

# BrightRidge®

## GET CONNECTED

January - March 2024

### Prepare and Manage Your Winter Bills

As you prepare for cooler weather, BrightRidge wants to offer information and tips to help manage upcoming winter electric bills. We hope you're completely equipped to manage your electric usage so there are no surprises when bills arrive.

- **First, consider downloading and using our free SmartHub app.** SmartHub allows you to view daily, weekly, and monthly electric usage so you can calculate your bill. You can view your account's billing history and make payments via SmartHub. Other features include reporting service issues, power outages and much more. Visit [bit.ly/brightridge-smarthub](http://bit.ly/brightridge-smarthub) for more features or scan the QR code below.
- **Do you need a payment plan?** Recent nationwide statistics indicated that 1 in 6 families struggle to pay their electric bills on time. If you might be in this situation, BrightRidge encourages you to call and we'll work with you on payment options to meet your needs. Additionally, BrightRidge can share programs that might help with bills.
- **Consider using or donating to the Heisse Johnson Hand Up Program** that helps with electric bills. Visit [bit.ly/hand-up-program](http://bit.ly/hand-up-program) for more information.
- **Home improvements make a big difference!** Simple DIY projects that are fairly inexpensive include weatherstripping doors and windows, adding insulation to drafty spots, changing filters every month, and caulking air leaks are just a few. Check out more ways to save at [bit.ly/brightridge-energy-savings](http://bit.ly/brightridge-energy-savings)



### Enhancing the Grid

When you pay your electric bill, you're doing so much more than keeping the lights on. You're creating BrightSpots in your community.

As our communities grow, BrightRidge is building more infrastructure and transitioning to smart grid technologies that increase reliability and enhance communications within the electric system. During the last two years, BrightRidge has installed a new technology on its power grid called intellirupters.

Intellirupters work similar to your light switch, turning off and on, opening and closing the flow of electricity. With an intellirupter, the system automatically diverts power flow the instant a problem is detected. So, when you see a blink in your power, going off then quickly back on, that's an intellirupter doing its job.

Beyond eliminating momentary outages, intellirupters also allow BrightRidge to isolate outages to an exact area, reducing the number of affected customers. Instead of 600 homes on the same circuit being without power, intellirupters automatically identify where the problem is, then reroute power to automatically restore service to 400 homes that are not directly impacted by the problem. With this specific knowledge, crews are then dispatched to restore power to the remaining homes impacted versus having to drive the entire line of 600 customers to find the problem.

BrightRidge is also managing the complexity of higher demand usage and two-way power flow, a direct outcome of integrating electric vehicles and solar energy into the grid. By adding intellirupters to the system, BrightRidge can overcome this multifaceted challenge by enhancing support for bidirectional power flow, improving the grid's resilience and stability for all our customers.

BrightRidge, keeping the community shining.

# From the CEO



**BrightRidge**

2600 Boones Creek Road  
Johnson City, TN 37615  
423-952-5000  
www.brightridge.com

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

Visit website for Board Member and  
Administrative Staff Directories.

**“Success usually comes to those who are too busy to look for it.”**

**– Henry David Thoreau**

Preparations for winter lead us to prepare our homes for the cold and weather events that may come our way. Just as you prepared your home for the winter months, BrightRidge is prepared for the winter and potential outages that might occur during this time. The installation and initialization of our intellirupter system is an advancement in reducing outages for our customers and increasing our reliability. In the coming years, we will continue to advance and grow this system, making our grid more resilient and dependable for our customers.

As our broadband system continues to grow and expand its installation know that our goal is to make high speed broadband available to 100% of our customers. Our talented and diligent staff works each day to expand and enhance the system so that what we provide far exceeds the competition. Whether it be high-speed symmetrical gigabit internet service or exceptional customer service, we will not be outperformed in meeting the needs of our customers and community.

Our prayers this winter are that you can enjoy time with your family. As winter gives way to spring, make building relationships and family key to all your endeavors. May each day bring new enjoyment to what you do.

**“You’ll never get bored when you try something new. There’s really no limit to what you can do.” – Dr. Suess**

Jeffrey R. Dykes,  
Chief Executive Officer



## PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE OUTAGES

1.

Report an outage quickly and easily by using SmartHub on your smartphone, computer or tablet. If you don't have access to SmartHub, consider downloading it now to be prepared.

