

## Space heater safety

**PLACE** space heaters on a flat, level surface, away from high-traffic areas.



**PLUG** a space heater directly into an outlet and avoid using an extension cord.

**NEVER LEAVE** space heaters unattended.

**ONLY USE** space heaters with the certification label of a nationally recognized testing lab.

**DON'T USE** a space heater if the plug is broken or the cord is frayed, worn or damaged.



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation

## 32% of home fires are caused by space heaters

More home fires occur during the cold winter months than at any other time of year. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, 32% of those fires are caused by space heaters.

Make sure to follow these important tips before you plug in a space heater:

- Place space heaters on a flat, level surface, away from high traffic areas.

- Never leave space heaters unattended.
- Only use space heaters with the certification label of a nationally recognized testing lab.
- Plug a space heater directly into an outlet and avoid using an extension cord.
- Don't use a space heater if the plug is broken, or the cord is frayed or damaged.

### Home heating tips to live by:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from a heating source.
- Have your heating system inspected annually.
- Keep vents clear of dust and debris.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

# 2020:

Look for the Ripley Power & Light 2020 calendar to arrive in your mailbox later in December!

### Ripley Power and Light offices will be closed...

- Tuesday & Wednesday, December 24 & 25, for the Christmas holiday.
- Wednesday, January 1, for New Year's Day.
- Monday, January 20, for Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.
- Monday, February 17, for President's Day.



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### Office Hours & Locations

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 utility bill at ...

- 150 S. Main St. in Ripley
- 409 S. Church St. in Halls

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

# Ripley

**POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY** Winter 2019

## Residents spread joy all year with their talents

Ripley and surrounding communities are blessed with talented people who like to share their work with others. Residents like Ronnie Blakely, who bakes sweets; Rhonda Morrow-McClodden, who plans events; and Alisa Chaney, who makes crafts; add a flair to life in Lauderdale County with their hobbies and careers. They bring happiness to people with the product of their work.

### Candy Maker: Sharing sweets throughout the community

Ronnie Blakely likes to bake sweets and share them with as many people as he can.

In addition to mainstays like Rice Krispies treats, he makes a variety of fudge, including an award-winning maple nut. He then delivers them to grateful candy-lovers around Ripley.

"I enjoy it, and I enjoy seeing the happiness in their eyes," Blakely said. "I enjoy seeing the joy that people get out of eating that."

He brings fudge to Ripley Power and Light's office on South Main Street for the employees, who are grateful for the delicious treats. He also delivers to employees at the courthouse, churches and businesses around town.

Blakely, 64, started baking after spending 11 years in the U.S. Army as a cook. It's a hobby he squeezes in between his full-time job at the justice center and part-time jobs at two nursing homes.

What makes his concoctions special is the goodies he adds to them. He'll take a traditional recipe and add extra candy or nuts. "I take candy and make candy," he said.

Some of it he sells – a four-pound bag of fudge goes for \$30. A lot of it,

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Alisa Chaney works on a Christmas decoration. Story on next page.



Ronnie Blakely, left, delivers some homemade sweets. Rhonda Morrow-McClodden turns spaces into festive events, above. Story on next page.

# Residents spread joy all year

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however, he gives away; and, fortunately for sweet tooths throughout Ripley, he doesn't plan to stop.

"As long as I have breath in my body, I want to keep doing this for people."

## Event Planner: Taking care of the details

Planning an event – whether it's a wedding, baby shower, kid's birthday, company get-together or just a party with friends – can be overwhelming.

That's where Rhonda Morrow-McClodden comes in. The event planner from Ripley said she works to make dream events a reality.

"If you go online or if you see things in magazines, you really don't know where to begin to put everything together," she said. "They don't know where to start or how to create it. With my services, all you got to do is show up."

Morrow-McClodden, who owns Elite Events, can plan every detail of an event. She brings the tablecloths and chair covers, sets up centerpieces and creates decorations to her customers' liking. She specializes in unique and trendy décor for any occasion.

"I love what I do," she said. "I love the outcome of it. I love the expressions on my customers' faces when they walk in and see what we do."

