



BTES NEWS

Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable

Spring 2023 - For customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INCREASES RELIABILITY

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 anything near the power lines to enable our customers to resume maintaining their vegetation.



3. Debris

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, 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



BTES has been working to increase reliability for our customers by making improvements to our Vegetation Management Program. This includes conducting a significant Vegetation Management Project that began in October 2022 in areas that have been more prone to outages.

"Recent growing seasons caused many areas to grow beyond what customers are able to maintain safely and effectively," explained Steve Craddock, Supervisor of Transmission and Distribution. "Where we used to be able to use simple trimming methods, we are now taking down or trimming anything near the power lines. This enables our customers the ability to resume maintaining their vegetation."

BTES' outage goal is less than 60 minutes of outage time per customer per year.

Craddock continued, "We were better than our goal for many years. Over the past few years, our outage numbers continued to increase. We recognize how the growing seasons have impacted reliability and are taking aggressive action."

Trees are being trimmed or taken down to achieve the industry standard necessary of at least 10 feet of clearance (ground-to-sky) on each side of the line. Depending on the type of power line and location, some trees are being taken down to achieve more clearance.

"Thanks to these aggressive actions, electric reliability has increased in the areas that have been part of this project. This demonstrates that our Vegetation Management Program is working," said Craddock.

An interactive map is available at www.btes.net/trees that shows the locations that are being addressed as part of this project as well as the locations that are part of our normal vegetation management. After crews complete their job, customers will be able to resume maintaining their vegetation.

"We ask our customers not to plant trees under or near the power lines and keep the areas under and near the power lines clear of excessive vegetation growth such as trees, large bushes, and vines," said Craddock.

More information can be found at www.btes.net/trees.

LESSONS FROM CHILDHOOD

When I was growing up, I spent a lot of time with my grandparents. Through that time, among other things, my grandmother taught me the importance of a filling meal as a “growing boy” and I learned the importance of a good work ethic from my grandfather. Over the years I spent a lot of time working with him on all sorts of projects but didn’t fully appreciate the knowledge or skills I was soaking up at the time.



One common practice was cutting and splitting firewood. My grandparents heated their home with firewood. It was a regular event that we would go help neighbors or family members drop trees that were dead, or otherwise posing a threat to the well being of others, and stockpile the cuttings for the next winter.



As many already know, BTES is actively working to reduce the impact of power outages through our vegetation management program. We love the beauty and environmental benefits that trees bring to our community; however, when trees are planted or allowed to grow near power lines it jeopardizes this critical service for our customers. Trees can grow so fast that it is easy to think that the tree must have been there before the power lines were built, but that is almost never the case.

We are continually working to educate and remind customers that it is the property owner’s responsibility to keep the vegetation a safe distance away from power lines. Please help us provide reliable electricity and fiber services to you and your neighbors by preventing vegetation on your property from growing under, around, or adjacent to power and telecommunication lines. Since vegetation has become a hindrance for us to provide reliable service, we have taken action to reduce the risk. Unfortunately, that comes at a cost that all customers must bear and could have been avoided.

Please help us avoid those additional costs by keeping vegetation away from overhead and underground utilities. For more information, please visit btes.net/trees.

Blessings to you,



Clayton Dowell

BTES News

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

Clayton Dowell, P.E.
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 for the benefit of our customers.



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SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES AND COST INCREASES IMPACT BTES

Supply chain issues from significant market changes during the pandemic have impacted most everyone in some way or another. BTES and other utilities have felt the complications. From transformers to wire to fiber optic equipment and more, low supply and increased costs have been changing the way we are purchasing and receiving items and projecting out future plans.

Particularly challenging is the availability of distribution transformers – which are necessary for both the ongoing reliability of our existing electric system and for our community to grow.

"While many of our customers have yet to personally experience how supply chain issues and cost increases have impacted BTES, the impact is beginning to trickle down," said BTES CEO Clayton Dowell. "Home builders and developers are particularly impacted by the transformer shortage."

