



# BTES NEWS

**Bristol Tennessee Essential Services**

*Electric • Internet • Telephone • Cable*

Fall 2018 — For Customers of Bristol Tennessee Essential Services

## Sounding the Alert: Saving Customers from Scams

**It's the beginning of the lunch rush at a locally owned restaurant. The cashiers are ringing up the long line of hungry patrons as fast as they can, and the phone is ringing off the hook with to-go orders. A frightened employee runs up to the owner and explains that the electric utility has just called to say that their account is overdue. If they don't pay it right now, they'll have their power cut off — right in the middle of peak business hours.**

The owner, who cannot handle one more thing going wrong that day, tells the employee to do whatever is needed to take care of the problem. If they lost power now, they'd lose out on hundreds of dollars in sales. It isn't until they are closing shop for the day that the owner realizes her mistake. She has handed hundreds of dollars over to a scammer.

Over the past few years, scams targeting customers of utility companies have been on the rise. The most common scam involves convincing customers to buy prepaid debit cards to cover a late bill.

"Scammers call our customers and present themselves as a representative of BTES," says Mike Browder, CEO of BTES. "The scammers inform the victim that their account is overdue, and if they don't pay a certain amount right then, they will be disconnected. They instruct the customer to give them their credit card number or go to a local store and buy a prepaid debit card, and then call them back with the PIN to satisfy the payment."

The caller tells the victim that they must pay in this manner and not at the BTES office because it is the fastest way to ensure that their electricity will not be disconnected.

"BTES does not initiate calls to our customers requesting payments outside of our normal methods," Browder says. "We don't call and ask for credit card information over the phone. Our customers can pay by credit card by logging into our website or mobile app, or through our automated phone system."

Scammers are getting smarter and more sophisticated.

"Just as technology has improved for the general population, it has also done so for scammers," Browder says. "To deceive customers and gain their trust, scammers now frequently provide a call-back number that is automatically answered by an interactive voice response system or they call from what looks like a local telephone number."

Anyone receiving a call should not give out personal information, including account or credit card numbers. If you receive such a phone call and the number is presented on your caller ID, write down the number and report it to BTES and local authorities.

"We strive to make our customers aware of potential scams so they can protect themselves from becoming victims of identity theft and other fraudulent activities," Browder says.

To verify anyone claiming to be from BTES, call our main line at 423-968-1526.

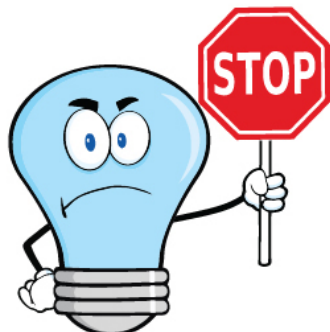
*Thanks to the American Public Power Association for sharing information on scams.*

### Protect yourself from scams

#StopScams #PublicPower

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

**This is a scam.**



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## BTES' Assistance Following Hurricane Michael

We all depend on electricity for comfort, convenience, entertainment and productivity. We need electricity for healthy eating, which requires refrigeration and stoves for cooking. We also need electricity for our televisions to work and our cell phones to charge. The list goes on.



At BTES, we work hard to deliver dependable, reliable electricity, as well as Internet, telephone and cable. Long before we provided those last three services, we supplied electricity. We are always working to ensure that BTES is ready to deal with the effects of a severe weather event. These events can stretch our ability to keep the power on — and other services as well. When we observe these events in other places in the world, we think through how we would handle such an event should it happen to us.

When asked, BTES has provided linemen and equipment to help others experiencing power outages after severe weather events. Likewise, when we have needed help, others have come to our aid. Under existing contracts, the helped party pays, and the helping party gets paid the actual costs. That is part of being prepared. In recent years, FEMA has reimbursed some of the expenses, which is a big help. Even with all the pre-planning, however, it is still a traumatic event for everyone involved.

We all watched closely as Hurricane Michael approached the Florida panhandle. Electric utilities began asking for help, and BTES linemen volunteered to go. We first had to evaluate the hurricane's potential effects on BTES since Bristol could have been in the path. We couldn't release any of our crews until we knew our own power needs. When we received a call from the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association saying that crews were needed in Florida, we were making the final decision on what we could do to help without endangering our ability to serve our customers.

