

# BrightRidge®

## GET CONNECTED

April - June 2024

**Annual enrollment open**  
**April 1 – May 31**



On a budget and looking for an easier way to manage monthly utility costs? BrightRidge's budget billing program offers two options to minimize bill fluctuations and avoid the frustration of unexpected bill amounts.

**1. Fixed Budget:** offers an end-of-year settle up bill in June or July. Depending on your energy usage, there will be a debit or credit to your "settlement" bill.

**2. Rolling Budget:** does not offer an end-of-year settle up bill, but instead, it varies slightly from month-to-month depending on your energy usage.

Interested in our fixed budget program? Customer Support will review your energy usage over the past 12 months to determine the recommended budget amount.

Interested in our rolling budget program? Customer Support can provide you with an estimated starting amount as there is not a "set" start amount due to monthly system recalculations.

Prefer to sign-up online? Got you covered! Visit us at <https://www.brightridge.com> to start the budget application process. It's really that easy!

Either option will help you to avoid unexpectedly high seasonal bills. Our budget billing is available to residential customers, you must have a current zero balance and a 12-month account history to start the application process. Budget billing monthly payments must be paid by the due date each month or program eligibility is at risk.

Applications are only accepted April 1 – May 31 each year so be sure to contact Customer Service to discuss your options today! Call 423-952-5000, visit [brightridge.com](https://www.brightridge.com) or visit our office at 2600 Boones Creek Road anytime Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm.



## **More Solar Power for** **BrightRidge**

Together, we're creating BrightSpots in our community.

In February, the Washington County Commissioners approved zoning changes that will allow land outside of Gray to host a new 12 megawatt (MW) solar farm. Over 200 acres will be purchased by BrightRidge's solar partner, Silicon Ranch, to construct the solar farm. BrightRidge has entered into a 30-year purchase power agreement with Silicon Ranch to purchase 100% of the power produced at this site.

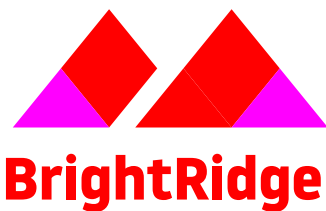
Although the project is still in the design phase, the projected 12MW site will produce enough to power 2,000 homes on an annual basis for 30 years. Working with neighbors and within the Washington County Zoning Codes, the project will include a landscaping plan, while keeping most of the natural tree buffer that currently exists. Silicon Ranch also procures 100% of their solar modules from US manufacturers.

BrightRidge's initial analysis shows a minimum savings of \$24 million over the term of the project by producing the power locally to off set our purchases from TVA. Local renewable generation projects like this have been made possible through TVA's Flexibility Program which allows local power companies to self-generate or procure up to five percent of their load.

The Gray Solar Farm will be the third flexibility project for BrightRidge. The 9MW Martin Solar Farm was the first and the smaller BrightRidge Solar Lab at 300kW was the second. BrightRidge's commitment to producing energy locally leads to greater grid stability and demonstrates the value of new technology for northeast Tennessee.

BrightRidge, keeping the community shining.

# From the CEO



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Jeff Dykes, Chief Executive Officer  
Ceilya Campbell, Administrative  
Assistant  
Carrie Boeve, Publication Editor

Visit website for Board Member and  
Administrative Staff Directories.

**“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” – Anne Frank**

The coming of spring brings changes to the region in relation to the warming of the earth; both for restoration of soil to provide growth and nourishment, and the renewing of our souls going out into the world. At BrightRidge we will also be doing some refreshing and renewing of some of the products we offer to our customers. We will be updating our website, making it easier to maneuver and access those things you are looking for. We will also be making changes to SmartHub, giving you greater access to your information and your ability to track usage. This newsletter will update you on some of those improvements. If you are not currently a SmartHub user, please contact a Customer Service Representative and they can instruct you on how to sign up.

