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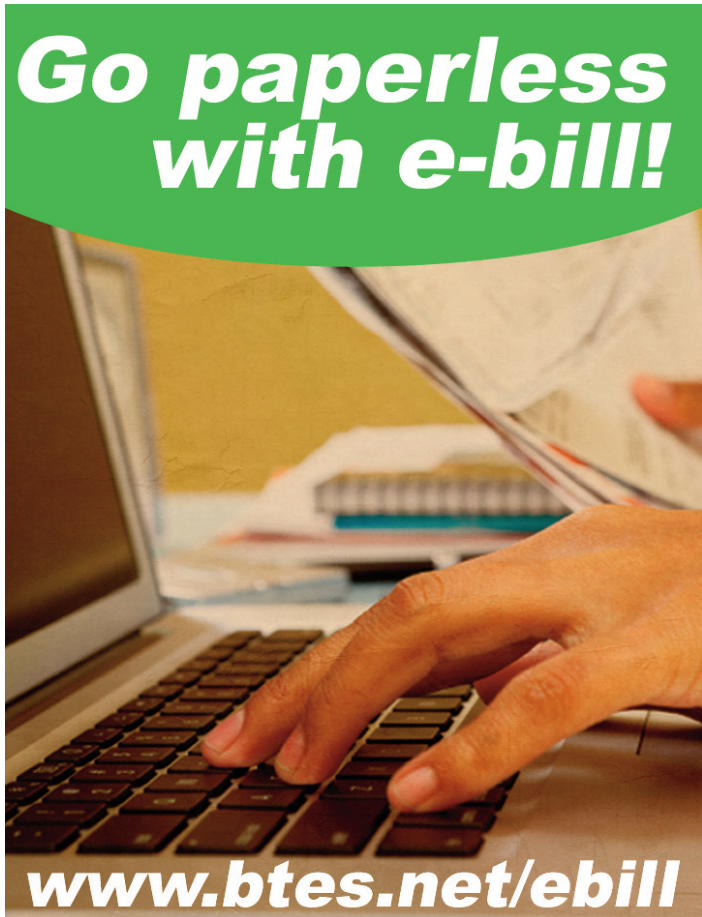
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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other comments, story ideas or questions.

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Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable

News

Winter 2015 ~ For Customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

BTES Employee Serves Third Military Deployment

Matt Dickson had only been employed in the BTES meter reading department a short time when he received notice that he was being deployed to Afghanistan.

This would be his third tour of duty. This time, however, he would not only be leaving behind his wife and two young children, but a new job as well.

Once Dickson arrived in Afghanistan, his initial duties were to train the Afghan military on how to fight and defend themselves, as well as serve as an equipment mechanic. He also taught the locals how to repair the equipment themselves without requiring future assistance from the U.S. military.



Upon his return, Dickson presented BTES with this flag that flew over his base. It is now on display in the BTES main lobby.

Dickson was soon promoted to the NCOIC of the 203rd Corps Engineer Kandak Mechanical Section under the 10th Mountain Division Security Force Advise and Assist Team 11.

"I began serving as senior mechanic for the 663rd Engineer Company," he says, "and I was responsible for maintaining their heavily used, sometimes badly damaged dozers, scrapers, road graders, dump trucks, cranes, rollers, backhoes and other general heavy construction equipment. This equipment is used for the construction of landing strips, base fortification, outpost fortification repairs, and anything that requires the use of heavy equipment."

Dickson's group also maintained armored vehicles and the fire power that protected them day-in and



BTES meter reader Matt Dickson serving his third tour of duty with the U.S. military.

day-out. As more time passed, parts became more difficult to find and have shipped. Dickson's crew stayed extremely busy and worked long hours.

"I couldn't have asked for a better bunch of guys to serve with," Dickson says. "They were all very young, but they did whatever I asked of them and took the hard days very well. As long as I let them fly their 'Roll Tide' flag above our shop, they were happy!"

Dickson returned to Bristol on Nov. 10, 2014.

"I am thrilled to be back home with my wife, kids and BTES family," he says. "The support I received from BTES and my fellow employees was incredible. The employees put together several care packages that I received while on my tour, and it really helped bring a little bit of home to such a far-away place."

BTES is happy to have Dickson back home and congratulates him on a job well done while serving our country.

