

# BTES NEWS

**Bristol Tennessee Essential Services**

*Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable*

Summer 2024 - For customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

## BTES PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF ENERGY & CONNECTIVITY

The BTES team works hard every day to provide the best service to our customers, who are our neighbors and fellow community members, while understanding that every action and decision can be impactful. In 2023, BTES employees took a deep dive into strategic planning with the fundamental mindset to improve service to our customers. The Senior Leadership Team, which consists of BTES' CEO and Vice Presidents, began the journey by reviewing best practices to develop how the BTES team would approach the process. They then worked with the BTES Leadership Team to begin strategic planning.

BTES Vice President of People Operations Tara Ellis explained, "The Leadership Team considered feedback from customers, employees, and board members to help in setting new goals, strategies, and objectives to achieve within the next three to five years. We also reflected on our vision and mission statements and recognized that it was appropriate to update them based on how we see our team serving our customers today and moving forward."

BTES' new vision is *to be our community's trusted resource for energy and connectivity.*

Ellis continued "Our team really zeroed in on being the local, trusted resource in our community that our

### VISION

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

### MISSION

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

customers can reach out to with questions about energy and connectivity or challenges that we can help solve."

The new mission for BTES *is to provide essential services that enrich our community while striving to make tomorrow better than today.*

"We understand that the services we provide are truly essential," said Vice President of Engineering David Hacker. "We take that responsibility seriously and strive to be part of enriching our community through our services. Additionally, we are always focused on how we can improve."

So, what does this mean for our customers?

"It means that we will continue to partner with organizations to support our community, engage with schools to help prepare our future workforce, make improvements to our services, and much more," Hacker continued. "We are local people serving local people striving to make tomorrow better than today."

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- Fiber Homes

## SETTING A VISION



As discussed on page one, in late August, our BTES team began a process of Strategic Planning. I will admit, probably most people's first reaction when they hear "strategic planning" isn't to jump up and down with excitement. However, we really strived to engage in a positive...dare I say "fun"...process to provoke meaningful discussions and outline a plan that we could use as a guide for the next several years. BTES has a long history of providing excellent service, but we believe we can always find ways to improve. So that's what we set out to do.

As we started this process, one of the first tasks was to consider various feedback and then reflect on our mission and vision statements to identify if any adjustments were appropriate. A common theme kept coming out of our discussions, the importance of trust and how critical that element is in any relationship. I think most of us can admit, that without trust, there really isn't an opportunity for a quality relationship. At BTES, we desire to be recognized by our customers as more than just a service provider, but also as a trusted partner, neighbor, and resource to help improve the quality of life in our community. In essence, to provide enrichment.

Another theme that penetrated through our discussions was the importance of continuous improvement and the unceasing drive to learn from others and continually develop ways to better serve our customers. This concept is well engrained into our culture, but we recognized that for us to continue challenging ourselves it would be beneficial to more prominently capture this concept.

Our team went on to compile a holistic strategic plan that was ultimately adopted by our board earlier this year. But as we rounded the corner of this phase of the process, it became evident that it was appropriate to capture some of these thoughts in our mission and vision statements. As a result, our Vision is to be our community's trusted resource for energy and connectivity. Our Mission is to provide essential services that enrich our community while striving to make tomorrow better than today.

As we look ahead, planning for the future while executing on the needs of today, we desire to connect in meaningful ways and keep building this relationship with you on a foundation of trust, one interaction at a time.

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

Address changes, news items and suggestions should be sent to:  
PO Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621

Editor: Leslie Blevins

### 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.

# KNOW WHAT'S BELOW.

CALL BEFORE  
YOU DIG!



## BTES' WATER HEATER MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

For 50 years, BTES customers have benefited by participating in the Water Heater Maintenance Program. If you need a new water heater, this program may be a great option to consider! More than 17,000 customers are currently enrolled!

Jessica Waterman, Supervisor of Fiber Services, explained the process, "A customer may call BTES to schedule a time for a service technician to visit their location to measure the area where the water heater is to be installed and ensure the home is eligible. Following eligibility, the water heater and load management device will be delivered and installed by our approved quality contractor."

A load management device is a box installed on the water heater. This box allows a water heater to be turned off during certain times of the day, month, or year, when the price for electricity is increasing or the demand for electricity is at a peak.

Waterman continued, "This helps to keep electric rates lower than they would have been otherwise."