The city of Blountstown, Florida, needed our help. All of their power was off. Most of their electric system was down. The transmission system feeding their substation was out. There were no places for outside crews to stay. We were asked to send help and they would work something out. Of the many BTES linemen who volunteered to go, we were able to send Working Foremen Aaron Maxwell and Brian Harber, Lineman Matt Proffitt and Apprentice Lineman Matthew Lampkins. They took three trucks with them, as well as a utility trailer for personal storage and sleeping (cots and hammocks were used for sleeping). It was disheartening for our crew to work day after day, getting lines built and connected to houses that were deemed capable of receiving power, but incapable of having their power restored because transmission lines were still out.

After most other crews had returned home, our crews told us they were making headway with finally getting power restored. They asked us to give them three more days and we agreed. Updates were given throughout their time in Blountstown, and finally, after two weeks of working there, our crews told us, "We have power to all the structures that can currently take power. We are coming home in the morning."

We extend our gratitude, both to those who traveled and those who made life go on in their absence. Thanks for a job well done!

*Mike Browder*

## BTES News

Owned and published by  
Bristol Tennessee Essential Services,  
serving more than 33,000 electric customers  
and over 17,500 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  
for the benefit of our customers.

## Customer Comments

### Water Heater Program:

"I am so impressed and appreciative of the quality of work completed when my water heater was replaced. The work was quick and efficient, and all involved were polite, clean and respectful. Exceptional job all around!"

- Herbert Dunn

### Outage Restoration

"So often we take for granted the hard work you perform to restore power outages. I really do appreciate the expedience in restoring our power on Daryl Lane in Blountville. Thank you and God bless you."

- Dolly Rose



## Three Serve on 2018 TNCPE Board of Examiners



Three BTES employees were appointed by the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) to the 2018 Board of Examiners: Leslie Blevins, public relations and communications manager;

Jennifer Booher, executive assistant; and Chris Kibler, system engineer. Blevins, serving as a master examiner, is in her ninth year with the program, and Booher and Kibler are serving for the first time. TNCPE is a state-level counterpart of the national Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

As a member of the TNCPE Board of Examiners, Blevins, Booher and Kibler are responsible for reviewing and evaluating organizations that apply to the TNCPE Award Program. Each year, the TNCPE Award Program recognizes local, state and regional organizations that demonstrate excellence in business operations and results. BTES received the top honor — the Excellence Award — from TNCPE in 2012, and is one of only three organizations to ever receive the award twice, first receiving it in 1994. In 2017, BTES went on to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award — the first utility to receive this prestigious accolade.

The TNCPE Board of Examiners consists of experts from all sectors of the regional economy, including health care, service, nonprofit, manufacturing, education and government. All members complete extensive training in the Baldrige Excellence Framework, a nationally recognized systems approach to



*Jennifer Booher (left), Chris Kibler and Leslie Blevins are currently serving as Examiners for the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE).*

organizational performance. This framework evaluates all of an organization's components (leadership; strategy; customers; workforce; operations; and measurement, analysis and knowledge management) as a unified whole, so that plans, processes, measures and actions are consistent.

Each year, the TNCPE Board of Examiners contributes more than 10,000 hours of volunteer service to organizations across Tennessee. In turn, examiners use expertise developed during TNCPE training and assessments at their own jobs, benefiting and improving organizations from within, and working to achieve TNCPE's mission: To drive organizational excellence in Tennessee.

## ROUND UP to Help Your Neighbor

Round up your bill to the next dollar to help customers in need pay their electric bill.



All donations collected go to our Help Your Neighbor Fund, which BTES matches up to \$20,000 per year.

[www.btes.net/roundup](http://www.btes.net/roundup)  
423-968-1526

## BTES Linemen Help Restore Power Following Hurricane Michael

On Oct. 12, a crew of BTES linemen left early in the morning to head to Blountstown, Florida, to help restore power to customers impacted by Hurricane Michael. Working Foremen Aaron Maxwell and Brian Harber, Lineman Matt Proffitt and Apprentice Lineman Matthew Lampkins spent two weeks rebuilding Blountstown's entire electric system. Hurricane Michael leveled the entire city's electric system.

BTES partnered with Tallahoma Utilities Authority and several other public power providers to help the Blountstown community. Being able to send crews to help others (and request help when we need it) is one of the greatest benefits of being part of the public power model and having mutual aid agreements.



Working Foreman Brian Harber (left), Apprentice Lineman Matthew Lampkins, Lineman Matt Proffitt, and Working Foreman Aaron Maxwell spent two weeks working in Blountstown, Florida, following Hurricane Michael.

*Thank you!*



## Waterman Named to 2018 Tri-Cities 40 under Forty Class



Jessica Waterman with her husband, Dustin.

**BTES extends our congratulations to Jessica Waterman, systems analyst supervisor, who was recently honored at the 26th annual Tri-Cities 40 under Forty gala.** 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.

