



BTES NEWS

Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable

Winter 2017 - For Customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

Mobile Substation Provides Additional Reliability

For the past 30 years, BTES has invested in and prepared for the purchase of a mobile substation, a valuable resource that brings additional levels of reliability to our customers. Delivered in late 2016, this essential piece of equipment represents a significant step in helping make our electrical system one of the most dependable in the United States.

Roughly the size of a shipping container, a mobile substation carries replacement equipment that would be needed in the event of a failure at a distribution substation. This includes a high-voltage circuit breaker, a transformer the size of a utility shed, and various electronics needed to monitor and manage equipment function.

“A transformer is the most expensive piece of equipment inside of a substation,” says BTES CEO Mike Browder. “Most of the other equipment in a substation is dedicated to protecting that asset. If anything happens to that transformer, it can take a long time to get a replacement because of the delivery time and cost.”

BTES’ new mobile substation allows for the temporary replacement of a damaged or failed transformer without having to worry about overloading other substations, all while keeping customers’ power on.

“Having this equipment means we won’t have to have a substation de-energized for an extended period of time while we wait for a replacement transformer to arrive,” says BTES Director of Engineering Clayton Dowell. “This provides an additional level of reliability for our customers and helps ensure that we have quality electric service available, even if a critical piece of equipment inside a substation is not functioning.”

The mobile substation will also allow maintenance on substation transformers or high-voltage breakers to be performed without having to shift the electric load to other substations.

“This is especially important if maintenance is required during high system load times, such as periods of extreme cold,” Dowell says.



BTES’ mobile substation arrived in early December 2016. Crews immediately began training on its operation and capabilities.

Additionally, if needed, the mobile substation can be used to temporarily provide significant amounts of power to a new or growing industry, benefiting our area’s economic development.

BTES continues to look for cost-effective ways to increase reliability for customers and cultivate economic development in the region.

“As technology continues to improve, so will BTES,” Browder says. “Our next big project in the ongoing upgrade of our electric system is the addition of a substation east of Bluff City. This substation will increase reliability in the Bluff City, Piney Flats, Holston Valley and southeast Bristol regions of our service area, and provide backup power to those communities.”

IN THIS ISSUE

Power Line Safety

New Billing Information System

Community Service Efforts

eScore

To Be the Best

My first job, after graduating from Auburn University with an electrical engineering degree, was with a consulting engineering firm specializing in electric power companies. I worked on a large variety of projects for municipal and cooperative electric utilities. I developed long-range system plans, including engineering, construction and financial plans.



I submitted several of the plans to the Rural Electrification Association for financing. The financing was approved. Annual and two-year work plans were developed. I even did construction plans for some of the utilities. One of the great things about municipal and co-op electric utilities ... they are always willing to share their knowledge. I tried to learn best practices of each of my clients and share with the rest. Most were willing to learn. Not all were eager to implement a new process. Some just didn't like change. The ones that embraced learning, implementing and changing for the better continued to get better.

My next job was with Huntsville Utilities in Huntsville, Alabama. The CEO and the two supervisors between us were all bright and driven to do the best job to provide great, reliable service at a good price. My second promotion was to superintendent of the engineering department. I really enjoyed my work. We were constantly learning what our peers were doing and seeing how we could get better.

After being in Huntsville about six years, I received a call from Linda Parker, BTES' director of management services. She interviewed me and set up an appointment for me to talk with BTES CEO Jim Sherfey. He was looking to hire a director of engineering and operations and they were interested in me. We had never met, but I knew of BTES' reputation and he knew mine. BTES and Huntsville Utilities' reputations were at the top of electric utilities in the country. I was invited to Bristol for an interview for three days. I came, received an offer and accepted.

We still practice learning from our peers in the utilities business or anyone else. We try and learn any facet of the business that may improve us and see how it can be integrated into BTES. If there is an improvement in safety, reliability, service, customer and/or employee satisfaction, we will make changes.

This is in line with our Board-adopted vision: **To be the best electric, Internet, telephone and cable television provider.** If we are developing or learning all of the best practices and get to equal each one of the best, we will be the best! Not to win a game, but to be the BEST for our customers, community and employees.

Have a great day and...

Good Luck!

Mike Browder

BTES News

Owned and published by
Bristol Tennessee Essential Services,
serving more than 33,000 electric customers
and more than 16,000 fiber customers.

Dr. R. Michael Browder
Chief Executive Officer

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Editor: Leslie Blevins

Our Mission

To provide service to our customers,
employees and community that exceeds
their expectations.

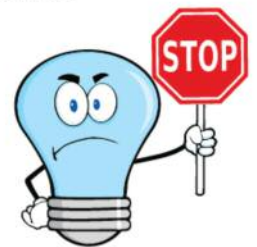
Our Vision

To be the best electric, Internet,
telephone and cable television provider.

Protect yourself from scams

#StopScams #PublicPower

**Never give personal or
financial information to
an unsolicited caller.**



**To verify the authenticity
of anyone claiming to be
from BTES, call our main
line at:**

423-968-1526



Power Line Safety



While winter wonderlands are beautiful, the ice and cold they bring can produce nightmarish situations in the form of downed power lines.

