



BTES NEWS

Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable

Spring 2024 - For customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

BTES AND TVA SUPPORT STEM PROJECTS

In today's rapidly advancing technological landscape, the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education cannot be overstated. Elementary and middle schools especially play a crucial role in nurturing young minds and preparing our children for the challenges of tomorrow. To help in this mission, BTES and TVA have been supporting STEM education initiatives to inspire and empower the next generation of innovators.

BTES CEO Clayton Dowell explains, "By investing in STEM education programs, BTES and TVA are helping students develop critical thinking skills, foster creativity, and cultivate a passion for learning. Through hands-on activities, workshops, and mentorship opportunities, students can gain valuable insights into the world of science and technology, sparking an interest that could lead to fulfilling careers in STEM fields such as electrical engineering, linework, and cybersecurity."

BTES is involved in several on-going projects to promote STEM education.

"BTES has held an annual Teacher Industry Day for more than 30 years to showcase the STEM skills needed in local jobs, sponsored local robotics teams and competitions to grow students' interest in STEM-related fields, and supported work-based learning opportunities," said Dowell.

To further support STEM projects, Bristol Tennessee High School, Sullivan Central Middle School, Sullivan East Middle School, and West Ridge High School were recently awarded grants from TVA, in partnership with Bicentennial Volunteers, Inc., a TVA retiree organization, to develop STEM education programs for students that will inspire interest in STEM-related fields.

"TVA is committed to supporting schools and educators who are inspiring an interest in STEM education in students across the Valley, as we know our young people will design and build the energy systems of the future," said Jeannette Mills, TVA executive vice president and chief external relations officer. "Providing resources and access to STEM education is key to inspiring innovation and we're proud to contribute to the next generation's visionaries."

TVA, in partnership with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, have also created STEM centers at 27 locations in underserved communities throughout TVA's seven-state region, including a new center at the Boys & Girls Club of the Mountain Empire at Bluff City Elementary School. The STEM centers provide hands-on learning opportunities as well as access to curriculum plans to complement TVA's and BTES' workforce development initiatives.

Dowell continued, "These initiatives are helping to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications, showing students how their knowledge can make a tangible impact on their future and the future of our local communities."



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DEEP ROOTS OF STEM

A significant part of my college career was spent in labs working on various projects along my engineering journey. A highlight of those experiences was working on a year-long capstone design project that consumed most of my time outside of class. Looking back, it was one of the most rewarding experiences in my educational career.



Our six-member team was selected to work on the robotics project that year. This was a time when the term STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) was still fairly new in education. Our task was to design, build, program, test, and demonstrate a completely autonomous recycling robot. We were given specifications from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) that defined parameters such as the maximum size of the robot and types of materials (plastic and glass bottles, aluminum cans) the robot would need to detect, sort, and store. Virtually everything else was up to us to design. We had to determine the physical construction, types of sensors to implement, the micro-controller (computer) that would be the brains of the robot, and many other critical details. We also had to stick to a budget.



As you might expect, this was a stressful endeavor. Though I had great teammates, this was a task none of us had ever faced before. We learned a lot about ourselves and what we were capable of, about overcoming challenges, working as a team, problem solving, and, yes, about the technical aspects of building a robot. I have referenced this experience many times since and continue to reflect back and appreciate the valuable experience this was in my life.

Not everybody is an artist or musician, and not everybody wants to be an engineer or scientist, but there are valuable things that everyone can learn from these opportunities and many others. I'm thankful for the opportunity that STEM studies bring to students in our community and proud that BTES and TVA continue to be supportive of these programs.

Blessings to you,



Clayton Dowell
Chief Executive Officer

BTES News

Owned and published by Bristol Tennessee Essential Services, serving more than 34,000 electric customers and approximately 19,000 fiber customers.

Clayton Dowell, P.E.
Chief Executive Officer

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Our Mission

To provide essential services that enrich our community while striving to make tomorrow better than today.

Our Vision

To be our community's trusted resource for energy and connectivity.



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS GROW LOCAL COMMUNITY

BTES and the Community Team work to identify economic development opportunities to grow our local community. Over the last two years, these efforts have resulted in three major projects including the expansion of Tri-City Extrusion in the Bristol Business Park, the building of Seaman Corporation's fourth facility in Bristol with its new 350,000-square-foot building in Partnership Park II, and A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing Company announcing its plan to build a new facility in the Bristol Business Park.

