

Tennessee CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2022 | CUSTOMER FOCUSED ⚡ COMMUNITY DRIVEN

Veterans' Museum Celebrates 30 Years

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PHOTO BY
DORIS
MONTGOMERY

Ice covers trees and power lines on Highway 19. It's certainly time to welcome spring.





VETERANS' MUSEUM

Celebrates 30 Years of Its Founding

Start with the remnants of a World War II Army air base on the edge of Halls. Add a Tennessee 1986 Homecoming initiative and an abundance of memorabilia. Stir in hours and hours of volunteer work.

The result is today's Veterans' Museum on the site of the former Dyersburg Army Air Base, a World War II training facility from 1942-1945. Home of the 346th Bomb Group, it was the last, largest, inland stateside training base east of the Mississippi for the B-17 crews before going overseas.

Thirty years ago, in spring 1992, high school teacher Pat Higdon and accountant Martha Crites cofounded the Dyersburg Army Air Base Memorial

Association with the purpose of restoring and preserving portions of the air base and promoting it as an integral part of U.S. history.

The effort took root during Tennessee Homecoming '86 when towns across the state celebrated their history. Higdon, who was the Homecoming '86 coordinator for Halls, focused on a reunion of air base veterans—the first since the base closed in 1945.

World War II aircraft were brought in to welcome the veterans; people brought memorabilia and swapped stories.

Upcoming events

- Spring Ladies Luncheon, noon, April 20. Tickets are \$25.
- Golf Tournament, noon, May 6. Call the museum at 731-836-7400 to set up a four-person team or to sponsor a hole.
- Music Fest, May 14. Food trucks, games and kids' pedal planes, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Joe Eskridge and friends will host a live music concert from 1-3 p.m.



Pat and Sonny Higdon's home in Halls housed soldiers on the second floor during World War II. Years later, the second floor displayed memorabilia until the Veterans' Museum was built. A guard house, which used to sit behind the Higdon's home, is now at the museum.

100-mile radius of Halls.”

Higdon and her husband, Sonny, turned the second floor of their 1898 two-story home into a museum. During the war, two soldiers and their wives lived on the second floor. Two base guard houses were still on the property when the Higdon's bought the house in 1975.

In 1992, Higdon and Crites cofounded the association. Higdon was president, Crites was treasurer and Roger Charest was vice president.

The memorabilia kept coming in, she said. “Finally, with my car full, my house full, my schoolroom full and my husband's garage full, we moved some of the memorabilia to the 600-square-foot airport office that had been the office for Huey Brothers Lumber Co.”

The museum and office were in her home until 1997 when the museum opened on the air base. Donations, volunteer work and some grant money funded the effort. It was open on Saturdays and Sundays; the admission fee was a donation.

Since then, the museum has grown several times; its budget has gone from \$2,000 to \$100,000 a year. It honors veterans of all wars. It has hosted many events, including vintage air shows, Rosie the Riveter celebrations, car shows, luncheons and special events.

The next step, said Higdon, is to build Stars and Stripes Village, a venue geared toward patriotism. The master plan is finished, she said. At 81, Higdon hopes another volunteer will step forward.

Her list of people and organizations to thank is long, including the museum boards and docents; the Vox Prop Auxiliary and Reserve; Halls High School students and faculty; and the many people who volunteered, gave money and sent memorabilia.

The museum continues to grow, Higdon said. “The memorabilia keeps coming in.” ■

The Veterans' Museum
Open 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday to Friday
2-5 p.m. Sat. and Sun.
Admission: \$5, \$2 for
veterans and children



The Dyersburg Army Air Base operated from 1942 to 1945.



Members of the museum's first board of directors in 1997 were, from left, seated, Dot Craddock, Ray Nolen, Shirley Roberts, Bob Little and Louis Wheatley; standing, Pat Higdon, Jean Spence, Tim Bivens and honorary members Sonny Higdon, Richard Charest and Billy Bivens.



Dyersburg Army Air Base veterans, on right, Bob Little, Tony Troiano and Joe Cepparulo were on hand for unveiling of the base's historical marker on U.S. 51 North.



The Veterans' Museum is filled with memorabilia from several wars, including a Chevrolet staff car from World War II.

More from Ripley Power and Light, pages 20-21

'It could have been worse.'

The ice certainly was beautiful. It glistened on tree branches in Lauderdale County, West Tennessee and a wide swath of the United States up to the East Coast.

Beauty was not a priority, though, for customers who lost electric power when the tree branches burdened with ice started falling on power lines.