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Last week, I was reviewing some video clips. Some were recent commercials for BTES. One was a video that we were asked to make, which was shown when BTES received the Excellence Award from the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence. Jim Conrad performed the voiceover for the video.

"Conrad," as he was called, was a master videographer for WCYB-TV, the NBC affiliate in Bristol. Conrad also did some very interesting videos of happenings in our region. They were usually short, "high-morale" stories. He conducted the camera work and performed the voiceover for these stories. I never saw him in front of the camera. After he passed away unexpectedly at work, shocking both his friends and co-workers, several videos were broadcast showing him working at the TV station.

A huge crowd of friends showed up on Dec. 20 for Conrad's wake and funeral at the Lodge at Steele Creek Park, a place he loved. Linda and I parked in the last available parking space. We waited in line for about an hour to visit with his wife, Sheilah. When we walked back to our car, Linda opened her door to get in, but, instead, bent down and picked up something from the pavement.

She said, "Mom and Bo have been here." She had found a new, shiny 2014 penny laying face-up beside her car door. The penny had not been there when we arrived. Conrad was a close friend of my brother-in-law, Curtis "Bo" Thurston, for many years. Conrad was there when Bo passed away four years ago. Since her mom's passing in 2008, Linda has found many pennies in unexpected places. Actually, the pennies have been discovered in places where her mom used to sit when she lived with us.

Linda's sister, Ann, has also found pennies, and she remembered a poem, titled "Pennies from Heaven."

*I found a penny today just laying on the ground. But it's not just a penny, this little coin I've found. Found pennies come from heaven, that's what my Grandpa told me. He said Angels tossed them down. Oh, how I loved that story! He said when an Angel misses you, they toss a penny down, sometimes just to cheer you up to make a smile out of your frown. So don't pass by that penny when you're feeling blue. It may be a penny from heaven that an Angel's tossed to you.
(Author: C. Mashburn)*

Linda and Ann are sure that those pennies were communications from their mom and three deceased brothers — Sammy, Bo and Ronnie — to let them know that things are okay. Maybe they were all part of Conrad's welcoming committee in heaven.

Remember the good work Conrad did for BTES and our community, and ...

Good luck!

Mike Browder

BTES News

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serving more than 33,000 electric customers
and more than 15,000 fiber 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.

REMINDER

Please be sure that you have your account number readily available when conducting business at BTES. This will ensure the quickest and most reliable service for you!

All payment transactions require your account number. If you choose to use our drive-thru lane or inside window to pay your BTES bill, please provide your bill payment stub or your account number to the cashier with your payment.

Your account number is located on the upper left-hand side of your bill.

Thanks for allowing
us to serve you!



BTES Water Heater Program Reduces Legionella Risk

Legionnaires' (LEE-juh-nares) disease is caused by a type of bacteria called Legionella. Found naturally in the environment, Legionella grows best in warm water, such as the kind found in hot water heater tanks. BTES' Water Heater Program helps reduce the Legionella risk by setting the temperature of the water in our water heater tanks at 135 degrees.

"Legionella grows best at temperatures between 68 degrees and 122 degrees," says Cody Johnson, BTES supervisor of purchasing and stores. "We set our water heater temperatures at 135 degrees, which helps kill this bacteria. This also helps reduce the chance of our customers running out of hot water when we cycle them off through our Load Managed Water Heater Program."

People can become infected with Legionnaires' disease when they breathe in a mist or vapor containing the bacteria. The bacteria are not spread through person-to-person contact.

Most healthy people exposed to the bacteria do not become ill. People at a higher risk of getting sick include the elderly, those with chronic lung disease, current or former smokers, those with a weakened immune system, and those who take medications that suppress the immune system.



Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, high fever, muscle aches and headaches. These conditions often progress to pneumonia. Although Legionnaires' disease primarily affects the lungs, it occasionally can cause infections in wounds. Most cases can be treated successfully with antibiotics.

"Keeping Legionella bacteria out of water is key to preventing infection," Johnson says. "BTES will continue to review and research our product offerings to provide reliable, safe and cost-effective services while exceeding our customers' expectations."

BTES Employee Receives Tri-Cities 40 Under Forty Award



Supervisor of Customer Service Diane Smith

The Business Journal of Tri-Cities, TN/VA named its 22nd annual class of 40 Under Forty on Friday, Oct. 10.