BTES Business Development Manager April Eads explains, "We have been able to facilitate these projects by strategically planning, receiving grants to prepare sites, and having property available for purchase. Having large pad-ready sites is a critical component in attracting new and keeping existing businesses in our community."

Pad-ready sites are properties that have been cleared and graded, making them ready for immediate development. These sites are more attractive to potential businesses since it helps to mitigate risk and allows for a faster speed to market.

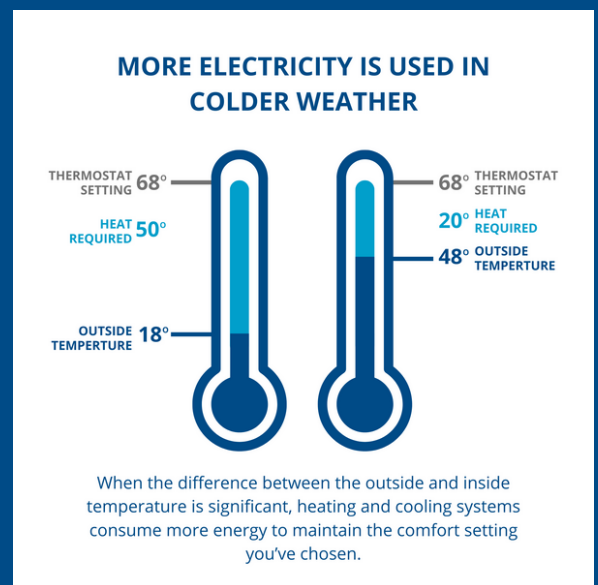
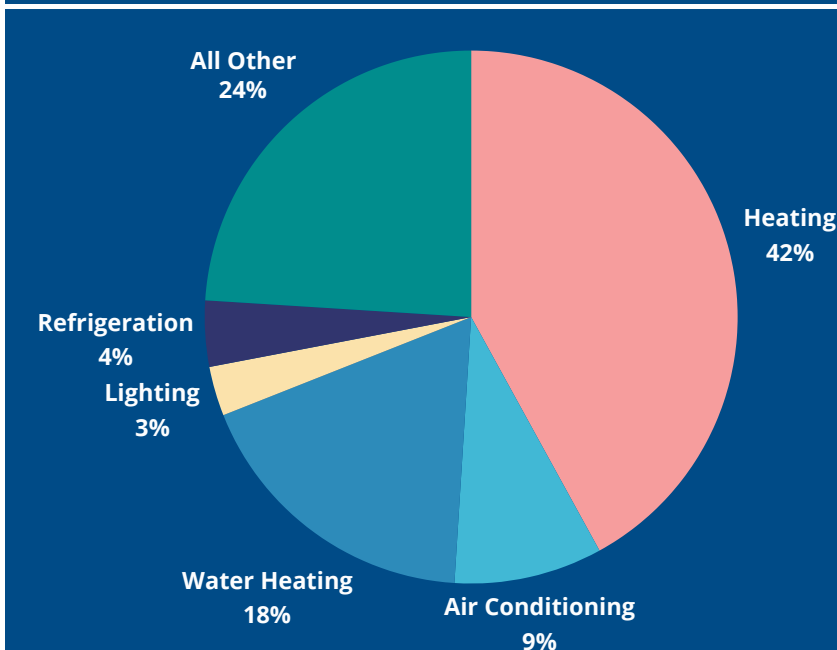


"Having pad-ready sites gives us the opportunity to participate in requests for information from Site Selection Consultants that we wouldn't have been able to otherwise," continued Eads.

This, in addition to BTES' highly reliable electric service and high-speed Internet service availability, helps attract advanced manufacturing, service industries, data centers, fulfillment centers, and corporate offices to our community. Other economic development initiatives that BTES and the Community Team facilitate include Teacher Industry Day, career and training opportunities, hiring events, and much more.

Eads continued, "Working together, we are creating meaningful new opportunities for our community."

WHAT USES THE MOST ENERGY IN YOUR HOME?



FORTNITE

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW...

