

# Ripley grant

... Continued  
create more transportation options for people by improving facilities for walking, biking and transit, which is essential to the continued success of the city.

TDOT's Multimodal Access Grant Program was created to support the transportation needs of transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists through infrastructure projects that address existing gaps along state routes.

Washington Street is State Route 209.

The projects are state-funded at 95 percent up to \$950,000 with a 5 percent local match, according to TDOT.

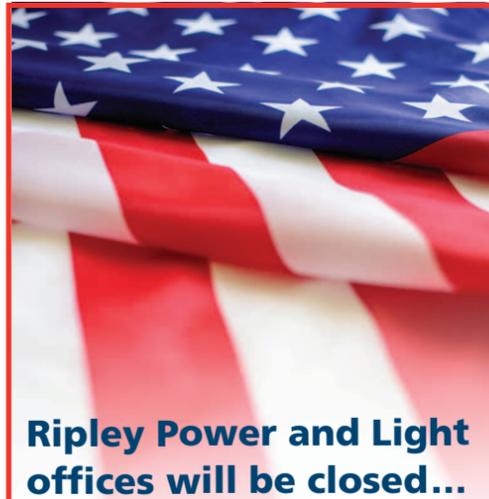
Lauderdale County, with a poverty rate of 23 percent and a three-year average unemployment rate of 7.5 percent, received the grant as one of 15 distressed counties in Tennessee.



## SUMMER SAFETY WORD SEARCH

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE ON BACK PAGE OF THIS MAGAZINE

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H	Q	E	S	C	O	S	O	C	K	E	T	S	O	P	I
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### Ripley Power and Light offices will be closed...

- Friday, July 3, for Independence Day
- Monday, Sept. 7, for Labor Day



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# Ripley

POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY Summer 2020



Students, above, meet employers at Ripley Power and Light's multipurpose complex during a career fair.

## EXPO CONNECTS STUDENTS WITH FUTURE CAREERS

Nearly 3,000 eighth graders from 10 different counties in West Tennessee attended a career fair on March 4 and 5 in Ripley Power and Light's multipurpose complex at 164 Viar Ave. The event exposed students to high-demand jobs in the area and gave employers insight into their future talent pool.

The inaugural West Tennessee Pathways2Possibilities Career Expo organized by HTL Advantage – an economic development initiative of Haywood, Tipton and Lauderdale

counties – gave students a hands-on introduction to many area businesses and post-secondary schools. The event included more than 50 community volunteers and featured 75 interactive exhibits with more than 300 representatives of businesses and organizations from 11 different counties.

"For it to be the first year, we were very excited that all of our partners in the community got on board with us," said Robin Sealy, Tipton County Workforce Development Coordinator. "It is so important for students to understand the opportunities we have right here in West Tennessee, and we want employers to know that this is their talent pipeline that's coming to them."

The exhibitors were from private industries and post-

secondary schools, such as Dyersburg State Community College and Tennessee College of Applied Technology. Ripley Power and Light had an exhibit with employees on hand to answer questions. Other exhibits represented a variety of sectors, including health care, aerospace, manufacturing and engineering.

The eighth graders – along with teachers and guidance counselors – were from public schools, private schools and home schools throughout the region. The expo allowed them



Students visit Ripley Power and Light's exhibit at the career fair.

to begin planning their high school classes around their areas of interest, which provides a better pathway to their careers.

The idea for the event came from a career expo in Mississippi visited by West Tennessee economic development officials that had 2,500 students in attendance.

Organizers of West Tennessee's event were

excited that it was even bigger than the expo in Mississippi. They received positive feedback, and they expect more students to attend future career expos. They want the career fair to be an annual event.

"It was an amazing event," Sealy said. "We were very happy with the turnout, and I think our community volunteers exceeded our expectations. Overall, we were just thrilled, and I think moving forward, it's just going to grow."

## Grant will help pay for a Halls downtown facelift

Halls was one of 10 communities selected to participate in the Tennessee Downtowns program that helps revitalize rural downtowns.

The program is funded by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

The highly competitive selection process was based on historic commercial resources, economic and physical need, demonstrated local effort, overall presentation and probability of success.

Halls' application – one of more than 100 that were submitted – was completed by the Lauderdale Chamber/EDC. Program Chair Susan Worlds and Mayor Eugene Pugh said they were very pleased that Halls was selected to participate.

"We have a lot of undeveloped property that we need help developing," Worlds said in a video promoting the city.

Ensuring that historic downtowns are vibrant is a focus of the Department of Economic and Community Development as it works to strengthen rural communities in Tennessee, said Commissioner Bob Rolfe.

"The Tennessee Downtowns program is an essential part of our rural development strategy, and we look forward to working with these 10 new Tennessee Downtowns as they develop sustainable renewal efforts in their commercial districts," he said.

The department offers Tennessee Downtowns to communities that want to pursue the Main Street America approach to downtown revitalization. The two-year program helps communities revitalize traditional commercial districts, enhance livability, spur job creation and maintain the historic character of downtown districts.

It also coaches selected communities and their steering committees through the steps of launching effective re-



*Halls will be eligible for grants and a Main Street designation after completing the Tennessee Downtowns program.*

newal efforts. Tennessee Downtowns includes community training in the Main Street America program – a national movement to celebrate community character, preserve local history and generate economic returns – and a \$15,000 grant for a downtown improvement project. After completing the program, communities are eligible for Commercial Façade Improvement Grants as well as Main Street designation.

Potential projects for Halls include an expanded fairgrounds, new amphitheater and the rehabilitation of a block with buildings damaged by a fire.

Fifty-eight Tennessee communities have participated in the program since 2010. Besides Halls, the communities recently selected were Collinwood, Covington, Decaturville, Dunlap, Hartsville, Madisonville, Somerville, South Pittsburg and Whiteville. To date, six Tennessee Downtowns, including the City of Ripley, have advanced to the Main Street program,



## Ripley Power and Light wins safety award



*Ripley Power and Light employees practice safety as they work on electrical lines at a Ripley intersection.*

Ripley Power and Light earned the American Public Power Association's Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2019 – for the fifth consecutive year.

The company earned first place in the category for utilities with 30,000 to 59,999 worker-hours of annual worker exposure. Ripley Power and Light's award is based on 28 employees who work directly with the company's electrical lines and equipment having 58,240 total electrical worker-hours of exposure.

"Ripley Power and Light is proud of its safety record," said Mike Allmand, President and CEO. "This award is a testament to the hard work that goes into ensuring that our team members go home safe to their families every day."

More than 335 utilities entered the annual Safety Awards, which is the highest number of entrants in the history of the program. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records during 2019.

The incidence rate, used to judge entries, is based on the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses



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

and the number of worker-hours during 2019, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

"Strong safety programs are essential to ensuring that electric utility employees are informed and trained on safe work procedures," said Brandon Wylie, Chair of the Association's Safety Committee and Director of Training & Safety at Electric Cities of Georgia. "The utilities receiving this award have proven that protecting the safety of their employees is a top priority."

The Safety Awards have been held annually for the last 60 years. The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide.

## Ripley awarded sidewalk grant

The City of Ripley received an \$880,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to create better sidewalks and bike paths on a quarter-mile stretch of Washington Street between Ripley High School and Save-A-Lot.

The grant will help the city make needed improvements to increase the walkability of the community and the overall quality of life, said Tennessee State Sen. Ed Jackson.

In a similar comment, State Rep. Chris Hurt said the funds will

*Continued, next page ...*



*The grant is for a section of Washington Street.*