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Attention to Changing Needs Brings Customers Cleaner Energy, Compassionate Assistance and Economic Growth

[BOILERPLATE] BrightRidge and TVA were founded on a mission to serve — through reliable and affordable energy, a safe and protected environment and thriving economic development.

BrightRidge provides electricity to more than 81,000 residential and business customers within Washington, Sullivan, Carter and Greene counties in Northeast Tennessee, a majority of which are in Johnson City.

Solar for All

Historically, solar power has presented barriers to access for many demographic groups. Renters, for one, have not had the option to consider installing panels, and even for homeowners, installation and upkeep costs can be expensive. And on a structural note, not all buildings are able to support the weight of the heavy panels.

Today, however, BrightRidge, in partnership with TVA's Community Solar Program, gives every resident and business in the service area the opportunity to benefit from clean solar power as a part of their overall energy consumption — and all without altering their rooftops.

This is possible thanks to solar farms. In 2019, BrightRidge partnered with TVA to bring Silicon Ranch's Telford Solar Farm to the area. The farm generates 5 megawatts (MWAC) of energy, which is enough to power 500 homes for a year. Even better — it's produced without emitting carbon or using any water. BrightRidge sells all 5 MWAC to TVA, who distributes it to customers through the Community Solar program.

To build the farm, Silicon Ranch hired 100 people, most of whom were locally based. They also invested millions of dollars of private capital into the local community.

Things got even sunnier in January 2022 when BrightRidge and Silicon Ranch "flipped the switch" on Martin Solar Farm, a 9 megawatt (MWAC) facility in western Washington County, tripling their solar energy output. This was the first completed project in TVA's Generation Flexibility Program, designed to encourage local power companies (LPCs) to offer up to 5 percent solar energy to customers.

"Generation flexibility is something we have strongly encouraged for quite some time as a way to allow local power companies to respond to the specific needs of our business and residential customers," BrightRidge CEO Jeff Dykes said. "We know an important segment of our community is very interested in alternative forms of cleaner energy generation. At the same time, we are seeing across the country that having adequate solar generation available is a critical economic development recruitment tool."

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To showcase their commitment to promoting renewable energy, BrightRidge installed a tree with solar panels as leaves in front of its Boones Creek facility. This structure commemorated the utility's 75th anniversary and fortified its relationship with TVA.

Recovery Relief Continues

BrightRidge understands that two years into the pandemic, its effects are far from over. This is why they've given \$1.3 million in Pandemic Recovery Credits provided by TVA to customers for the second year in a row, this time giving them a cost savings that was reflected in February 2022 bills. The utility also matched TVA's \$75,000 donation to the Heisse Johnson Hand Up Fund, which makes for a total of \$150,000 distributed to local organizations by the United Way, and helps residents in need pay for power bills.

Dykes said, "We realize our customers are still working to get back to pre-pandemic economic footing. The BrightRidge Board of Directors and staff believe this is yet another way we can continue to help folks recover. We thank TVA for stepping up for a second year in a row with this gift to the Hand Up Fund."

Bald Eagle Cameras

High up in the canopy at Winged Deer Park, two bald eagle families tend to their newly hatched chicks who came into the world in March 2022. Jolene and Boone built their nest in a pine tree on Boone Lake in Johnson City, and Eugene and Frances have a Bluff City postal address in a Sycamore tree along the Holston River. The public is able to safely view these majestic creatures in action via [livestream](#), thanks to eagle cameras run by the East Tennessee State University (ETSU) department of biological sciences.

The cameras cost \$25,000 per year to operate, and are sponsored by TVA, BrightRidge, Bristol Tennessee Essential Services (BTES), Mahoney's Outfitters and Bank of Tennessee. TVA also provided assistance installing the cameras and BrightRidge utility crews maintain the feeds when it's not hatching season.

"Our Eagle Camera project has been the cooperative project of a community of volunteers, donors and corporate sponsors. [TVA has been a strong supporter](#) of this educational service effort almost since its initiation," Eagle Camera project leader and ETSU biological sciences professor Dr. Fred Alsop said, adding, "Together we have brought the personal lives of this pair of our national birds into the homes of viewers around the world, and we continue to do so 24/7 and 365 days of the year."

Economic Development

[BOILERPLATE] BrightRidge works with [TVA Economic Development](#) to attract new companies and bring more jobs to the area and to help existing businesses and industries grow in a sustainable way.

TVA Economic Development serves the seven states that make up the TVA service area—almost all of Tennessee and parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and Kentucky. TVA partnerships with other economic development organizations, help to foster capital investment and job growth in the region.

Korean auto parts manufacturer Sungwoo Hitech America Corp. chose Washington County, Tennessee for its first U.S.-based auto parts plant. They are investing \$40 million to renovate the former site of Alo Tennessee in the Washington County Industrial Park. The facility will employ 117 additional workers. BrightRidge and TVA are partnered with NeTREP, the Town of Jonesborough, Washington County, and TDECD to support this move.

The Washington County Industrial Park is also the site of yet another international manufacturer, as German-based Ebm-papst is moving its second North American facility to this location. More than \$37 million in

construction efforts are underway for the electric motor and fan plant, which will employ 200 people. Economic development partners include BrightRidge, TVA, NeTREP and TDECD.

Economic development partnerships between BrightRidge, TVA, Northeast Tennessee Regional Economic Partnership (NeTREP), and Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TDECD) helped bring LabConnect® to Johnson City. The clinical trial central lab services provider relocated from Seattle, Washington in 2020, initially adding 100 jobs. That number continues to increase due to expansions, including growing the kit division and biorepository. And the campus alone has grown from 88,000 square feet, up from 55,000 square feet.

[BOILERPLATE] [Discover all the resources designed to help you manage your energy use and boost your bottom line.](#)

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

[BOILERPLATE] In comparison to gas-fueled vehicles, EVs make for a smoother and more efficient ride, are easier to maintain, and are better for the environment. BrightRidge partners with TVA EnergyRight to make it easier for drivers to decide if making the switch to an EV makes sense for them. From a comparison tool to help select an EV that fits your needs, to a digital map that helps easily locate charging stations along your route, [all the information you need is here.](#)

In addition to solar production, BrightRidge continues to reduce the area's carbon footprint by increasing its contribution to the Valley's growing EV culture, in partnership with TVA and the State of Tennessee. They are working to ensure that locals and visitors who choose to drive electric cars are able to recharge while enjoying area amenities and attractions. Thus far, BrightRidge has installed two Level 2 charging sites two at their office in Boones Creek, and one each in downtowns Jonesborough and Johnson City as well as the East Tennessee State University Gray Fossil Site and Museum.

"The era of electric vehicle propulsion is truly upon us," Jeff Dykes, BrightRidge CEO said. "This presents communities with the challenge of providing sufficient charging infrastructure. Local power companies need to step up and ensure construction of an adequate network of electric charging stations for our residents, businesses, and visitors. BrightRidge has taken our first steps in the right direction, but really, we have much more to do."