We are entering the time of year where the outdoors again becomes a part of our lives in a big way. May each of you be able to spend quality time with your families in this coming change of seasons. As our seasons change and things are renewed, I wish you a renewal in your lives, faith and fellowship with family and friends. May this seasonal change bring about a great opportunity for you to serve your neighbors and community in a positive way. It is our goal at BrightRidge, through our dedicated employees, to serve you, our neighbors and customers, in an exceptional way. These opportunities to serve are afforded to us by you through your use of the products we offer. We thank you for the opportunity to serve and continue to dedicate ourselves to providing the best products and offerings we can in the energy and broadband services we provide.

**“The purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others.” – Albert Schweitzer**

Jeffrey R. Dykes,  
Chief Executive Officer

## ***We're Preparing for Emergencies***

TVA and BrightRidge have learned a lot since December of 2022 when Winter Storm Elliott caused rolling power outages in the seven-state region. Announced last fall, TVA has a plan to strengthen their system while maintaining reliable power and collaborating on ways to trim energy consumption and high demand. Most importantly, TVA has worked with its local power companies, including BrightRidge, to improve communication during times of challenging power conditions.

Here at BrightRidge, our Engineering Department undertook a project early in 2023 to implement an automated load restoration system that can automatically switch power on and off if needed for emergency events. Using this new system, BrightRidge's Control Room can now manage the electric grid to cycle customers on and off in designated time frames and troubleshoot outage issues in real time as part of our Emergency Load Curtailment Plan (ELCP).

Now that the ELCP is automated, BrightRidge's Communications Team can share better information about what locations will be interrupted and when through our website, social media channels and the media. BrightRidge is also working towards the ability to message customers in emergency situations such as weather events via text messages, emails and calls.

**That's why it's so important that BrightRidge has every customer's most up-to-date contact information on file.** Please don't assume that just because we know your address, we have all your other contact information correct. Simply check your bill to ensure your primary and secondary phone numbers are correct. Then take it one step further to call us at 423-952-5000 to ensure we have your correct email address. That way, when we need to reach out in emergencies or power outage situations, you'll be sure to get the message.

## A New Look Coming Soon



Do you remember wearing these? Those “fashionable” glasses were for watching the total solar eclipse on August 21, 2017, almost seven years ago. And although you probably can’t find them, you’d need them to watch the eclipse again on April 8 of this year.

Another special event happened at BrightRidge seven years ago, we launched our website at BrightRidge.com. And after seven years, we believe it’s time for a few changes! Effective July 1, 2024, we’ll be launching a new look to BrightRidge.com, hoping to make it ‘one-click’ friendly for our customers.

Meaning with ‘one click’ you’ll be able to:

- ✔ Pay your bill
- ✔ Sign into SmartHub
- ✔ Start a new account
- ✔ Stop services
- ✔ Report a power outage
- ✔ Check the outage map
- ✔ Report a street light outage
- ✔ Check Broadband availability

We’re also improving our search function, streamlining the important information for customer access and hopefully, highlighting the services that are most important to you - our customers. We’ll still be available at BrightRidge.com, just with a new look and a lot of new features! So be sure to check us out on July 1, 2024 for our new look. (No special glasses needed!)

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## Are you part of our 64%?

Currently, 64% of eligible BrightRidge customers are using our free SmartHub app. The SmartHub app allows account access and two-way communications with BrightRidge via your mobile device or desktop computer. You can manage payments, notify Customer Service of account issues, report power outages, check your usage and receive special messaging from BrightRidge all through the app.

Last month, BrightRidge launched a sleek redesign for the web-based dashboard, making it even more user-friendly for our customers. We added the functionality of My Services so when broadband services become available at your home or business, you can sign up through SmartHub.

One of the most popular features of SmartHub is the graph feature that can help track your energy usage. You can drill down usage as far as hour-by-hour to see your home or facilities’ electric usage. It can also give you year-over-year trends to help manage your energy usage and costs.