In Ripley Power and Light's service territory, the calls and text messages to its Outage Management System started coming in about 3 p.m. Thursday, February 3, said Chris Mooney, the utility's engineer. Although Ripley Power and Light offices were closed that day because of treacherous roads, line crews were already at work, anticipating the weather would cause power outages, he said.

Crews spent the rest of the evening restoring power in scattered areas across Ripley's service territory. Several outages occurred the next morning, too. Calls and texts from customers who had updated phone numbers in the Outage Management System allowed the system to immediately inform line crews where they were needed.

"We restored power quickly to most customers," Mooney said. "Some customers had to wait longer if they had to call an electrician first to repair a meter or meter base, such as attaching it back on their home."

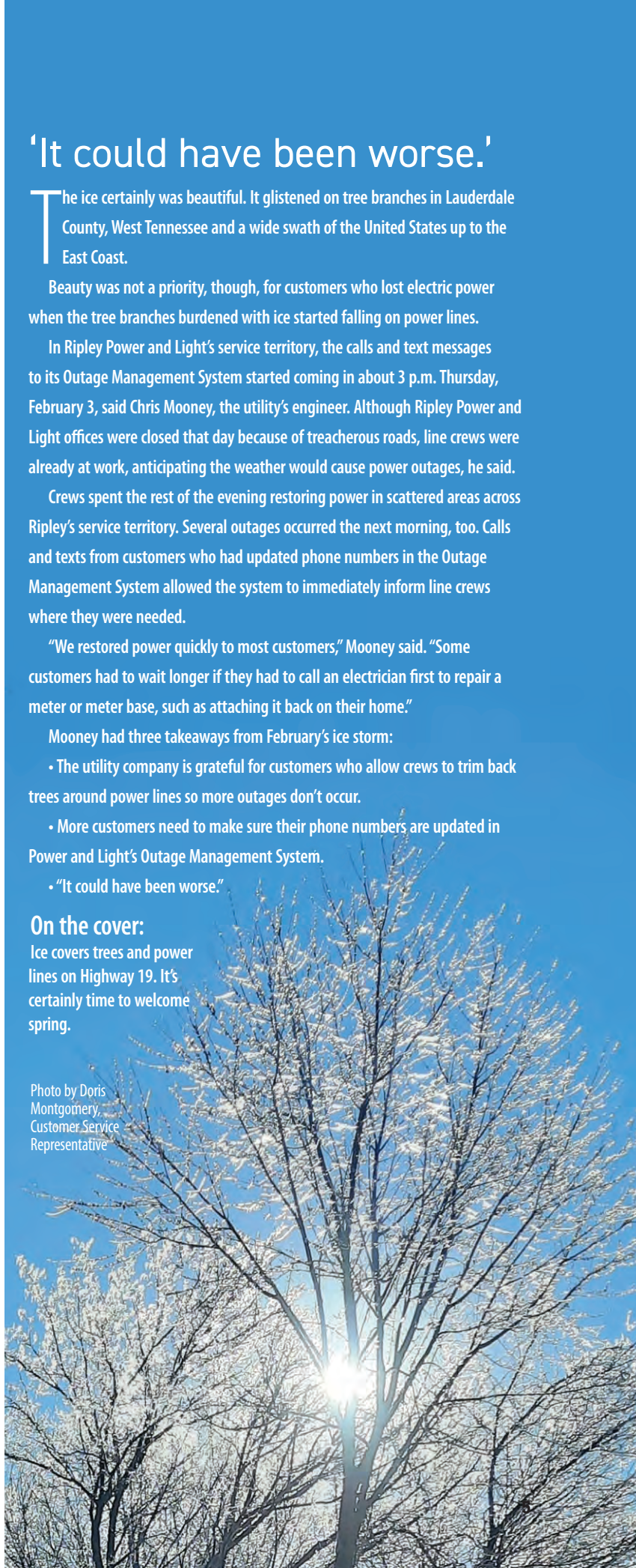
Mooney had three takeaways from February's ice storm:

- The utility company is grateful for customers who allow crews to trim back trees around power lines so more outages don't occur.
- More customers need to make sure their phone numbers are updated in Power and Light's Outage Management System.
- "It could have been worse."

