

AN UPDATE FROM BRIGHTRIDGE BROADBAND



Don't Deal with "Just Fine"

Elevate your internet.



BrightRidge Broadband continues to expand its nation-leading high-speed internet services, connecting people who lack access and bringing the next generation of internet infrastructure to our community. BrightRidge currently serves more than 8,000 homes and businesses with broadband and telephone services and is adding hundreds more each month. This service already improves the ability of 24,000 local residents to engage in remote education, improve digital skills, work from home, receive tele-healthcare, connect with family, and access many selections of video entertainment products.

Acceleration of broadband buildout

The city of Johnson City and BrightRidge have partnered to accelerate the build out of fiber broadband to the city residents by two years. Johnson City has committed \$2.3 million in ARPA funds to expand the serviceable homes and businesses from the planned 5,800 to 10,112 in fiscal year 2023 (July 2022 to June 2023). This results in the construction of 96% of Phase 6 and 40% of Phase 7 being one to two years earlier respectively.

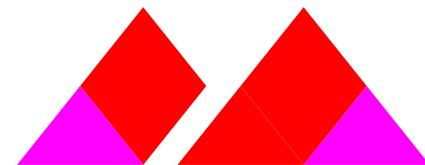
We will then be able to combine the deployment of Phases 7 and 8 in fiscal year 2024 (July 2023 to June 2024) and serve those 7,000 customers early as well. Our original goals were to complete the eight broadband phases by June 2026, but now these will be completed two years earlier by June 2024.

Additional areas to receive fiber broadband

BrightRidge has announced plans to extend fiber broadband to 5,643 homes and businesses in the Colonial Heights, Fordtown (adjacent to Hwy 36), and Cherokee Rd communities in fiscal year 2025 (July 2024 to June 2025). These locations were not part of the original eight phase broadband build, but due the huge success of the rollout, we are able to expand the coverage area.

Addressing affordability

With BrightRidge's participation in the FCC American Connectivity Program (ACP), many of our local residents are eligible for up to \$30 monthly credit on their internet costs. ACP program information can be reviewed at: <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/>



BrightRidge

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Get Connected BrightRidge®

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Baby it's Hot Outside!

High temperatures are expected to continue throughout the summer, so TVA and BrightRidge are focused on ensuring your electricity remains reliable during these extreme conditions. Please consider conserving power and saving money, especially during the peak use hours of 2:00pm through 6:00pm by taking a few simple steps:

- Turn up your thermostat – even one or two degrees makes a big difference in your power bill and doesn't significantly impact your comfort.
- Use ceiling and portable fans to circulate air – they use less energy than your air conditioner.
- If possible, avoid using ovens, clothes dryers, dishwashers and other large appliances during peak hours.
- Close window coverings on the sunny side of your home.
- Additional energy-saving tips can be found at www.energyright.com/residential.

Customers concerned about their ability to pay future power bills are encouraged to call Customer Service at 423-952-5000 to discuss the availability of assistance programs or billing options.



TALO – \$40 and Free Maintenance

Another way to help reduce system wide energy consumption during times of peak electricity usage is to participate in BrightRidge's Take A Load Off (TALO) Program. This program allows BrightRidge to install a load control device on your water heater to temporarily interrupt power to the unit during peaking conditions. Hot water is stored in the tank for future use, so the temporary interruption of hot water is rarely noticeable to the customer. TALO events are typically operated in the late afternoons during summer months and early mornings during the winter, lasting two to four hours. To qualify for the program, you must be the owner of the home or condo unit and your name must be on the electric account. In addition, the water heater must be electric and have a 38-gallon minimum tank. Participants in the program receive a one-time \$40 bill credit per installed device in addition to free maintenance for thermostats and elements.

IT'S SUMMER, THINK SAFETY FIRST!

Summer officially started June 21 and all pleasures of the season are in full swing! Whether you're a boater, outdoor sports lover, pool plunger, home project enthusiast or staying inside to catch up on reading – BrightRidge wants you to think **SAFETY FIRST!** In this edition of *Get Connected* you'll see many of the articles will address safety while updating you on the programs BrightRidge offers.

5 Quick Summer Safety Tips

1. Stay hydrated
2. Wear sunscreen and hats
3. Stay safe around water
4. Protect against bugs and ticks
5. Use correct protective equipment



From the CEO

“Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will.” – Zig Ziglar

This is the time of year when the weather pattern can turn into some quick strong storms in the evenings. While short, they can often cause significant damage to the system via trees, lightning, etc. We want to thank you for your patience as our folks work quickly and safely to restore your power. While we spend a significant amount of funds each year in tree trimming, many times it is trees outside of the right-of-way that take down lines.

Along with storms, high temperatures happen this time of the year. One of the programs we have in place for reducing your costs is the TALO program for demand reduction. You will learn more about this program in this newsletter and how you can participate in this cost saving program, along with other energy saving tips during this summer heat.