Each year, The Business Journal accepts nominations from the Tri-Cities business community to name 40 rising stars. Honorees are chosen on the basis of the accomplishments they have already achieved in their profession and in community service, as well as on their perceived potential as defined by their peers and supervisors. Previous classes have produced a congressman, lieutenant governor and CEOs.

This year's class of 40 Under Forty included BTES Supervisor of Customer Service Diane Smith.

Smith began her career at BTES in July 2009 as a customer service representative, where she was responsible for rapidly and accurately answering customer inquiries, processing high volumes of payments, and selling BTES products and services. As a model employee, she quickly exceeded goals and became a

benchmark for others in her department. She was promoted to supervisor of customer service in March 2010, where she now manages the entire customer service department, helps develop sales training, and implements processes to increase efficiency and decrease costs.

Smith graduated from ETSU in 2004 with a bachelor of business administration degree in corporate finance. She obtained a master of business administration degree, with a concentration in management, from King University in 2011.

As a 2012 graduate of the LEAD Bristol! Program, Smith has used her leadership skills and talents to spearhead numerous projects at BTES, including the implementation of a customer service dashboard. She is very active in the community, serving as the president of the YWCA Junior Board, and as the chair of the 2012 Celebrating Women silent auction and luncheon. She is also the upcoming 2015 co-chair of the YWCA Campaign of Promise fundraiser.

Previous recipients of the 40 Under Forty award include the following current BTES employees: General Accountant Heather Jenkins, Supervisor of Purchasing and Stores Cody Johnson (2013); Customer Relations Representative Leslie Blevins (2012); Director of Engineering Clayton Dowell (2011); Director of Management Services Tara McCall, Supervisor of Networks Michael Parker (2010); and Business Development Manager April Eads (2003).

Energy Savings Tips

Saving money is on everyone's mind these days. We want to help by offering some simple steps that you can take to save energy and possibly lower your electric bill this winter.

Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to stop air leaks.



Seal gaps in floors and walls, as well as around pipes and electrical wiring.

Inspect ductwork and repair any leaks.

Keep your outside air unit clear of debris or weeds.

Change or clean air filters monthly!

Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents — they use 75 percent less energy and last 10 times longer.



Turn off lights, televisions and other appliances when not in use.

Make sure your dryer's vent is clear and clean the lint filter after every load.



Run your dishwasher and clothes washer only when full.

Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. An open faucet lets about 5 gallons of water flow every two minutes.

Close fireplace damper when not in use.

Keep all windows and doors located near your thermostat tightly closed.

Add insulation to your attic, crawlspace and any accessible exterior wall.

Keep curtains open on the south side of the house and closed on the north side during the day to help keep warm.



Look for the Energy Star label when replacing large or small appliances.

Replace worn-out seals on your refrigerator and freezer.

Help Your Neighbor

At BTES, our customers are our number one priority. This is why we implemented the "Help Your Neighbor" program. This program is designed to help customers in need pay their electric bills.

"Help Your Neighbor" donations are collected from our customers throughout the year. The money goes directly toward helping residential customers who are in need. The Salvation Army certifies the eligibility of the recipients and the United Way of Bristol disburses the funds. 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. You can also visit www.btes.net/helpyourneighbor to sign up.

If you have signed up for automatic bank draft, it's still easy to donate. Either visit the "Help Your Neighbor" page on our website, or just fill out the form below and indicate whether you would like to give a one-time donation or monthly gift, include the amount of your contribution, then 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 customer contributions.

Help Your Neighbor Donation Form for Automatic Bank Draft Customers

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Choose donation level:

One-time donation:

OR

Monthly donation:

Amount: _____

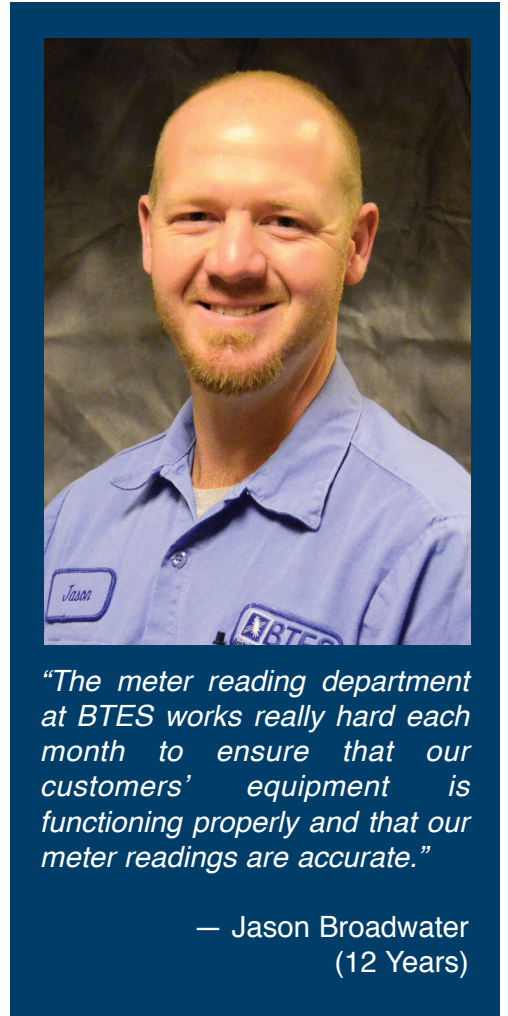
Signature: _____



Meet Your Meter Reader

Our meter reading department is responsible for timely and accurate meter readings for our nearly 33,000 residential and commercial electric customers each month.

Our meter readers are also responsible for effective meter tampering control, reports of abnormal conditions related to a customer’s meter, meter turn-ons and turn-offs, collections and timely response to customer load management water heater trouble calls, load management water heater switch quality checks and installations, requests for measuring for a new water heater, and water heater installations. These employees are also trained to install, maintain and troubleshoot our fiber-optic system, which includes Internet, telephone and cable television services.



“The meter reading department at BTES works really hard each month to ensure that our customers’ equipment is functioning properly and that our meter readings are accurate.”

— Jason Broadwater
(12 Years)



“My favorite part about being a meter reader at BTES is meeting our customers, being outside, and the sense of accomplishment I get from helping our customers and maintaining their equipment.”

— Chuck Jenkins
(20 Years)



“I truly enjoy getting to meet our customers each and every day.”

— Dave Myers
(25 Years)



“It is so important for our customers to understand the necessity for us to have access to their meter each month. This may mean cutting back bushes, putting away animals or opening a locked gate, among other things.”

— Matt Dickson
(1 Year)



“Even with the ever-changing weather conditions, along with sometimes encountering aggressive animals and lots of bees, I enjoy my job as a meter reader and getting to be out in my community, meeting our customers.”

— Jason Johnson
(12 Years)

2015

Recipe for a Happy Year

Take 12 fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate; cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness. In short, see that these months are freed from all the past — have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of time.

Cut these months into 30 or 31 equal days, except for one and divide it into 28. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many people spoil the entire lot this way), but prepare one day at a time.

Into each day, put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing — don't do it), prayer, meditation and one well-selected resolution.

Add one teaspoon of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play and a heaping of good humor.

And now, enjoy your year ahead — Happy 2015!

The Lighter Side

A simple and easy New Year's Resolution:

Remember to write 2015 instead of 2014 as the date!



Golden Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1/2 cup Gala or Golden Delicious apples, diced | dash of cinnamon |
| 1/3 cup apple juice | dash of nutmeg |
| 1/3 cup water | 1/8 tsp. salt |
| 1/3 cup rolled oats, uncooked | |

Combine apples, juice, water, cinnamon and nutmeg; bring to a boil. Stir in rolled oats; cook 10 minutes. Let stand several minutes before serving. Enjoy!

Maple Apple Baked Beans

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 5 cans Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained | |
| 2 1/3 cups Granny Smith apples, peeled and chopped | |
| 1 2/3 cups sweet onion, chopped | 1 cup pure maple syrup |
| 1 cup cooked bacon, coarsely chopped | 1 1/2 cups barbecue sauce |
| 1/4 cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed | 1/4 cup stone-ground mustard |
| 1/2 tsp. ground ancho chile pepper | 2 tsp. dry mustard |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients and stir well. Pour in a 13x9 glass baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes or until bubbly and heated throughout.