On the cover:

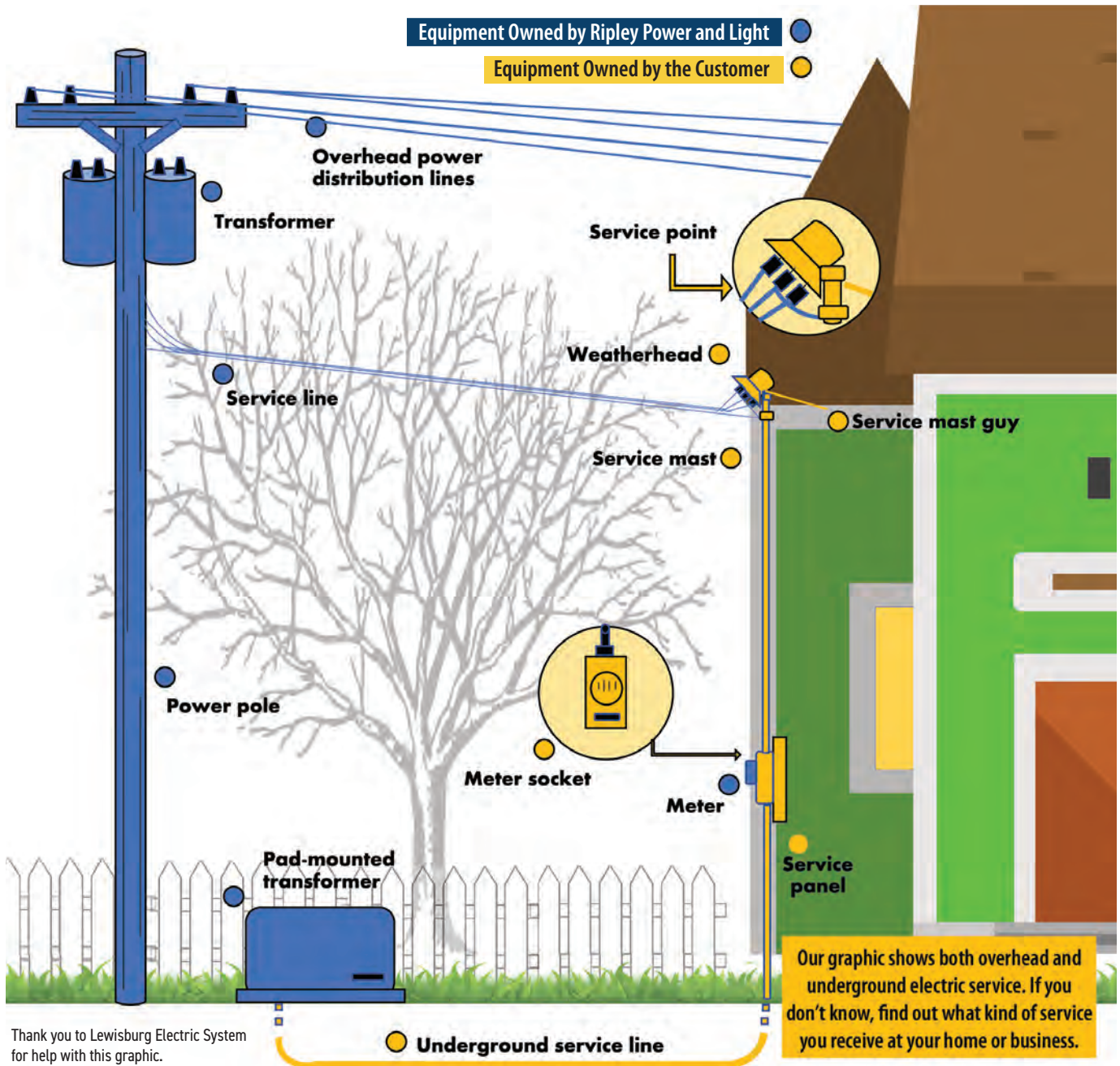
Ice covers trees and power lines on Highway 19. It's certainly time to welcome spring.

Photo by Doris Montgomery, Customer Service Representative



What's Yours? What's Ours?

Much of the equipment that provides electricity to your home or business is owned by Ripley Power and Light Company. However, you, the customer, are responsible for equipment once it reaches your home or business. This graphic depicts equipment owned by Ripley Power (in blue) and customers (in gold). If an event causes damage to any equipment owned by Ripley Power, we are responsible for repairs. If an event causes damage to any customer-owned equipment, the customer is responsible for repairs. Customers should hire a licensed electrician when making repairs to customer-owned equipment. This happened recently when the February 3 ice storm damaged some meters; before Ripley Power and Light could restore power to the home, the customer had to call an electrician to repair the meter.



Thank you to Lewisburg Electric System for help with this graphic.