The water heater tank comes with a six-year manufacturer's warranty (parts and labor). The Water Heater Maintenance Program also includes emergency service calls and free maintenance on the elements and thermostats provided the load management device is installed and in good working order, replacement parts are readily available, and we are still participating in the program in which you are enrolled. We offer a financing option up to 24 months with no down payment and monthly payments can be added to your BTES bill. Learn more at [www.bttes.net/waterheater](http://www.bttes.net/waterheater)

### DON'T NEED A NEW WATER HEATER?

You can still participate!

If you do not need a new water heater, you can still join our program. As long as your location is eligible and your water heater qualifies, we will install the load management device on your electric water heater free of charge and provide you with free maintenance on your elements and thermostats, for as long as the load management device is in proper working condition, replacement parts are readily available, and we are still participating in the program in which you are enrolled.

## DOWNED POWER LINE - IS IT HOT?

Always assume that a downed or low-hanging wire is an **energized** – or **HOT** – electric wire. It may look like something as simple as a fallen phone cable, but why take the chance that the wire could be in contact with a **HOT** power line still on the pole?

Here are some additional tips to help keep you and your family safe in the event you come across a fallen or low-hanging wire:

- Report it immediately to BTES and the local authorities.
- Stay away from wires and anything that may be touching them. Keep others away from them, too.
- Do not touch someone who is in contact with a fallen or low-hanging wire.
- Do not try to move a fallen wire or anything in contact with it by using a pole, broom stick, or any other object. Even materials that don't normally conduct electricity may do so if even slightly wet.
- Be careful that you do not walk on wet ground or step into water where a downed wire is located.
- If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with a wire, stay inside until a BTES employee tells you the wire is no longer energized, and it is okay to leave the vehicle. If you must leave the vehicle in the event of a fire, use a "kangaroo" type leap, with your feet together, so you do not have one foot in the vehicle and one foot on the ground at the same time.
- Never drive over or under fallen wires or low-hanging wires.

Always remember to ask yourself, "Is it hot, or is it not?" And always answer with **HOT!** It is better to play it safe than take the risk of being seriously injured.

## NEW 729 AREA CODE AND 10-DIGIT DIALING COMING SOON

To ensure new telephone numbers are available, the Tennessee Public Utility Commission approved adding the new 729 area code to the geographic region served by the 423 area code. This process is known as an area code overlay.

### What is an area code overlay?

An overlay is the addition of another area code (729) to the same geographic region as an existing area code (423). An overlay does not require customers to change their existing area code but does require using a new dialing procedure to complete calls.

### Who will be affected?

Anyone with a 423 area code will be affected. The 423 area code covers two non-contiguous regions in eastern Tennessee, serving communities such as Chattanooga, Bristol, Johnson City, and Kingsport, as well as many other smaller communities. The new 729 area code will serve the same geographic region currently served by the existing 423 area code.

### What will be the new dialing procedure?

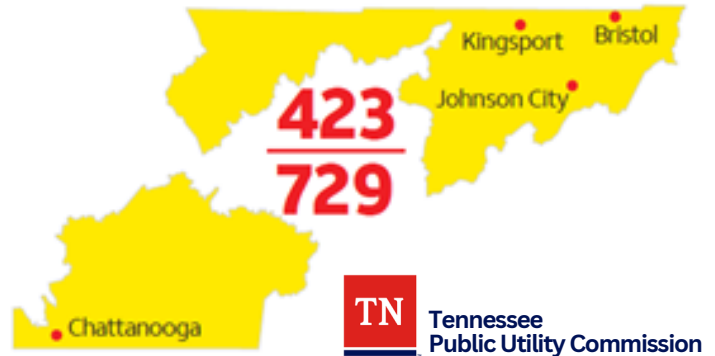
All calls in the 423 area code currently dialed with seven digits will need to be dialed using the area code + 7-digit telephone number. The same dialing procedure will apply to telephone numbers that are assigned in the new 729 area code.

### When will the dialing change begin?

Effective August 5, 2024, dial the area code + telephone number whenever you place a call, including calls within your same area code. If you forget and dial just seven digits, your call will still be completed until February 5, 2025.

**Beginning February 5, 2025, you must dial the area code + telephone number on all calls, including calls within your same area code.** After this date, if you do not dial the area code + telephone number, your call will not be completed. If you dial a number and do not include the area code, a recording will instruct you to hang up and dial again, including the area code.

Beginning March 5, 2025, new telephone lines or services may be assigned numbers with the new 729 area code. If you have a number in the new 729 area code, you must dial the area code + telephone number or the call will not complete.