2.

Customers can always call 423-952-5000 to report outages in person.

3.

Check the outage map at [www.brightridge.com](http://www.brightridge.com). Outage maps are interactive, allowing customers to see which areas are experiencing outages due to an emergency, maintenance, or weather-related event.

4.

Always keep your contact information updated! Updated contact information makes it easier to report an outage and stay informed. Call 423-952-5000 to update your phone number or email.



## Attaching Items to Poles is Dangerous and Illegal

Leaf Removal Services. We'll Hang Your Christmas Lights! Garage Sales. Electric or Plumbing Work. American, State or Team Flags. Security Cameras. Wildlife Feeders. Basketball Hoops.

BrightRidge sees many of these signs and attachments on its poles year around, many showing up daily. And although a utility pole may seem like a great place to hang a sign, flag, feeders, hoops or advertisements, attaching anything to a utility pole can be dangerous and is prohibited.

Tennessee law states that "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 or as defined in § 65-4-101, unless legally authorized to do so." (T.C.A§ 2-19-144) This includes the fasteners used to attach items to the pole such as nails, staples, screws, metal bands, zip ties and other such materials.

BrightRidge will remove all of these items from electric poles to ensure safety for our line crews. So please save your signs, attachments or advertising for another location and help keep our poles clear to ensure our line crews have safe access to maintain our electric system.



## NOTICE TO ELECTRIC SYSTEM CUSTOMERS OF INVESTMENT IN COMMERCIAL BROADBAND

BrightRidge requested authorization from its regulator, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), to invest electric system revenues in its commercial broadband division. This Notice is being provided to BrightRidge's customers pursuant to TVA's regulatory transparency requirements.

In 2018 BrightRidge filed an application with TVA requesting authorization to invest its electric system revenues in its broadband division. Specifically, BrightRidge's broadband division, has borrowed \$35 million approved in 2018, \$47 million in approved in 2021 and \$8 million in 2023 from the electric system revenues to finance the deployment of broadband equipment for its commercial broadband business in its service territory.

For 2024, BrightRidge's broadband division is borrowing an additional \$15.5 million from the electric division. Per TVA requirements and conditions of TVA's authorization, BrightRidge's broadband division, is required to repay BrightRidge's electric division for the electric funds being loaned to it for commercial broadband purposes. It is estimated that the total investment for both electric and commercial broadband will not have rate impacts associated with the investment.

Any questions regarding this broadband investment should be directed to BrightRidge's Public Relations & Governmental Affairs Director at Post Office Box 1636, Johnson City, Tennessee 37605-1636, or by email at [publicrecords@brightridge.com](mailto:publicrecords@brightridge.com) or by phone at 423-952-5000.

## TVA EnergyRight – Home Energy Programs & Rebates

In our last newsletter, we shared highlights of the new Residential Rebates launched by TVA on October 1, 2023. For this edition, we're going to highlight specifics for our residential customers.

- **DIY Home Energy Assessment** – Start with evaluating your home with this simple assessment to check your homes' energy efficiency. Participation is easy and once submitted, a Home Energy Report will be emailed and mailed to you so you can know where to start.
- **Home Energy Rebates** – Once you know what improvements are needed, you might be eligible for rebates to help with the cost of upgrades or repairs. Rebates are offered for air sealing, attic and wall insulation, duct systems, water heaters, refrigerators, heating and cooling, windows and doors, and appliances/electronics. Please note, to qualify for rebates for all energy efficiency projects, you must use a QCN member.
- **Quality Contractor Network (QCN)** – TVA provides access to trustworthy, licensed, and insured contractors trained to meet their quality guidelines. This also creates job leads for our local contractors.
- **Ask an Advisor** – This program connects you to TVA's home energy experts who can answer questions and give helpful advice and recommendations by phone or email. These experts can answer everything from "How do I read my energy bill?" to "Will an ENERGY STAR® certified appliance help me save money?"
- **Quick Quote** – There's a lot to consider when starting a home energy upgrade project: cost, schedule, contractor reputation and availability, and more. With Quick Quote, you have a direct line to TVA experts who can provide an initial project consultation, either in person or virtually, then source project quotes from local QCN members. After that, all you need to do is select a QCN based upon your preferences.
- **Off-Bill Financing** – TVA has partnered with Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance to offer affordable financing for money-saving upgrades. You can apply online and receive approval within minutes. There is no downpayment, fixed interest rates, up to 10-year lengths, no prepayment penalties, and financing ranges from \$2,500 - \$20,000. Please note to qualify for financing for all energy efficiency purchases, you must use a QCN member.
- **EnergyRight Marketplace** – Choosing the right energy efficient products is even easier now with Marketplace. It's a one-stop shop for ratings and reviews, price comparisons and financing options on energy efficient products, like appliances, electronics, smart home technologies, and more. This can help you narrow down your options in one place instead of scanning and scrolling through countless manufacturer or big-box retailer sites.

