

# Tennessee CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2023 | CUSTOMER FOCUSED ⚡ COMMUNITY DRIVEN

## Electricity: It's All About Safety

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CAMERON  
BRASFIELD

Students watch a robotic dog at the recent career expo for West Tennessee eighth graders in Ripley.



# Electricity: It's All About Safety

Every morning as they are about to begin work, the line crews at Ripley Power and Light pause to go over a safety checklist, a reminder that working around electricity can be dangerous.

They know how deadly electricity can be and the importance of safe workplace practices.

With a borrowed safety demonstration model on a flatbed trailer, Ripley Power and Light recently took that message to two groups of first responders and then to eighth graders participating in the Pathways2Possibilities Career Expo.

Under the direction of Meter Department Supervisor David Newman, lineworkers went through various scenarios to show their audience the deadly power of electricity. Because the lines were energized, the lineworkers wore the necessary



**David Newman, Meter Department Supervisor**

protective equipment and communicated with one another as if they were at a live scene.

Jaws dropped when spectators saw a blue arc of electricity caused by an aluminum ladder touching a live utility line. It happened again when a dummy was used to touch the handle of a car sitting on live electric wires after hitting an electric pole.

The “driver” inside was calling for help, and the responder didn’t think twice before trying to get the driver out of the car.

The lineworkers also demonstrated what happens when tree limbs touch a wire or when a shovel hits an underground electric wire.

Participating with David in the demonstration were lineworkers Scott Ozment, Chris Sanders, Chris Conrad and Ronnie Hunter.

The discussions with first responders were especially important, David said.

“First responders often arrive at an emergency scene before our crew. There have been times when people make impulsive decisions that could put them and others at risk.

“Electricity is invisible and produces no

sounds or smell,” David said. “We cannot rely on our senses or common sense to determine if the line is energized. The only safe assumption is to assume that all wires are energized with primary current. The line is not considered safe until grounds have been applied.”

The safety demonstration equipment was built with funds from the Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association, Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and Tennessee Job Training and Safety Department.

The trailer is equipped with a fully functioning model of a distribution power system, including lines, poles, conductors and transformers, which convert the voltage to the 7,620 volts that Ripley Power and Light uses on its primary lines throughout its system.

Tennessee electric utilities can borrow the demonstration trailer for safety events.



## Ripley Power and Light Earns National Safety Award

Once again, Ripley Power and Light Co. has been recognized for making safety a top priority.

The utility earned the American Public Power Association’s Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2022.

“Safety needs to be the first thing on every utility employee’s mind as they go about their work,” said Jim Boyd, chair of APPA’s Safety Committee. “The utilities honored by APPA for excellence in this area should be proud of the culture they have instilled in serving their communities.”

Nearly 300 utilities from across the country entered the annual Safety Awards. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker hours. Utilities are then ranked based on incident-free records and the overall state of their safety programs and culture during 2022.

“Ripley Power and Light cares deeply about sending our employees home to their families safely every single day,” said Mike Allmand, president and CEO. “We are proud to be honored for all the work that goes into standing behind this commitment.” ■



**Mike Allmand, President and CEO Ripley Power and Light**



**Lineworker Chris Sanders demonstrates what happens when the dummy touches the door handle of a car sitting on energized electric utility lines.**

“People often assume that electric power isn’t dangerous because it looks so tame,” David said. “But it can cause bad injuries and even death. Electricity burns you from the inside out, so people often don’t know the full extent of their injuries until later.”

As for Power and Light’s lineworkers, however, “we know the power we’re dealing with.”

### **Remember:**

- Keep ladders, kites, antennas and other equipment away from power lines.
- Stay clear of any power lines that have fallen to the ground.
- Stay in your car if it comes in contact with downed power lines. If it’s unsafe to stay in the vehicle, jump clear of the lines with both feet touching the ground at the same time.
- Don’t use electric appliances or tools if you are standing in water.
- Always call 811 to get the location of underground lines before you dig. ■



**A bright blue arc jumps from an aluminum ladder when it touches an energized electric line. Chris Sanders demonstrated the dangers of being around live electricity during the Career Expo for Eighth Graders. For more information about the expo and more Ripley Power and Light news, see pages 20-21.**

# Expo Introduces Career Possibilities

Some students watched in amazement; others were nervous or even a bit fearful as a robotic dog moved around the building. The students participated in the 2023 Pathways2Possibilities West Tennessee Eighth Grade Career Expo.

The robot, named Spot, is a replica of a robot that can be sent into many different environments—such as a coal mine, nuclear power plant or an area of downed power lines—to assess dangers, explained Erin Smith, who handles purchasing at Ripley Power and Light.

Spot, on loan from Tennessee Valley Authority, was one of several attractions Ripley Power and Light Company offered at its booth at the career expo.

The purpose of the annual expo is to introduce the eighth graders to possible careers after graduating high school.

“We want to spark their interest at an early age,” Erin said. “We want the students to know they have options after graduation.”

Businesses, health care organizations and other groups set up booths in a warehouse owned by Ripley Power and Light.

Thousands of eighth graders from across West Tennessee, who attended the two-day event in March, encountered interactive activities designed to promote awareness of the link between their education choices and their future employment.

Besides introducing Spot’s capabilities to the students, Ripley Power and Light offered safety demonstrations from a live line electric system on a flatbed trailer. Students were amazed at the power of electricity as they watched a blue electric arc created when an aluminum ladder touched an energized power line. (See story, page 4.)

