

Tennessee CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2024 CUSTOMER FOCUSED ⚡ COMMUNITY DRIVEN

Employees Provide Essential Services

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Ripley Power and Light lineworkers work on Main Street. PHOTO COURTESY OF RIPLEY POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY



Employees Provide Essential Service



ABOVE: ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
From left, Gina Choat, billing; Vanessa Williams, billing coordinator; Jenny Skinner, Ripley office manager and accountant, Tracy Etheridge, executive administrative assistant; and Valerie Turnbow, accountant.



Cameron Brasfield, systems administrator, left, and Chris Mooney, engineer.



PURCHASING
Erin Smith



RIPLEY CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES
From left, back row, Jessica Lee, Stacy Nolen, Rachel Daniels. Front row, Doris Montgomery.

Though their roles vary, the employees at Ripley Power and Light Company total hundreds of years of experience in serving customers.



Mike Allmand
President and CEO

From the customer service representatives in the front office and the lineworkers and tree trimming crew members on the street to the many other employees working in offices and the warehouse, they are all important.

“Most of our employees make a career out of working here because they value serving our customers and know the importance of providing reliable electric service to our customers,” said Mike Allmand, Ripley Power and Light President and CEO. “I speak for the Board of Directors and myself when I say that we appreciate their dedication and hard work.”

Though Employee Appreciation Day was officially celebrated March 1 this year, Allmand added, “we celebrate the work they do every day.”

Lineworker Appreciation Day

Lineworkers across the country receive special recognition on Lineworker Appreciation Day, which is April 18. The day acknowledges the risks they face in their jobs and the important work they do to keep the lights on around the clock.

It’s a job that requires several years of training. A future lineworker at Ripley Power and Light, for example, usually starts at the utility as a groundsman or apprentice lineworker. The employee then works through four textbook units of self study and advances through the work by taking online tests.

The next phase is five hands-on labs, followed by a final exam. The training is coordinated through the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association. ■



LINEWORKERS

From left, front row, Ashton Land, Scott Ozment, Joey Beavers, Caleb Wright and Chris Conrad; back row, Line Superintendent Johnathan Kissell, Jerry Cunningham, Matthew Bell, Ty Buckner, Ronnie Hunter and Chris Sanders.



TREE TRIMMING

From left, Dallas Midkiff, tree trimming crew; David Deloach, tree trimming crew/lineworker; and Bill Newman, tree trimming crew/lineworker.



HALLS OFFICE

Kami Wright, Halls office manager, left, and Toni Gay, customer service representative



**METER DEPARTMENT
METER TECHNICIANS**

Greg Thurmond, left, and David Newman

Vanessa Williams Retires After 43 Years

Vanessa Williams was looking for a job that offered a future when she first started working at Ripley Power and Light Company in November 1980.

As she readies for her retirement April 5, she looks back on a job that became her career.

“I’ve been here 43 years,” she said. “I’ve become friends with many of our customers. I consider my co-workers my family.”

As a recent Halls High School graduate, Williams started

as a customer service representative in Ripley Power and Light’s Halls office. Five years later, she moved to the Ripley office. She’s retiring as billing coordinator.

Being involved with billing has been part of her job since day one.

It’s one of many functions at the utility that has changed through the years.

When she started, meter readers walked from house to house to read meters and write the new readings in a logbook. At the utility, Williams then subtracted the previous month’s

reading from the present read to know how many kilowatts of electricity a customer used that month and how much to bill.

A big change in billing came when meter readers used handheld devices to key in the customer’s meter read. Williams would download the information in the office into a program that posted the read into customer accounts. These days, with automated meter reading, the system reads all the customer meters at midnight on the first day of the month to determine how much to bill.

“I’ve seen the billing process progress into what it is now,” Williams said. “Being involved in the changes in billing has been challenging, but it was also one of the favorite parts of my job.”

“On behalf of the entire Ripley Power and Light Company family, I want to express our heartfelt appreciation for Vanessa’s outstanding dedication and contributions to our organization over the past 43 years,” said Mike Allmand, President and CEO.