Tree First Aid After a Storm

In the aftermath of a storm, an initial impulse of property owners is to remove trees that could have been saved. Doing the right things after trees have been damaged can make the difference between giving your trees a good chance of survival and losing them unnecessarily. The National Arbor Day Foundation urges home and property owners to follow a few simple rules in administering tree first aid after a storm:

1. Don't try to do it all yourself.

If large limbs are broken or hanging, or if high climbing or overhead chainsaw work is needed, it's a job for a professional arborist. They have the necessary equipment and knowledge needed, and they are generally listed in the telephone directory under "Tree Service."

2. Take safety precautions.

Look up and look down. Be on the alert for downed power lines and dangerous hanging branches that look like they're ready to fall. Stay away from any downed utility lines. Low-voltage, telephone or cable lines, and even fence wires, can become electrically charged when there are fallen or broken electrical lines nearby. Don't get under broken limbs that are hanging or caught in other branches overhead. And, unless you really know how to use one, leave chainsaw work to the professionals.

3. Remove any broken branches still attached to the tree.

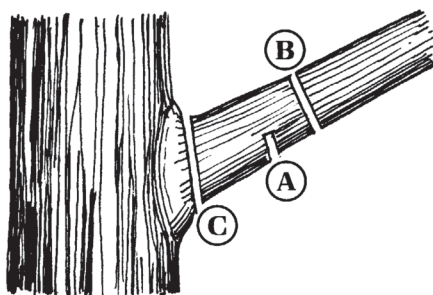
Removing the jagged remains of smaller-sized broken limbs is one common repair that property owners can make after a storm. If done properly, it will minimize the risk of decaying agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches that are broken should be cut back to the trunk or a main limb by an arborist. For smaller branches, follow the pruning guidelines shown in the illustration so that you make clean cuts in the right places, helping the tree to recover faster.

Because of its weight, a branch can tear loose during pruning, stripping the bark and creating jagged edges that invite insects and disease. That won't happen if you follow these steps:

A. Make a partial cut from beneath at a point several inches away from the trunk.

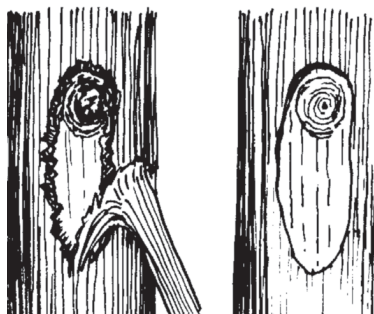
B. Make a second cut from above several inches out from the first cut to allow the limb to fall safely.

C. Complete the job with a final cut just outside the branch collar, the raised area that surrounds the branch where it joins the trunk.



4. Repair torn bark.

To improve the tree's appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth the ragged edges of wounds where bark has been torn away. Try not to expose any more of the cambium (greenish inner bark) than is necessary, as these fragile layers contain the tree's food and water lifelines between roots and leaves.



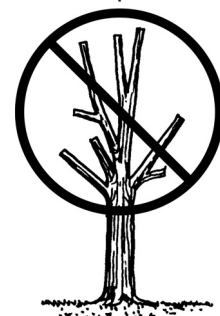
Cutline: Smoothing the ragged edge of torn bark helps the wound heal faster and eliminates hiding places for insects.

5. Resist the urge to over-prune.

Don't worry if the tree's appearance isn't perfect. With branches gone, your trees may look unbalanced or naked. You'll be surprised at how fast they will heal, grow new foliage and return to their natural beauty.

6. Don't top your trees!

Untrained individuals may urge you to cut back all of the branches, on the mistaken assumption that reducing the length of branches will help avoid breakage in future storms. While storm damage may not always allow for ideal pruning cuts, professional arborists say that topping — cutting main branches back to stubs — is one of the worst things you can do for your trees. Stubs will tend to grow back a lot of weakly attached branches that are even more likely to break when a storm strikes. Also, the tree will need all its resources to recover from the stress of storm damage. Topping the tree will reduce the amount of foliage, on which the tree depends for the food and nourishment needed for regrowth. A topped tree that has already sustained major storm damage is more likely to die than repair itself. At best, its recovery will be retarded and it will almost never regain its original shape or beauty.



Cutline: Never cut the main branches of a tree back to stubs. Ugly, weakly attached limbs will often grow back higher than the original branches and be more likely to break off in a future storm.