According to the American Public Power Association (APPA), the typical lead time for transformers used to be around 10-16 weeks from the date of order to delivery. Now, that time is 48-62 weeks, and even higher for some types of transformers. Wires and cables used to take about 6-8 weeks to deliver, and now utilities are waiting between 26-43 weeks for those materials. Times to receive wooden poles, insulators, and crossarms have also increased exponentially. Transformer prices are also five to seven times the price higher than before.

Dowell continued, "The BTES team has been working with our vendors to mitigate as many issues as possible. We have been meeting to discuss the future in hopes to have all available inventory needed so projects can continue. This includes sourcing new vendors and researching potential new suppliers."

Equipment supply and increasing costs are also impacting BTES' fiber system.

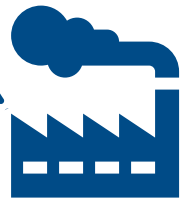
"The costs we are required to pay to deliver cable content to our customers have significantly increased," Dowell said. "Individual networks continue to increase the monthly fees they charge for access to their content at approximately 7% per year. BTES will soon have to pass along these increases to our customers."

In the near future, BTES will offer a new app-based video platform that gives customers another option to receive TV programming.

"We want our customers to have options and pay only for the services they want," said Dowell. "If customers want cable TV, we are happy to provide it. But, as the TV networks continue to increase their prices, we understand and are okay with our customers cutting the cable TV cord. BTES' new app-based video service will be available to our customers soon. Or, our customers can use their BTES Internet to stream via another platform."

BTES has partnered with MyBundle.TV to give personalized streaming TV package recommendations. Just answer a few questions, select channels you watch, and the site will show you the best streaming packages! No matter what video service you select, you will get the best experience using BTES' Internet service.

Dowell continued, "We are always looking to the future and working to provide the best services to our customers."



DE TROYE NAMED TO 2022 TRI-CITIES 40 UNDER FORTY CLASS

BTES extends our congratulations to System Engineer Chris De Troye who was recently named to the Tri-Cities 40 under Forty class. Each year, nominees are solicited by *The Business Journal of Tri-Cities Tennessee/Virginia* for the 40 Under Forty program. Nominees are judged on their business success and achievements as active members of the community.



Chris joined BTES in 2015. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering from Tennessee Tech and an MBA from King University. Chris has many engineering job responsibilities, but one of his biggest impacts comes from ensuring our customers' electric reliability through the design and implementation of a mobile substation. His leadership throughout the design, delivery, and implementation of this massive piece of equipment helps keep the power on. If one of our substations were to fail, thousands of customers would be without electricity for a significant amount of time. With Chris's leadership and innovative mindset, the mobile substation can be used anywhere on our system to restore service to our customers.

Chris served as a Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence examiner in 2017 and graduated from the LEAD Bristol program in 2020. Throughout 2019-2020, Chris volunteered as a team mentor for the Lego League (middle school robotics competition) and taught programming, engineering, and robotics. He regularly volunteers at his church through their meal program, teaches a children's Sunday School class, helps with video streaming, hosts a men's group, and does building upkeep and yard work for others.

Chris joins several other BTES employees who have been honored with the 40 under Forty award. These include Network Specialist Cody Cornelius (2021), Working Foreman of Transmission and Distribution Cole Morgan (2019), Supervisor of Fiber Services Jessica Waterman (2018), Supervisor of Customer Service Diane Smith (2014), Supervisor of Accounting Heather Jenkins (2013), Supervisor of Technical Operations and Purchasing Cody Johnson (2013), Public Relations and Communications Manager Leslie Blevins (2012), Chief Executive Officer Clayton Dowell (2011), Vice President of People Operations Tara Ellis (2010), Supervisor of Networks Michael Parker (2010), and Business Development Manager April Eads (2003).



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www.btes.net/upgrade

TEACHER INDUSTRY DAY PAIRS SULLIVAN COUNTY TEACHERS WITH LOCAL INDUSTRIES

On November 8, BTES' Teacher Industry Day expanded to Sullivan County Schools to offer teachers and industries the opportunity to partner together with a goal of helping students be more prepared to enter the workforce in our local area. Over 40 educators from Sullivan County Schools were paired with 21 industries. This program has been in place for 25 years in the Bristol City School System

The goal of the day is for the educators to take what they learn back to their classrooms and help their students be more career ready.