WRITTEN BY FIBER GAMING NETWORK

Fortnite is one of the most popular online video games of all time, and gamers of all ages can't seem to get enough of it. Its rich replayability and brilliant blend of savvy strategy and intense action have captivated millions of people around the world.

But like with any other online activity that kids love, parents might have questions and even concerns about *Fortnite* and how it's sweeping up young gamers across continents. At BTES, we take your family's online safety and security very seriously. And while we love online gaming as much as anyone, we understand why parents are cautious about any popular Internet trend their kids love to engage in.

So, let's discuss what the game is about, why it's become such a global phenomenon (especially for children), and safety and security settings parents may want to employ.

WHAT IS FORTNITE?

First released to the public in 2017, *Fortnite* offers an intriguing mix of action, adventure, strategy, and survival. Players are dropped onto an island to play with and compete against up to 100 other players online (depending on the version of the game they play), requiring each player to quickly adapt to the new terrain, think through their plans carefully, develop and maintain teams, and outwit one another enroute to victory.

On each island, there is a treasure trove of weapons, resources, and other items for players to scavenge—items critical to success in the game. Like other strategy games, players explore their island territory, hunting, and collecting resources to build up their defenses. Today, *Fortnite* is not just one game; rather, there are multiple versions of the game available.

WHY DO KIDS LIKE IT?

The cartoon-like graphics are just one appeal of *Fortnite*. The game is incredibly compelling and, like similar games, building structures, crafting tools and weapons, and defending and protecting yourself and your teammates turns out to be enormously satisfying, as well as challenging.



Apart from its exciting gameplay and visual appeal, the social aspect of the game is another major draw for kids. *Fortnite* can be played with friends, and they can also text and voice call each other as they play making it a less isolating experience than some other games.

If you're looking for a safe online space for your kids to play *Fortnite*, sign up for Fiber Gaming Network (FGN)! FGN offers free virtual gaming nights and tournaments in a fun, family-friendly online environment. BTES offers free FGN accounts for our Internet customers, so go to FiberGamingNetwork.com to create an account and join the fun!

POTENTIAL PARENTAL CONCERNS ABOUT FORTNITE

Fortnite has been rated by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board as "T" for Teen. That means it's deemed suitable for children ages 13 and up mostly due to the interactive chat feature and violence.

The social aspect of the game means that kids can interact with other players, which could raise some parents' eyebrows in the same way other online interactive social media app or program. *Fortnite* also includes firearms which may make some parents feel uncomfortable.

...ABOUT FORTNITE AND FGN

If your child is participating in *Fortnite* events with Fiber Gaming Network, you can rest assured that the game chat and FGN Discord server are continually monitored to ensure a family-friendly environment.

FORTNITE'S SAFETY AND SECURITY SETTINGS

Given *Fortnite's* popularity with kids, it's natural for parents to want to exercise caution, and the programmers seem to respond to their concerns. For starters, Epic built parental controls and settings right into the game.

Some of these parental controls are both strong and protective, especially for online social interactions. For example, one *Fortnite* setting can be activated requiring a parent to approve any new friend with a special PIN number before your child can play, chat, or otherwise interact with that person. Other settings limit texting and chatting even further, allowing chatting with pre-approved friends only or completely turning off chat.

For parents worried that their kids may be playing *Fortnite* too much, Epic created a weekly playtime report that parents can receive via email. It details the number of hours your children play *Fortnite*, so that their other priorities (i.e., homework, exercise, and extracurricular



activities) can be balanced. Epic even lets parents filter out inappropriate language by toggling a setting that detects offensive language in text chats and replaces them with heart shapes.

Fortnite's popularity continues to endure, and parents are likely to face decisions on whether to let their kids play it whether solo or with their friends. We hope parents are now better armed with both basic knowledge about the game and the parental control tools and settings *Fortnite* offers so that they can make informed choices that are best for their families.

FIBER GAMING NETWORK

Fiber Gaming Network hosts a series of online gaming events every week featuring popular games such as *Super Smash Bros Ultimate*, *Minecraft*, *Fortnite*, *Rocket League*, and more. Participating players must register beforehand to compete in events or watch the livestreams, where they can score exciting giveaways. BTES Internet customers can sign up for free! Create an account at FiberGamingNetwork.com to check out the family-friendly gaming events and tournaments!