Interesting Facts About Your Electric Service

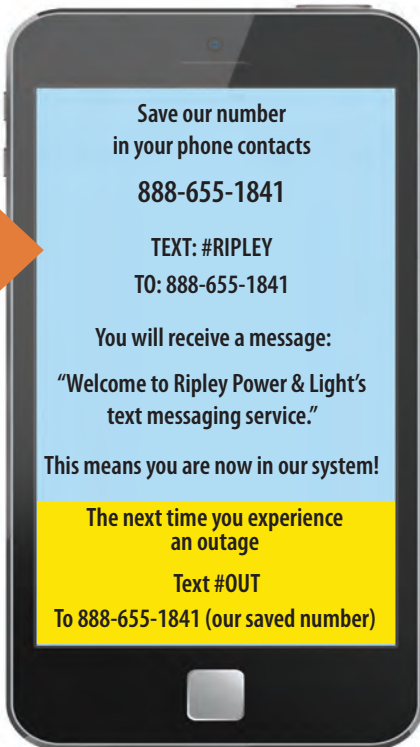
Waiting For Your Monthly Electric Bill?

Ripley Power and Light meters are read the first day of each month. Bills are ready around the fifth day of the month and then mailed.

Customers who sign up for e-statements get their bill in an email that day. To sign up for e-statements, go to the "My Account" section at ripleypower.com.

Text to report an outage

Update your cellphone number at www.ripleypower.com or call 731-635-2323. This system only works with a cellphone.



We will know where you are and begin efforts to locate the cause of the outage and restore power.

A Note for New Prepay Customers

Prepay customers receive a new account number each time they move to a new location. The customer receives the new log-in information from a customer service representative the day of sign-up for new service.

To log in to your new account, download the myusage app or go to myusage.com. It may take 24 to 48 hours to access your new account.

More information about the Prepay Program is also available at ripleypower.com under "Prepay My Bill."

Pay Your Bill Any Time Day or Night

Ripley Power and Light offers 24-hour secure bill payment through kiosks located in the drive-thru lanes at both our Ripley and Halls offices.

The kiosks can be used by monthly billing customers or prepaid customers. They accept several types of credit cards, as well as cash.

Cash must be in even amounts, such as \$1, \$5 or \$20; the kiosk does not give change. Any extra money is applied to your account.

Monthly billing customers can scan the barcode on the *back* of their bill or enter the account number to access their account. Be sure to include the hyphen in the account number; for example, 123456-123456.

Prepaid customers receive a customized key tag to swipe to access the account or enter the account number. Again, be sure to include the hyphen.

Kiosks also accept payments for other companies. Businesses interested in using the kiosks can contact Mike Allmand at 731-635-2323 or mallmand@ripleypower.com.



Solar Power for Your Home?

Residential customers interested in getting their electricity from solar power should visit TVA's website and enroll in the Green Connect program. Find it at tvgreenconnect.com.



RIPLEY POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

www.ripleypower.com

Ripley Office

731-635-2323

150 S. Main St. • Ripley

Halls Office

731-836-7595

409 S. Church St. • Halls

Office Hours

We are open 47 hours each week to serve you better!

7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday-Thursday

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday

You can pay your bill ...

- at www.ripleypower.com
- through bank draft
- at our Ripley & Halls offices
- in the office night deposit boxes
- at the kiosks at our offices.

If you have not been receiving your bills, call our office immediately so we can verify your mailing address.

Ripley Power and Light offices will be closed ...

April 15 for Good Friday

**Monday, May 30,
for Memorial Day**

**Monday, July 4, for
Independence Day**

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FRANKLIN, TN
PERMIT No. 351

TN-200

Tripped Breakers

What to do when it happens

Sometimes when a prepaid customer is disconnected, the main breaker in the customer's home trips, and the home loses electricity.

Customers need to check their electric panels before calling Ripley Power and Light because policy prohibits service technicians from going into homes to check it.

Here's what to do:

- Go to your electric panel. It is a tan or gray metal box that is usually on a wall in your basement, garage or utility closet.
- Make sure you are wearing rubber-soled shoes. Only bring insulated tools with you. Do not stand in water or on a wet surface.
- Inside your electric panel, you will find rows of switches that should be labeled by the

Main Circuit Breaker



This electric panel has the main circuit breaker at the top. Below that are circuit breakers controlling various parts of the home and major appliances.

part of your home each controls.

- Find the main circuit breaker. Make sure it is in the "on" position.
- Look for other circuit breakers that may have tripped. If one is flipped in the opposite direction from the other switches, flip it back in place.
- If this doesn't solve your problem, call a licensed electrician. ■