BTES Business Development Manager April Eads explained, "Teacher Industry Day began as a way to promote economic and career development in our community. It has been incredibly successful for the past 25 years – even receiving international recognition in 2019 as one of the world's best economic development programs – so we are excited to grow Teacher Industry Day in Sullivan County Schools!"

The all-day event began with a breakfast where Northeast State Community College President Dr. Jeff McCord welcomed attendees in the Technical Education Complex. After a brief program, teachers were paired with an industry and spent the day touring their facility, discussing career opportunities and, ultimately, learning what skills are needed to work at that company.

"The biggest thing I learned by participating in Teacher Industry Day is that there are many opportunities for our students to get good quality and high paying jobs if they are willing to prepare for them," said Sullivan East Middle School STEM Teacher Kenny Timbs. "We must teach and model to our students that they must be willing to work hard in school to get proper training and, more importantly, be available to learn and work by being present at school and work."



(L-R) West Ridge High School CTE Teacher Sarah Knight, Sullivan East High School CTE Teacher Mike Smith, BTES Supervisor of Transmission and Distribution Steve Craddock, and West Ridge High School CTE Teacher Barry Jessee visited BTES during Teacher Industry Day.

BTES and the Tennessee Valley Authority have sponsored the day since its inception.

"Teacher Industry Day is a unique program in bringing business, workforce development, and our future workforce together," said NETWORKS Sullivan Partnership CEO Clay Walker. "With workforce taking center stage as the top priority issue in site selection, our region's innovative and effective strategies in helping our companies have a larger, more qualified workforce give us a significant advantage in business recruitment. This is one of the best initiatives as it has been in place for such a long time and has dozens of success stories resulting from it."

Participating industries included Bell Helicopter, Bristol TN Police Department, Bristol TN Fire Department, BTES, City of Bristol TN, Bristol Metals, Economy Beauty, H. Johnson Pharmacy, Integrated Health, JA Street, Mattern & Craig, Metz Culinary Management, Microporous, Modern Forge, Royal Building Products, Seaman Corporation, Teleperformance, The Robinette Company, Tri City Extrusion, USAntibiotics, and Wallace Collision Center.





SPRING
is a lovely
reminder of how
BEAUTIFUL
CHANGE can truly
be.



Favorite Recipes

Hawaiian Pizza Sliders

1/2 cup pineapple, fresh
1/4 tsp Italian seasoning
1 Pinch salt
1 tbsps butter, unsalted
6 slices deli honey ham

1/2 cup pizza sauce
1 pinch pepper
12 Hawaiian bread rolls
6 slices mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut the rolls in half so the tops are separated from the bottoms. Place the bottoms of the rolls on a baking sheet. Spread the pizza sauce over the bottom half of the rolls, sprinkle with Italian seasoning, and then layer the ham slices. Top the ham with mozzarella cheese and then sprinkle with pineapple. Place the roll tops over the pineapple. Brush the tops of the rolls with melted butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 15 minutes, or until the edges of the rolls are crusty and the cheese is melted.

Tortellini Soup

1 bag of frozen tortellini
4 cups vegetable broth
2 cans of Italian style diced tomatoes
1 small bag of fresh spinach
1 8-ounce block of cream cheese

Slice cream cheese into smaller blocks. Place all ingredients in a crockpot and cook on low for 5-6 hours. Stir and enjoy!

The Lighter Side

WHAT DO YOU CALL a BEE THAT comes
from AMERICA?

USB





Lighting

Upgrade your old incandescent bulbs with high-efficiency and high-quality lighting to make your home more energy efficient.

Four tips to help you save energy



Turn the lights off

Make sure to turn lights off when you leave the room or your home.



Use lamps when possible

Use a lamp for tasks like reading or homework rather than turning on ceiling lights you don't need.



Choose natural light

Open your window shades to take advantage of natural sunlight and warmth in the winter!



Replace bulbs with LEDs

Switch to high-efficiency lighting to save energy and money. LEDs also last longer than other bulbs.



Did you know? Nearly **11 percent** of the average home's electricity bill is from lighting.



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Malcolm Baldrige
National Quality Award

2017 Award Recipient

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 2023)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Other comments, story ideas or questions:

Please return to:
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