Learn more about these rebates and programs by visiting [EnergyRight.com](https://EnergyRight.com)



### 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.

# BrightRidge Broadband Updates

In January 2023, BrightRidge celebrated adding our 10,000th Broadband customer. We have now connected more than 14,000 households/businesses 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, and low costs.

## Simple without Strings attached.

We took a simple approach for our Broadband product offerings: 1) Provide the fastest Internet speeds in the country 2) Design the network to be resilient and reliable. 3) Provide local personnel to install and support your services. 4) Price the products at very competitive rates. 5) Avoid the bait-and-switch promos and residential contracts used by the competitors. 6) Provide zero-cost in-home installations. 7) Provide local Customer Service and Technical Support staff to be able to respond promptly to your needs.

In addition, we haven't increased our Broadband rates since launching the service in 2019. How often have the other providers raised your rates or forced you to call back to get a temporary promo discount?

If you are a current BrightRidge Broadband customer, you already know that we have the fastest, most reliable, and best supported Broadband service in the region. We were excited to be selected as the Johnson City Press "2023 Best Internet Provider" for the second year straight!

We are committed to maintaining our Fiber Broadband services as one of the best available in the country and one of the few with 10Gig speeds. Our 10Gig product is also priced the lowest of any offered in the country.

Demand for our products continues to be tremendous as both households and businesses realize that we have raised the bar for the local competitors. Don't settle for mediocre internet service and poor support, when you can get the best with our local staff supporting you during the activation and afterward. Your family deserves the best, so why not call and switch today?

## Status of broadband deployment Check availability for your address at [www.mybightridge.com](http://www.mybightridge.com)

BrightRidge 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.

The BrightRidge board approved additional investments for our current budget (FY24) which extends Broadband to the communities of Colonial Heights, Cherokee Rd (southwest JC), 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 I26 from Boones Creek Rd eastward.

Based on our original plans we would have extended fiber broadband to 5,300 homes and businesses during the current fiscal year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). With the acceleration and add-ons to our project, we will now add that opportunity for approximately 17,000 customers to subscribe to our nation-leading Broadband services.

We applied for \$6.68 million in TN-ECD grant funding to match our \$2.86 million investment to serve those homes identified as unserved (lacking 25Mb/3Mb internet) with Broadband access. This includes 2,067 households in the rural areas of Washington County and 200 homes in Greene County. The ECD is expected to announce award recipients this month (January 2024). If our application is approved, we also plan to extend services to 3,800 additional homes along those routes in the months following the broadband grant completion.

## Understanding the 5G (5th Generation cellular technology) hype used in many advertisements.

Should you consider 5G home Internet service from the cell provider instead of a wireline fiber service?

The cell providers use the term 5G very loosely, but in reality, the current implementation deployed in our area is more of an enhancement of the previous 4G technology and doesn't get close to the bandwidth previously promised of 5G. Feedback from consumers indicates that they only realize a bandwidth gain of approximately 20% more than before.

To gain the promised benefits of 5G, the provider would need to deploy high-frequency millimeter wave spectrum and quadruple the number of cell towers that currently exist. The mmWave signals can't travel for more than a few thousand feet nor do they easily penetrate homes nor other objects.

Do your research and you'll find that many customers report poor satisfaction with the cellular "5G home internet" services. One user stated, "Service was extremely intermittent, frequently testing as low as 20Mb/5Mb". Availability is also limited geographically, typically by proximity to the closest cell tower, and subject to obstructions between the tower and home.

**BrightRidge<sup>®</sup>**  
Broadband

# Consider Cutting The Cord

Thinking about switching to video streaming services? Scan the QR code with your mobile device to learn more about the benefits of switching and the options available.

SCAN HERE