Waterman began her career at BTES in May 2007 as a project coordinator and was promoted a year later to senior project coordinator. She was named administrative systems analyst in 2015 and was promoted again in 2018 to systems analyst supervisor. A 2009 graduate of the LEAD Bristol! Program, Waterman has used her leadership skills and talents to spearhead numerous BTES projects. These include the development and management of our employee training and knowledge management program, analyzation of BTES' electric rates and rate structure, tracking and analyzing the results of our improvement initiative process, and organization of employee events. Waterman is also responsible for the development, implementation and management of the BTES WISE Water Heater Switch Program.

In addition, she is a member of the Baldrige Team at BTES, which led the organization to earn the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2017 — the nation's highest honor for quality. For the past 10 years, Waterman has served as a category lead on BTES' Baldrige team, leading the organization through the process of understanding category 4 — measurement, analysis and knowledge management. She wrote the category 4 section for the award application and led the interviews during the site visit. She also served on the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) board of examiners in 2007 and 2013.

Waterman joins several other BTES employees who have been honored with the 40 under Forty award. These include Diane Smith (2014), supervisor of customer service; Heather Jenkins (2013), senior accountant; Cody Johnson (2013), supervisor of purchasing and stores; Leslie Blevins (2012), public relations and communications manager; Clayton Dowell (2011), director of engineering; Tara McCall (2010), director of management services; Michael Parker (2010), supervisor of networks; and April Eads (2003), business development manager.



Waterman (center) is pictured with Cody Johnson, supervisor of purchasing and stores; Mike Browder, CEO; Dustin Waterman, her husband; and Diane Smith, supervisor of customer service.

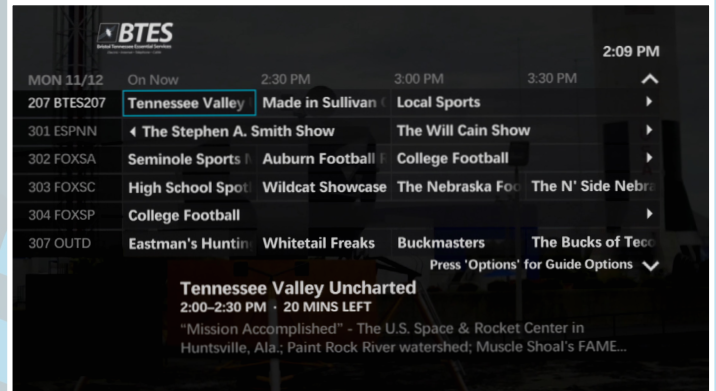


# IPTV Cable Customers Receive an Upgrade!

If you subscribe to BTES' IPTV cable service, you may have noticed a new look! IPTV received an upgrade that enhances the look and efficiency of the menu screens and some remote functionalities.

This upgrade will enable BTES to continue adding benefits to our cable service! A "How To" video library can be found on our Video on Demand and website to assist customers with using the new elements. Upgraded features include larger channel numbers for easier viewing, a black-and-white color scheme on menu screens to provide a higher contrast and cleaner view, pre-programmed shortcuts on your remote, and many more!

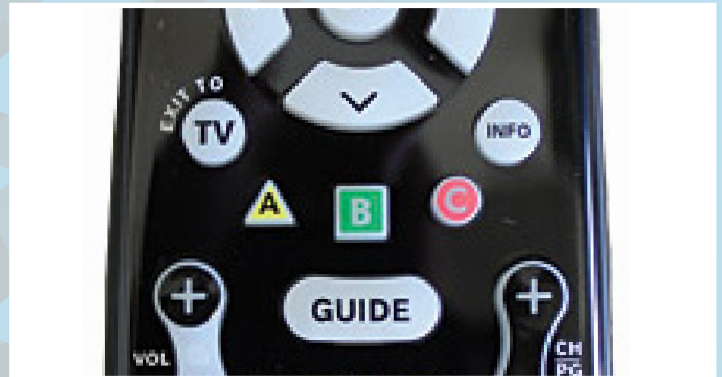
Visit [www.btes.net](http://www.btes.net) to learn more!



Customers will notice a new black-and-white color scheme to provide higher contrast and easier viewing.



Channel numbers are much larger when scrolling through the channels or when typing in a channel number.



Several buttons on your remote are now pre-programmed with shortcuts, including the "A" button, which goes to the search screen; the "B" button, which goes to the BTES "How To" Video Library; and the "C" button, which turns closed captioning on and off.