Many people get intimidated or wary about additional costs when hiring an event planner, Morrow-McClodden said. But she can reduce the overall costs because customers don't have to purchase the items required for a party that she brings with her, such as tablecloths and decorations.

"I've had people think they could do it cheaper, but they paid more on materials," she said. "I can accommodate anybody from a large budget to a small budget. I work with any budget."

If you know of someone who has an interesting job or hobby, send his or her contact information to Tracy Etheridge at [tracy@ripleypower.com](mailto:tracy@ripleypower.com) or 731-635-2323. We're always looking for good stories for Tennessee Connections.



Rhonda Morrow-McClodden

Event planning was just a part-time job when Morrow-McClodden first started, but she said it kind of overtook her life. The business requires a lot of work, and it can be exhausting and frustrating, she said. But when it's over and people appreciate the work, she said it revitalizes her and gives her the energy to keep going.

"It's absolutely wonderful," she said. "You really have to love what you do. Anybody can decorate, but if you have the heart for it, it comes out amazing."

## Craft Maker: Decorations for people's homes

Alisa Chaney has a talent for crafts, and she shares them with happy customers at local fairs.

"I mainly do small crafts," she said. "It's just like a little hobby that I have. It's something to keep me busy. It's something to pass the time."

She started with burlap door hangers, then moved on to wooden door hangers when people requested it. Now she makes crafts of all sorts and paints wood of all types to be used as decorations in homes throughout the community. "Anything I can paint, I paint." She's had her hobby since before her 23-year-old daughter was born. She stopped for years, though, as she focused on raising and home-schooling her child. These

days, she's back at it.

Chaney, who lives in Ripley, sells her crafts out of her home and at local crafts fairs. She said she enjoys the fairs because she gets to see the people she's met through the years – customers and vendors alike – over and over again.

"It's just fun to go see everybody you know," she said.



# Stay safe during the holidays

- 1. Inspect electrical decorations for damage before use.**  
Cracked or damaged sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
- 2. Do not overload electrical outlets.**  
Overloaded electrical outlets and faulty wires are a common cause of holiday fires. Avoid overloading outlets and plug only one high-wattage into each outlet at a time.
- 3. Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights.**  
More than three strands may not only blow a fuse, but can also cause a fire. However, if you use LED lights (see story below), you can connect many strands together.
- 4. Keep trees fresh by watering daily.**  
Dry trees are a serious fire hazard.
- 5. Use battery-operated candles.**  
Candles start almost half of home decoration fires.
- 6. Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.**  
A heat source that was too close to the decoration was a factor in half of home fires that began with decorations.
- 7. Protect cords from damage.**  
To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces such as doors and windows, placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples.
- 8. Check decorations for certification label.**  
Decorations not bearing a label from an independent testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), have not been tested for safety and could be hazardous.
- 9. Stay in the kitchen when something is cooking.**  
Unattended cooking equipment is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- 10. Turn off, unplug, and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving the house.**  
Unattended candles are the cause of one in five home candle fires. Half of home fire deaths occur between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation

## Why use LED Christmas lights?

- **The cost factor.**  
While LED Christmas lights will cost you more money upfront, you'll save money in the long run. You can pay \$13.65 per month to decorate your rooftop with those old incandescent lights, or you can pay 22 cents with LED lights (prices estimated by Xcel Energy Colorado). LEDs cost more to produce because components are often assembled by hand, they need conducting material to dissipate heat and, to get a natural white glow, they are often coated with yellow phosphor.
- **Cool to the touch.**  
If you have children or pets, LEDs are a good choice because they produce next to no heat and they're always cool to the touch.
- **The weather factor.**  
LEDs have no problem coming on and working in cold temperatures. In fact, LEDs get more efficient as the outdoor temperature gets lower.
- **They're durable.**  
In tests, LED bulbs didn't burn out after over 4,000 hours, while standard light-string bulbs burned out at a rate of one to two per strand before half that time.
- **More lights, fewer outlets.**  
Typically, you can connect eight to 10 times more mini LED light strings together end to end while only using one electrical outlet.

Source: FamilyHandyman.com