Snow, slush, ice and wind create hazardous conditions and make encounters with downed lines more likely. Knowing what to do if you come upon a downed or low-hanging line can save your life, as well as the lives of others.

“Our number one rule of thumb is to always assume that a downed or low-hanging line is an energized — or HOT — electric line,” says BTES CEO Mike Browder. “A downed line can appear as harmless as a fallen phone cable, but why take the chance it could be a hot power line? Always assume that downed lines are hot and stay away.”

Report any fallen or low-hanging lines to BTES immediately. It is important to stay far away from wires and anything that may be touching them — and also to keep others away.

“If someone comes in contact with a power line, do not touch them,” Browder says. “If you do, you could become the next victim. Materials that typically don’t conduct electricity will do so if they are even slightly wet, so it’s important not to try to move a fallen wire or anything in contact with it.”

If you are in a vehicle that comes in contact with a power line, there are steps to take to stay safe.

“When a power line connects with a vehicle, the most natural reaction is for people to get out of the car,” says BTES Director of Operations and Safety Kenneth King. “However, getting out of your vehicle is the wrong thing to do — unless it is on fire.”

According to King, this is because the area around a downed line becomes charged with electric energy. Drivers or passengers who step out of the car can become the path to the ground for the electricity, leading to electrocution.

“While downed lines sometimes spark or demonstrate electrical arcing, this is not always the case,” King says. “Power lines can look completely inactive and still be just as lethal.”

Knowing what safety actions to observe can mean the difference between life and death. Safe Electricity provides the following guidelines:

- Stay in the car. Warn those who try to come near your car that they must stay far away. Call 911 for help, and wait until BTES has de-energized the line and confirmed that it is safe to leave the vehicle.
- The exception to this rule is if the car is on fire. In that case, cross your arms and keep your feet together, then jump clear of the vehicle. Do not touch the car and the ground at the same time. Hop away from the vehicle while continuing to keep your arms crossed and feet together.
- If you see a power line touching a vehicle, do not approach it. By trying to help, you will put your own life at risk. The best thing to do is contact BTES and emergency responders and stay far away.
- The tires of a vehicle do not insulate it from electrical dangers. Follow the above safety precautions even if the car has rolled and is upside down or on its side. The vehicle is the path to ground for electrical current, and it’s safer to remain inside. If you step out of the car, you are in danger of becoming the path to the ground.

“Remember to never drive over or under fallen or low-hanging wires,” King says.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

VEHICLE IN CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE?



Call 911 immediately.



Do not exit your vehicle and keep others away.

VEHICLE ON FIRE?

- 1 Make sure no wires are in your way.
- 2 Stand in doorway, cross arms, put feet together.
- 3 Jump as far as possible, land with feet together.
- 4 Do not touch your vehicle.
- 5 Keep arms crossed, feet together, and hop at least 30 feet to safety.



**REPORT A DOWNED LINE:
423-968-BTES**

New IVR Telephone System for Your BTES Bill!

To serve our customers in the most timely and cost-effective manner, BTES is now offering a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system! This system will allow our customers to call BTES 24/7 for information regarding their bill, make credit card and e-check payments, and set up payment arrangements. To access the system, you will need your BTES account number, or you may call from one of the telephone numbers linked to your BTES account.



Available 24/7

A huge benefit to this new system is that it is available for customers to use 24 hours a day, seven days a week! Information is updated in real time and payments are applied to accounts immediately!

Credit Card by Phone

With this new system, BTES will now accept credit card payments over the phone. By calling 423-968-1526 and selecting option 4, you will be able to pay your BTES bill by entering your credit card information. A convenience fee of 2.45 percent will be charged for each transaction, which is a fee mandated by credit card agencies.



Payment Arrangements

If for some reason our customers need additional time to pay their bill, qualifying accounts can now set up payment arrangements through the IVR system.



Check by Phone



Before using our new IVR system to pay your BTES bill by check, visit our Customer Portal website at billing.bttes.net/oscp to set up your e-check profile. Once your e-check

profile has been created, call 423-968-1526 and select option 4 to pay your BTES bill using your e-check profile. A fee of \$1.00 will be charged for each transaction, which is a fee mandated by the e-check processing agency.

Account Information

To obtain information regarding your BTES bill, such as your balance, due date, last day to pay before disconnection and last payment received, call 423-968-1526 and select option 5.



BTES Account Number

ACCOUNT INFORMATION WITH PAYMENT	
ACCOUNT NUMBER	000000-001
Service location phone	423-968-1526

To access the IVR system, please have your account number available or call from a phone number that is linked to your account. To add a phone number to your account, visit our Customer Portal website at billing.bttes.net/oscp, or fill out your next BTES bill stub with your updated telephone number.

"Our new IVR telephone system is a great benefit for our customers," says Supervisor of Customer Service Diane Smith. "Having the capability to call any time of day and retrieve important information is a time-saver, and having the opportunity to use this system to pay with a credit card is a payment option we didn't have before."