“Vanessa was one of the first people I had the privilege of

hiring when I assumed the role of president in 1980. From the very beginning, it was evident that she possessed a unique combination of expertise, dedication and resilience that set her apart. Over the years, Vanessa has shouldered one of the most important, complex and challenging roles at Power and Light with unparalleled skill and precision.”

“To say that Vanessa is an expert in her field would be an understatement,” Allmand said. “Her role in accurately billing thousands of customers over the span of 43 years demands an incredible attention to detail, and Vanessa has consistently exceeded our expectations in this regard.”

There’s much more to Williams’ job, though, than billing. She handles heat pump financing and leasing security lights on customer bills. She sets up customers in the pre-pay program. When customers have questions about their energy use or bills, they often talk to her.

She also processes daily work orders for the service crews when they need to run a new service, install a security light, repair a streetlight and do other jobs. She’s in charge of updating rates on the website.

Williams’ daughter, Paige, and her daughter’s husband, Paul, have two children, Liam, 5, and Spencer, 6 months. Besides seeing her grandchildren more, Williams plans to sleep late and have more time to vacation at the beach.

She’ll be 63 years old April 4. Being able to retire then “is a blessing,” she said. “But I will miss my customers and my co-workers.”

“It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to one of our co-workers and friends, who has been an integral part of the Ripley Power and Light Company family since 1980,” Allmand said.

“Beyond her professional achievements, Vanessa has been a true friend. It is always difficult to see valued members of our RPL family leave, but it brings us immense joy to see dedicated friends like Vanessa embark on a well-deserved journey of rest and enjoyment in life.

“It has been an absolute privilege to work alongside Vanessa for the past 43 years, and her impact on our organization will be felt for years to come. We extend our warmest wishes for a retirement filled with joy, relaxation and new adventures.” ■



Williams at her computer in 1999.

A HEAT PUMP KEEPS YOU WARM IN THE WINTER AND COOL IN THE SUMMER

The most economical way to heat and cool your home in West Tennessee's climate is with an energy-efficient, electric heat pump.

Modern air-source heat pumps can reduce your electricity use by 50% compared to furnaces and baseboard heaters, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Tennessee Valley Authority reports the operating costs for a standard heat pump are 53% less than natural gas or propane, and air-conditioning costs with a heat pump are similar to costs with other central air conditioning systems.

That translates into hundreds of dollars in savings on your utility bills each year.

HOW DOES A HEAT PUMP WORK?

The most common type of heat pump is an air-source heat pump, which transfers heat between your home and the outside air.

In cold weather, a heat pump takes heat from the air outside your home and circulates it inside your home.

The process reverses in the summer, as it takes the hot air from inside your home and pumps it outside, while circulating the cooled, dehumidified air in your home.



A heat pump's performance is rated by its Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio. The higher the SEER, the higher the efficiency of the heat pump and the lower the cost to operate it.

The higher the efficiency of your pump, the more you will pay for the unit on the front end, but the less expensive it will be to operate. You will realize the savings each month on your electric bill.

BUYING A HEAT PUMP

Ripley Power and Light offers low-interest financing for your heat pump purchase. You can pay for your heat pump on your monthly utility bill with no money down, up to 10 years to repay and no prepayment penalty.

To be eligible for the financing, you must buy your heat pump through a member of Ripley Power and Light's Quality Contractor Network. This ensures you get the correct-sized heat pump for your home's heating and cooling needs, and it will be installed correctly.

Members of Ripley's network are Quality Service Heating and Air in Ripley and Windle Heating and Air Conditioning in Dyersburg.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

To learn more about financing a heat pump, call 731-635-2323, or visit ripleypower.com to apply online. Find out more about heat pumps at energy.gov and tva.com. ■



Power and Light Supports Communities With In-Lieu-of-Tax Payments

Ripley Power and Light makes annual in-lieu-of-tax payments to help support the communities it serves.

The amounts are determined by a formula, which is audited by Tennessee Valley Authority and Ripley Power and Light. The funds come from operating revenues, which are received from the sale of electricity to customers.