### What needs to change?

- Dial the area code + telephone number for local calls.
- All services, automatic dialing equipment, or other types of equipment that are programmed to dial a 7-digit number will need to be reprogrammed to include the area code. Some examples include life safety systems and medical monitoring devices, fire or burglar alarms, security systems, gates, fax machines, Internet dial-up numbers, speed dialers, call forwarding settings, voicemail services, and similar functions.
- Update your websites, personal and business stationery and checks, advertising materials, personal and pet ID tags, and other such items to ensure the area code is included.

### What remains the same?

- Your telephone number, including your current area code.
- The price of a call, coverage area, or other rates and services will not change due to the overlay.
- What is a local call now will remain a local call regardless of the number of digits dialed.
- You can still dial just three digits to reach 911 and 988, as well as 211, 311, 411, 511, 611, 711 or 811 if available in your area.

### Who may you contact with questions?

You may visit the Tennessee Public Utility Commission website at [www.tn.gov/tpuc](http://www.tn.gov/tpuc)

## BTES RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY TREE CARE



*BTES; the City of Bristol, Tennessee; and Bristol Tennessee City Schools celebrated Arbor Day at Anderson Elementary School where BTES received its Tree Line USA recognition and the City received its Tree City USA recognition. Students helped plant two trees at their school to celebrate.*

Bristol Tennessee Essential Services (BTES) was named a 2024 Tree Line USA by the Arbor Day Foundation to recognize its dedication to proper urban forest management in BTES' service area.

Tree Line USA, a partnership between the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters, recognizes public and private utilities for pursuing best practices that protect and cultivate America's urban tree canopy. In addition, Tree Line USA promotes delivering safe and reliable electricity while maintaining healthy community forests.

"By participating in the Tree Line USA program, service providers benefit from lowering line clearance costs due to proper pruning," said Dan Lambe, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Service providers like BTES demonstrate how easily trees and utilities can co-exist for the benefit of communities and residents."

As a result of properly pruned and maintained trees, customers benefit from increased reliability of service because those trees will have healthy root systems that decay less, have less structural weakness, and ultimately result in fewer downed lines during storms.

BTES achieved the Tree Line USA recognition by meeting five program standards: quality tree care, annual worker training, tree planting and public education, a formal tree-based energy conservation program, and participation in an annual Arbor Day celebration.

BTES has been recognized as a Tree Line USA utility for 24 years.

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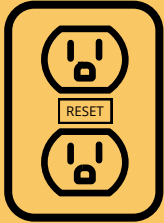
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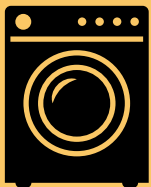
# ELECTRICAL SAFETY



Ensure Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) outlets are installed where needed.



Install carbon monoxide and smoke alarms.



Plug appliances directly into the wall.



Never use damaged cords.



Extension cords are temporary solutions and shouldn't be used on large appliances.

For more information, visit [esfi.org](http://esfi.org)

# Favorite Recipes

## Deviled Egg Pasta Salad

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8 oz. macaroni pasta       | 6 hard-boiled eggs       |
| 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt | 1/4 cup mayonnaise       |
| 1 tbsp. Dijon mustard      | 1 small red onion, diced |
| 2 celery ribs, chopped     | 2 tbsp. chives, chopped  |
| 1/2 tsp. paprika           | sea salt, to taste       |

Cook macaroni per package instructions. Drain and rinse and set aside in large bowl. Cut the hard-boiled eggs in half and remove the yolks. Place the yolks in a small bowl. Chop the whites and add to the pasta bowl. Mash the egg yolks with a fork. Stir in Greek yogurt, mayonnaise, and mustard. Add the chopped onion and celery to the pasta bowl and stir in egg yolk mixture until combined. Top with fresh chives, paprika, and salt as desired. Can be eaten immediately, but best served after being chilled in refrigerator for at least 1 hour.

## Strawberry Banana Fluff Dessert

- 8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 oz. instant banana pudding (just the dry mix)
- 8 oz. whipped topping (Cool Whip)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped strawberries
- 1 banana, sliced
- 10 oz. mini marshmallows

Beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add the banana pudding dry mix and combine. Mix in the whipped topping and then the milk and vanilla extract. Stir in the strawberries, marshmallows, and banana. Enjoy!

## The Lighter Side

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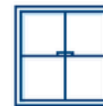
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**Malcolm Baldrige**  
National Quality Award

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. (Summer 2024)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments, story ideas or questions:

Please return to:  
BTES News, PO Box 549, Bristol, TN 37621

\_\_\_\_\_  
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