Erin said another attraction borrowed from TVA was bicycles that generated power as the students pedaled. When an LED turned green, the bicycle rider generated enough power to charge a cellphone.

“Our employees did a great job helping with the booth,” she said. “It was a great experience for both sides.” ■



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Students watch a safety demonstration at the Ripley Power and Light booth at Pathways2Possibilities, a West Tennessee Eighth Grade Career Expo. Students generate enough electricity to power a cellphone as they pedal. Other students learn about careers in health care. Spot, the robotic dog, moves by remote control.





## At Your Service

Customer service representatives at Ripley Power and Light have years of experience helping consumers. Each day, they accept bill payments, answer questions about electric service, help customers sign up for PrePay accounts and other payment methods, suggest ways to lower electric consumption, help people navigate the website and welcome new customers to the utility service area. In other words, they are ready to help Ripley Power and Light customers with a solution to numerous needs. Pictured, from left, are Toni Gay, in the Halls office; and Gina Choat, Jessica Lee, Stacy Nolen and Doris Montgomery in the Ripley office.

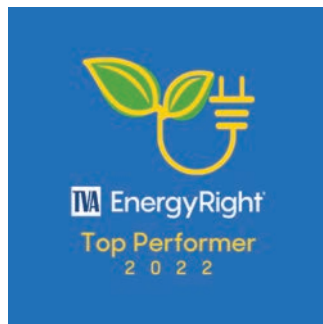
## Top Performer Award

The Tennessee Valley Authority named Ripley Power and Light a top performer in three different categories for its efforts to help its customers use energy wisely, as part of TVA's EnergyRight program.

Ripley Power and Light earned first-place recognition in "Total Energy Savings—Saved as a Percentage of Sales." The utility also earned third place in "Improved Energy Equity" and third place in "Total Energy Savings."

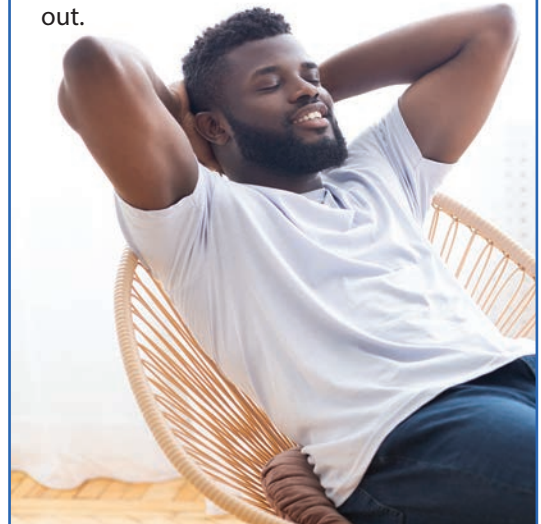
"We are proud to be recognized by TVA for our efforts to help our communities use energy wisely and improve the lives of our customers," said Ripley Power and Light President and CEO Mike Allmand. "The Top Performer awards demonstrate our value in striving for a healthier and more sustainable community."

"Ripley Power and Light's commitment to helping their customers is on full display with this award," said Cincy Herron, TVA vice president of TVA Energy Services and Programs. "We appreciate its partnership as we work to bring innovative energy programs to the residents and businesses in the Valley." ■



## Did You Know

Your air-conditioning system is the highest energy user in your home during hot weather. To lower your electricity use, raise the temperature on your unit as high as comfortable, such as 78 degrees. Use electric fans to keep the room cooler. Close your blinds or curtains to keep the hot sun out.





## RIPLEY POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

[www.ripleypower.com](http://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 better serve you!

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](http://www.ripleypower.com).
- Through the new mobile app.
  - Through bank draft.
- At our Ripley and 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:**

Tuesday, July 4,  
for Independence Day.  
Monday, September 4,  
for Labor Day.

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# Manage Your Account From a Smart Device

'In this tech-savvy world, I love it,' customer says about Ripley Power and Light's new mobile app

Stephanie Jackson, owner of Styles By Stephanie Beauty Salon in Ripley, loves managing her Ripley Power and Light account through the new mobile app.

The app allows Stephanie to check her balance, so there are no surprises in what she owes. She can make payments anytime from anywhere. It can be hard to run errands to pay bills during the day because her salon and the utility office are open at the same time—even though they are practically next door.

Stephanie installed the app a few months ago after she heard about it.

"The biggest thing is convenience," she said. "In this tech-savvy world, I love it. It is just very convenient for me as a business owner."



Stephanie Jackson manages her account with the new Ripley Power and Light mobile app.

The app is available on Google Play or the Apple app store, or scan the QR code below for quick access.

### Customer Portal

Online bill payments to Ripley Power and Light now go through the new customer portal. Customers can access the portal through the app or the link at [ripleypower.com](http://ripleypower.com).

The first time you access the customer portal, the welcome screen will ask you to create a username and password. You will also need your 12-digit account number, which is printed on the top left of your bill.

Then, follow the

easy instructions to create your account. You are now ready to pay your bill, review your statements and monitor your utility use.

"You can be assured that transactions through the customer portal adhere to the latest payment card industry data security standard," said Mike Allmand, president and CEO of Ripley Power and Light.

"Your information is secure and your identity protected." ■

### Download the Mobile App

Ripley Power and Light's app enables customers to manage their accounts from their smart device—anytime, anywhere. It is secure, easy to download and simple to use.



Mobile App