"The money we pay is based on the net plant value we have in each of the communities we serve," said Mike Allmand, President and CEO of Ripley Power and Light. "The net plant value includes lines, poles and other equipment. It's our contribution because we don't pay taxes, and we want to pay our part." ■

2023 In Lieu of Tax Payments

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| City of Ripley: | \$385,496.69 |
| Town of Halls: | \$20,105.72 |
| Town of Gates: | \$3,079.58 |
| Town of Henning: | \$5,343.41 |
| Lauderdale County: | \$120,200.92 |
| Total Funds Distributed: | \$534,226.32 |



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 our new mobile app.
 - Through bank draft.
- At our Ripley & Halls offices.
- In 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 are closed:

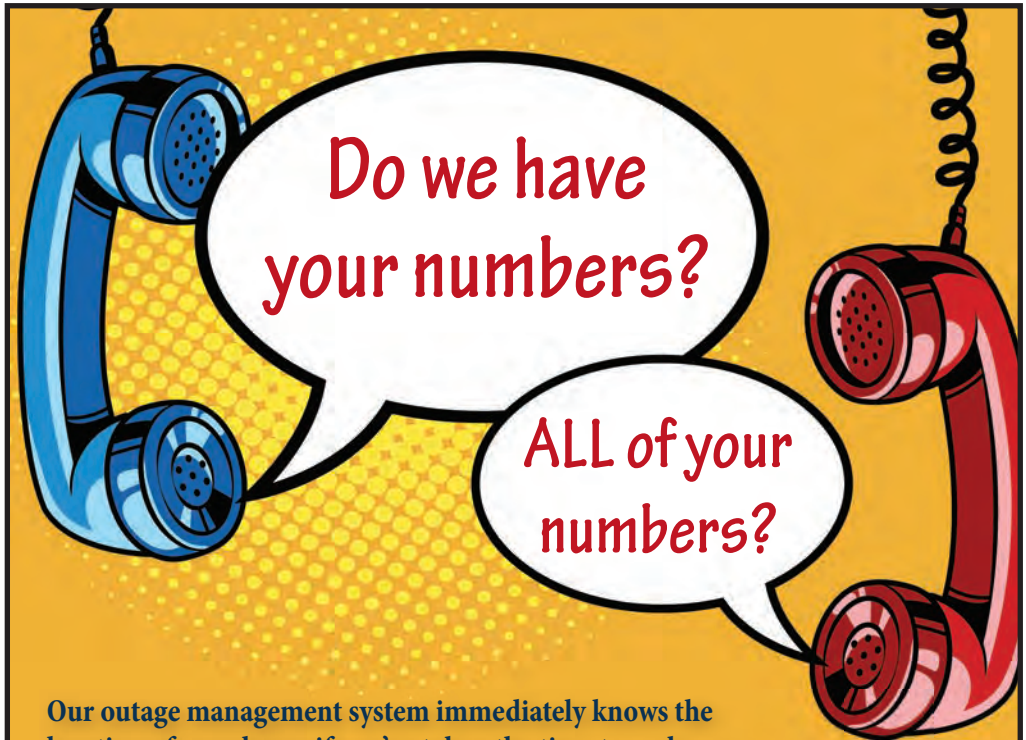
March 29
for Good Friday

Monday, May 27,
for Memorial Day



TN-200

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Our outage management system immediately knows the location of your home if you've taken the time to make sure we have everyone's phone numbers.

So, it doesn't matter if the call comes from the house phone, grandma's cellphone or junior's, we'll know the location of the outage. Our efforts to locate the cause of the outage and restore your power can begin immediately.

1) Update all phone numbers in your household—landlines and cellphones. Visit ripleypower.com under the 'Report an Outage' tab or call 731-635-2323.

2) Save our number in your cellphone: 888-655-1841. To opt in, text #RIPLEY to 888-655-1841. You will receive the message, "Welcome to Ripley Power and Light's text msg service ..."

HAVE AN OUTAGE?

The next time you have an outage, text #OUT to 888-655-1841.

Ripley Power and Light's Outage Management system will know your location, and we'll immediately begin our efforts to locate the cause of the outage and restore your power.