SmartHub is available for all residential, commercial, and most industrial customers. Sign up for SmartHub by visiting BrightRidge.com on your computer or by downloading the app on your mobile device.





# Are you missing out on Next Generation Internet?

## Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) grant

The federal government (NTIA) is providing \$813 million to the State of Tennessee to ensure that every American home has access to at least 100Mb/20Mb or better broadband service. This grant is expected to be the last of several massive funding rounds to ensure that you can get access to broadband internet services.

**If you do not have access to at least 100Mb/20Mb internet at your home, you need to act now to make sure your family is not overlooked.** You can verify that the FCC database correctly represents the availability at your home by visiting: <http://broadbandmap.fcc.gov> and typing your home address into the search field.

Once the map appears, you will see a list of the internet providers that say they serve your area and their fastest advertised products on the right side of the screen. If you determine that this data is inaccurate at your home or office, or that the service providers would require an expensive build charge to serve you, please choose the "Availability Challenge" option and fill out the form.

**Starting April 1, customers only have 75 days to challenge the FCC database so BrightRidge Broadband encourages all customers to verify their address.** If you don't challenge the information, there is a high probability that grant funds to serve your home will not be available for your address.

## New 10GIG Managed Wi-Fi Product

BrightRidge Broadband was one of the first service providers in America to offer residential 10GIG Broadband back in 2019 and is still the lowest priced at \$149.99 per month!

BrightRidge Broadband recently lowered the entry costs again, to allow more homes to take advantage of our 10GIG Broadband service by launching a new "10GIG Managed Wi-Fi service" for our 10GIG customers!

Prior to this option, our 10GIG customers had to purchase their own router to fully utilize the available bandwidth. With the new service we provide a state-of-the-art router that has a direct 10GIG interface, four 1GIG interfaces, and Wi-Fi 6E for the ultimate bandwidth to your home devices. The wireless coverage is enhanced with 10 antennas and three wireless spectrums (2.4Ghz x2, 5Ghz x4, 6Ghz x4) to carry up to an aggregate of 9.6GIG worth of traffic. It has dynamic beamforming to direct the power to the devices that require the most.

And the great news is that we provide this ultimate Wi-Fi solution for only \$19.99 per month! This monthly fee includes the installation, maintenance, firmware updates, remote support, and hardware replacements for as long as you subscribe. Others promise, but we deliver!

## Our Customer Base Continues to Grow

**We have already connected more than 15,000 households/ businesses to our world class broadband services** and continue to experience extremely high demand for our products. If you read our Google Business reviews for BrightRidge Broadband, you will see that our customers are very satisfied with our super-fast broadband speeds, reliability, commitment to support by local associates, and low costs.

## Status of Broadband Deployment

BrightRidge Broadband has been able to accelerate our fiber broadband deployment in the urban areas of Johnson City and Gray by two years, and portions of the rural communities (Bowmantown, Pleasant Valley, Fall Branch, New Salem) by five years.

We are currently extending broadband to the communities of Colonial Heights, Cherokee Road (in southwest Johnson City), and the underground areas within the previous phases of construction. We already had Phases 7 and 8 of broadband construction scheduled for this fiscal year, which includes the southwestern portion of Johnson City and those subdivisions south of I-26 from Boones Creek Road eastward.

To check availability of your address, visit [MyBrightRidge.com](http://MyBrightRidge.com).

## Utility Contractor Confusion

We have received numerous complaints concerning contractors of the former CenturyLink, now called Brightspeed, including yard and property damage, electric and water line damage, etc. These contractors are typically labeled as "MasTec" and are not performing work for BrightRidge. Claims can be reported to 1-833-365-3220 or non-emergency claims can be reported via <https://bmse01.gcp.brightspeed.com/rehd/>.

BrightRidge Broadband makes all efforts to ensure that our contractor's vehicles are labeled as "Contractor of BrightRidge" to ensure that you know who's working with us. If you have questions, you can always contact us at 423-952-5000, via Facebook or Live Chat at BrightRidge.com.

