal is to reduce the number of outages and reduce the costs associated with restoring service while maintaining our area's natural beauty and providing for the safety of our customers and our employees.



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. (Fall 2011)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other comments, story ideas or questions.

Please return to:
BTES News, P.O. Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621
 Phone (423) 793-5511

Name and address (Optional)

**What's the balance of my bill?
 When was my due date again?
 Am I late paying my BTES bill?**

Sign up for **BTES' text message** or **email bill alerts** and have these questions answered as soon as your bill is available! We will send you a text message or email letting you know your balance and due date, when payment has been received and if your due date passes without BTES receiving your payment. You can receive these via text message, email or both. Signing up is easy! Just fill out the form below and send it in with your next payment or email the information to customerservice@bt.es.net.

Name: _____

Account # _____

I would like to receive bill alerts by:

Text message Cell phone # _____

Cell phone provider: _____

Email Email address: _____

Both (please fill out information above)