# IPTV Essential Plus Package



100 Mb Internet



Telephone



IPTV Cable

\$134.95

[www.btes.net/ordernow](http://www.btes.net/ordernow)  
423-968-1526

# THESE THINGS I WISH

by Lee Pitts

We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse. For my grandchildren, I'd like better. I'd really like for them to know about hand-me-down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would.

I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated. I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand-new car when you are sixteen. It will be good if you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep.

I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in. I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother. And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you because he's scared, I hope you let him.

I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely. On rainy days, when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mom.

If you want a slingshot, I hope your Dad teaches you how to make one instead of buying one. I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books. When you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head.

I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Grandpa and go fishing with your Uncle. May you feel sorrow at a funeral and joy during the holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through your neighbor's window, and that she hugs you and kisses you at Christmas time when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.

These things I wish for you — tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it's the only way to appreciate life.

*Condensed for space.*

*Full version available at [www.inspire21.com](http://www.inspire21.com)*



## Thai Baked Salmon

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 6 - 6-oz. salmon fillets, skin on or off            | Pinch of salt |
| 1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp Thai sweet chili sauce, divided | Cooking spray |
| 2-3 tbsp green onions, chopped                      |               |

In a large baking dish, lay salmon fillets in a row. Sprinkle each fillet with a pinch of salt and top with 1 tbsp of Thai sweet chili sauce. Brush or rub with your fingers to coat fish with sauce. Cover and let marinate in the fridge for at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.

Turn oven's broiler on high and position top oven rack 5 - 6 inches below the heat source. Line large baking sheet with unbleached parchment paper, spray with cooking spray, and place salmon fillets skin-side down. Coat with remaining marinade from the dish. Broil for 8 minutes, rotating baking sheet once. Remove from the oven and brush top of each fillet with 2 tbsp of Thai sweet chili sauce. Return to the oven and broil for another 5 minutes or until salmon has caramelized. Serve garnished with green onions and extra sauce (if desired).

## Fajita Chicken Bake

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 3 - 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts         | 1 - 2 tsp taco seasoning   |
| 2 bell peppers any color, de-seeded and sliced   | 1 red onion, thinly sliced |
| 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar or Mexican blend cheese |                            |
| 1-2 tbsp olive oil                               |                            |

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Trim the chicken breasts, then lay them in a single layer in a glass baking dish. Sprinkle the taco seasoning over the top. Spread thinly sliced peppers and onions on top of chicken breasts. Drizzle the olive oil over the peppers and onions. Sprinkle cheese over the top of the dish. Bake for 35 - 45 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through and the juices run clear.

## The Lighter Side

*What has four eyes but can't see?*

*Mississippi*





## Tree First Aid After a Storm

*In the aftermath of a major storm, property owners often remove damaged trees that could have been saved. Taking the right steps after trees have been damaged can mean 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 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. 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.

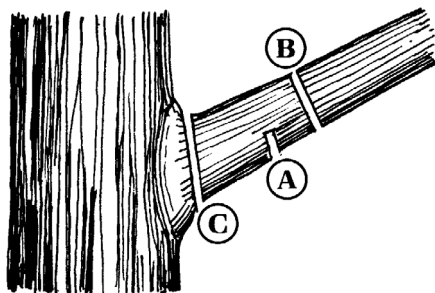
Removing the jagged remains of smaller-sized broken limbs is one common repair that property owners can make after a storm. If done properly, it will minimize the risk of decay agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches that are 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.**

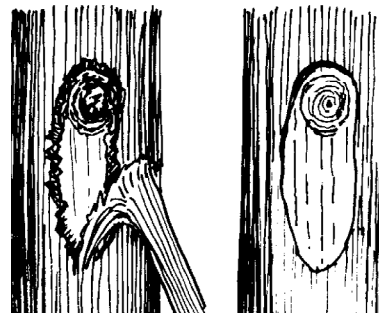
**B. Make a second cut from above several inches out from the first cut, to allow the limb to fall safely.**

**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.



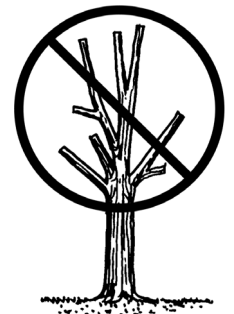
**Cutline: Smoothing the ragged edge of torn bark helps the wound heal faster and eliminates hiding places for insects.**

### 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 stunted 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.**



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**Malcolm Baldrige**  
National Quality Award

2017 Award Recipient



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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 with your BTES bill to the address below. (Fall 2018)

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
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Other comments, story ideas or questions.

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Phone 423-968-1526

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Name and address (Optional)

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**PAYMENTS MADE  
EASY!**