BTES continues to research ways to better serve our customers and provide the best electric, Internet, telephone and cable television services!

Don't get lost in a sea of paper...

Go paperless - Sign up for e-bill!

www.bttes.net/ebill





BTES Supports Our Community

BTES employees work hard every day to provide reliable services to our customers. These same employees understand the importance of supporting our community and volunteering their time to help others. BTES employees take pride in being involved and finding ways to assist those in need. Volunteer activities range from individual to group efforts, and support a wide variety of organizations and causes.



BTES employees, family members and friends have participated in every South Holston Lake and River Clean Up since the event's creation in 1993. Groups volunteer their time on the second Saturday in August to pick up trash along the shoreline of the lake. Each participant collects at least two large bags of trash, and employees compete to find the most unusual and interesting item each year!



BTES partners with area schools to help with projects, visit during career days, and conduct presentations about electrical safety. Pictured above: Meter and Substations Technician Jason Olinger helps third graders from Fairmount Elementary School with an egg drop challenge. The goal of the challenge was to see whether students could create a container that successfully protected a raw egg as it was dropped from a BTES bucket truck at heights of 15, 30 and 45 feet. Students whose eggs survived all three drops won the challenge!



For more than 35 years, members of the community have joined our employees to donate blood at BTES' annual blood drive, held at our office on Volunteer Parkway. Pictured at left: System Engineer Chris DeTroye donates blood to help people in our community.



In observance of Arbor Day and Earth Day, BTES plants a tree each year at an area school and participates in the City of Bristol, Tennessee's Arbor Day celebration. Presentations are given on achieving successful growth and avoiding power lines when planting trees. Pictured above: Students from Holston View Elementary help plant a dogwood tree on the school's campus.



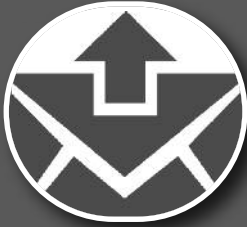
BTES employees are big supporters of the United Way of Bristol. All of our employees donate, at minimum, at the Extra Mile Level, which is one-and-a-half hours of pay each month. Many employees participate on boards and committees for the United Way and its partner agencies. Employees also participate in functions such as the annual Celebrity Bagging event (pictured above), where community members bag groceries at area Food City stores. Tips are then donated to the United Way.

SIMPLE STEPS TO ONLINE SECURITY



Create strong passwords

Make your passwords at least 12 characters long and include numbers, symbols and capital letters, whenever possible. Avoid patterns like 123456 and change your password often.



Make your inbox safe

Don't trust attachments from unknown senders. Disable automatic previewing and never respond to email requests for personal or company account information.



Keep security top of mind

Regularly evaluate access to sensitive data. Ensure that only those who need access are the ones who have access. Stay vigilant against potential security breaches.



Secure all devices

Apply encryptions to PCs and USB drives and keep your devices with you. Add a security password on mobile devices and, as mentioned above, change your passwords often.



Favorite Recipes of BTES employees and customers

Buttery Butternut Squash

4 cups butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed, flesh diced into 1/2-inch pieces

3 tbsp butter
Salt and pepper

1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme

Brown the butter in a large skillet on medium heat. Remove from heat. Add thyme, whisking continuously. Add the cubed butternut squash pieces and return the pan to the stove, heating to medium-high. Stir pieces so they are well coated. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Spread the squash out in an even layer and let cook, without stirring, so they brown on one side. Stir and spread the pieces out again for more even browning. Set heat to low, cover the pan and let cook until the squash is tender (about 10-20 minutes). Add more salt and pepper to taste and serve.

Carrot Cake Energy Bites

3/4 cup old-fashioned oats

1 cup carrots, finely shredded

1 tsp cinnamon, ground

1/2 cup dates

1/3 cup finely chopped almonds

1/3 cup coconut flakes

Stir together first five ingredients. Form the dough into tablespoon-sized balls, dip in coconut flakes. Refrigerate, covered, until chilled. Store leftovers in refrigerator, covered. Makes 12 bites.



The Lighter Side

What did the buffalo say to his son when he left for college?

Bison!



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TENNESSEE FIBER OPTIC COMMUNITIES



BTES News

Winter 2017

Page 8

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 BTES bill to the address below. (Winter 2017)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other comments, story ideas or questions.

Please return to:
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Phone (423) 968-1526

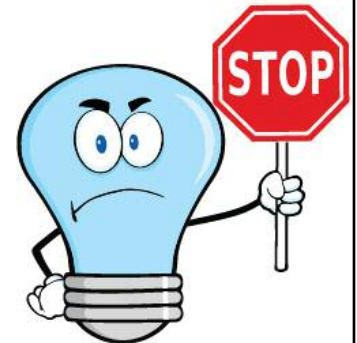
Name and address (Optional)

Protect yourself from scams

#StopScams #PublicPower

If someone calls threatening to cut off your power unless you purchase a gift card, hang up.

This is a scam.



To verify the authenticity of anyone claiming to be from BTES, call our main line at:

423-968-1526