FIBER GAMING NETWORK

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FORTNITE

WHAT TO EXPECT VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



1. Watch for trucks.



Numerous crews may be in your area. Watch for road signs, trucks, and other equipment and safely maneuver around them.

2. Significant Clearing

Crews will be taking down or trimming vegetation near the power lines to enable our customers to resume maintaining their vegetation.



3. Limbs, brush, and stumps

Wood that is too large for the chipper will be cut and left on the property. We will cut stumps either high enough so that you can have it removed or as low as possible.



4. Resume maintaining your vegetation

To help keep the power on for you and your neighbors, please don't plant trees under or near the power lines, and keep the areas under and near the power lines clear of excessive vegetation growth.



www.btes.net/trees

Favorite Recipes

Baked Pork Chops

- 4 boneless pork chops, at least 1 inch thick
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. ground paprika
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

Heat oven to 400 degrees and line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Place pork chops between two pieces of plastic wrap and very gently pound using a rolling pin (not meant to flatten but rather tenderize). Rub chops all over with olive oil and mustard. Combine remaining ingredients in a small bowl and rub blend all over chops. Bake for 12-15 minutes until they reach an internal temperature of 140 degrees. Turn oven to broil for 1-2 minutes until chops are browned. Rest for 5 minutes and enjoy!

Corn Casserole

- 8 oz. box Jiffy corn muffin mix
- 15 oz. can of whole kernel sweet corn, drained
- 15 oz. can of cream style sweet corn
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x9 baking pan or 2 quart casserole dish. In a large bowl, combine the corn, Jiffy, sour cream, and butter. Stir in the cheese (optional). Spread evenly into the prepared pan. Bake 55 minutes or until golden brown and set. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

The Lighter Side

HOW MUCH DID THE PIRATE PAY FOR HIS EARRINGS?

A BUCCANEER!

WATTS HAPPENING AT BTES



BTES employees and Board Members attended the 2024 American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally in Washington, DC to talk about the direct impact federal actions may have on BTES, our customers, and other electric utilities. Pictured above (L-R) CEO Clayton Dowell, Board Member and Bristol TN Mayor Vince Turner, TN State Senators Bill Hagerty and Marsha Blackburn, Vice President of People Operations Tara Ellis, and Board Vice Chair and Sullivan County Commissioner David Akard III.



The Customer Experience Department received a training refresher from the Technical Operations Department on processes related to our fiber optic network such as the install process, splicing fiber, and burying underground cables.



(L-R) VP of Engineering David Hacker, System Engineer Chris Kibler, CEO Clayton Dowell, and System Engineer Chris De Troye visited Georgia Transformer to look over the 250 MVA units for South Bristol Substation. The first unit is ready to ship, and the second unit will be ready soon. When fully assembled and filled with oil, these units weigh 326,000 pounds. As it stands in this picture, the unit weighs 216,000 pounds.

Supervisor of Transmission and Distribution Steve Craddock has been promoted to Vice President of Operations and Safety! Steve began his career at BTES in January of 1993 as a Meter Reader and moved to the Transmission and Distribution Department as a Groundman in November of the same year. After completing his apprenticeship, he became a Lineman in March of 1999 and was promoted to Working Foreman of Transmission and Distribution in January of 2000. In 2018, Steve was promoted to Supervisor of Transmission and Distribution where he was responsible for coordinating the construction and maintenance of BTES' transmission and distribution lines, managing crews during outages, overseeing the Vegetation Management Program, and scheduling projects, among other responsibilities. In his new position, Steve joins the Senior Leadership Team and will help guide and sustain BTES. In addition to overseeing the Transmission and Distribution Department, Steve will focus on employee and community safety, high performance among employees, and planning for the future.



Steve obtained an Associate Degree in Electrical Technology from Northeast State Community College in 1992 and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from East Tennessee State University in 2023. He is involved in many volunteer activities in our community including participating in the South Holston Lake Clean-Up, Fill the Bucket Challenges, Public Power Week of Service projects, and Touch-a-Truck events as well as leading BTES in building our float for the Bristol Christmas Parade for many years.



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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 to the address below. (Spring 2024)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Other comments, story ideas or questions:

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