Our Broadband rollout continues to go well, and we have been able to accelerate the process with the support from Johnson City using their ARPA funding. This support, coupled with the engineering efficiency designed by our staff, will allow us to complete the original eight phases of the project two years earlier than expected, thus allowing us to reach other areas sooner. As always, please **‘Think Safety First’** as we all enjoy the beautiful outdoors of northeast Tennessee during this season.

Jeffrey R. Dykes,
Chief Executive Officer

Did you know that 200 tree species grow wild in our state? The most common is the Southern Red Oak, but the Tulip Poplar was designated as the official State of Tennessee tree in 1947. Living so close to many state parks and mountains, we all enjoy the benefits of trees. **But trees and power lines don’t mix!** BrightRidge has seen an increase in customer calls asking about tree planting, brush left after storms, and Ash tree problems. Please keep in mind these tips:

Do not plant trees under power lines or near electric rights-of-way. New trees must be planted at least 25 feet away from power lines.

Tree removal or trimming is needed to ensure system dependability and avoid major outages during storms. Trimming will be done for any growth that is within 10 feet of the pole and below the lowest line on the pole.

BrightRidge does not clean up the brush resulting from a storm. This includes any required trimming to restore power or any tree which may have fallen during the storm. We need to move on to the next outage quickly and safely and will not take time to clean up, as that is the responsibility of the property owner.

Clean up of dead or rotten trees causing a power outage at any time is also the responsibility of the property owner.

Sometimes removal of trees is the only option to keep electric and broadband service reliable.

Specific to Ash trees impacted by the invasive Emerald Ash Borer bug, BrightRidge will only remove the tree if the trunk is within 10 feet of company-owned high voltage power lines. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the property owner.



BrightRidge continues to provide a no charge cut-loose service so that customers can safely trim trees near service drops, as that is their responsibility. Call 423-952-5025 to schedule this service, available Monday thru Thursday with limited time slots. Advance notice is required for all customer related cut-loose requests and we suggest calling at least 72 hours in advance. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work hard to continue tree maintenance throughout our system.

Summer is a perfect time for projects both inside and outside your home. BrightRidge encourages you consider **SAFETY FIRST** concerning your electric service before starting these projects. In many cases, you need to call BrightRidge before starting.

Inside Electrical Work – Whether you consider using an electrician or trying a DIY project, you must complete a few steps before starting to ensure your safety. **Only BrightRidge personnel can cut the seal and pull the meter to disconnect the power for electrical work including rewiring, changing a breaker or other such work.** As per TN Code, all wiring must be inspected and approved by the State Electrical Inspector. Homeowners and electricians must apply for permits (www.core.tn.gov) and schedule a disconnect before proceeding with any work. Once the work is done, you will need to get the service inspected by the appropriate electrical inspector (city or state) before BrightRidge can reconnect your power.

Outside Work – Over 40% of active diggers don’t contact 811 before digging because they think their project is too shallow to require it, but it isn’t! Utilities can be buried just inches below the surface and by calling 811 first, you can prevent damage to underground utilities, avoid fines and ensure safety for your project. It’s easy, just dial 811 or visit www.tnn811.com to request locating services. For planting projects, please see the article on tree trimming in this edition for specific planting requirements around power lines.



Title VI Public Notice

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is a recipient of federal financial assistance. Recipients are required to comply with various nondiscrimination laws and regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarifies that discrimination is prohibited throughout an entire agency if any part of the agency receives federal financial assistance. BrightRidge is a sub-recipient of TDEC’s federal funds and is required to comply with Title VI and related nondiscrimination laws and regulations. To view BrightRidge’s compliance policy, please visit our website’s Resources tab and open the Title VI Public Notice form or call BrightRidge’s Title VI Coordinator at 423-952-5162.



Have you ever gotten up in the middle of the night to get a glass of water and stepped on a stray forgotten toy? Ouch! That was not expected and now you’re hopping around on one foot trying not to cry out in pain and frustration so you won’t wake up the entire house!

Well, that’s sort of like the feeling an electrical worker gets when someone has left a nail, screw or staple from hanging up a sign on an electric pole. They’re trying to climb the pole and a stray nail scrapes a hand, forearm or leg. Yikes – that hurts! Signs and items used to hang them are safety issues.

Our crews work around the clock in all types of weather and trying to work around homemade signs can cause serious hazards and slow crews down. Even a small nail can puncture a lineman’s clothing, gloves or climbing gear making them vulnerable for falls or electrocution. Also, signs on electric poles may also impede line of sight for vehicles at intersections.

Tennessee law states “it is unlawful for any person to place or attach any type of show-card, poster, or advertising material or device...on any kind of poles, towers, or fixtures of any public utility company, whether privately or publicly owned,” TCA § 2-1-144.

It’s a safety issue for us and we want to continue to keep our system safe to provide reliable energy and connective services to all our customers. So please don’t hang your signs on our poles and consider other ways to promote your message.