



Ripley Power and Light Company TMEPA Member Spotlight December 2017



Located in rural West Tennessee, Ripley Power and Light Company is one of the smaller municipal utilities in the state. At the same time, however, Ripley Power and Light is a leader in using new technology and taking innovative steps to keep electric reliability high and customer costs low.

Because of this commitment to electric reliability and putting the interests of its customers first, Ripley Power and Light has earned APPA's prestigious RP₃ Diamond award. The award is based on four criteria: reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Ripley Power and Light is one of only 62 municipal utilities nationwide to hold the Diamond level RP₃ recognition and one of only 219 utilities nationwide to have the RP₃ designation.

Ripley Power and Light has about 6,600 electric customers in Lauderdale County, about 110 miles of electric distribution lines and three delivery points from TVA. Besides providing the electricity for the town of Ripley, the utility has franchise agreements with three neighboring towns: Gates, Halls and Henning.

The municipal utility was established in 1939 as TVA began to produce low-cost electric power to the Tennessee Valley.

Through the years, Ripley Power and Light Company has been very aggressive toward meeting the challenges of change in our industry. Ripley Power and Light's board, management and employees have always understood the need to change and embrace new technology.



"We are committed to investigating innovative solutions to energy delivery and technology development that better our ability to serve our communities," said Mike Allmand, who has been President/CEO of Ripley Power and Light since 1980. "We are always looking for ways to improve our reliability and customer service as we keep rates as low as possible."



- Ripley Power and Light was the first utility in the Tennessee Valley to build a back-up generation plant for an industrial customer. The 6 MW generation facility provided a reliable source of power to address the industry's critical load requirements. Five years into the agreement, the company announced that it was leaving Ripley. The utility used part of the money the company paid to buy out its 12-year lease to upgrade the generation plant to 8 MW. Then Allmand negotiated a partnership with TVA that generates \$40,000 in monthly income for 20 years for Ripley Power and Light. The \$9.6 million generation lease deal allows TVA to use Power and Light's 8 MW power generation plant as backup when needed to produce extra power for the grid. In addition, Allmand convinced the industrial customer to donate their 340,000 square foot – twenty acre manufacturing facility to Ripley Power and Light. The facility now houses Ripley Power and Light's 20,000 sq.ft. operations center, two environmental buildings – approximately 55,000 sq.ft., a 5,000 sq.ft. truck shop, 73,500 sq.ft. warehouse/manufacturing lease space and 14,400 sq.ft. office building lease space.



- Ripley Power and Light installed its first SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system in 1981 to monitor and control its electric system.
- Automated Meter Reading system was installed throughout the Ripley Power and Light system in 2003. The system allowed for quick meter reading, remote connect and disconnect, customer load profile and the ability to satisfy the customers questions concerning meter reading accuracy.



- Ripley Power and Light began installing a 192-count fiber loop around Ripley in 2003 and now has fiber to the other towns it serves. Ripley's fiber system connects to three of its neighboring utilities to the north and south of the Ripley Power and Light electric systems. The fiber system has proven to be a huge benefit to the Ripley Power and Light electric system. Excess dark fiber is leased to businesses and industry in Lauderdale County or those needing to pass data through our county. Leasing dark fiber provides another revenue stream for the Ripley Power and Light

system.

- In 2013, Ripley Power and Light installed the first meter optimizers in the country and is testing the system for potential deployment across the United States and Mexico. The system provides power factor correction at the customer's meter.

- In 2009, the Ripley utility began installing one of the first real-time voltage regulation systems (AdaptiVolt) in the country which became a pilot project for TVA and the Electric Power Research Institute. The system continuously monitors end of line voltage and makes adjustments across the electric system.
- A new Outage Management system allows the utility to pinpoint causes of outages more quickly and restore power faster.
- Kiosks at its Ripley and Halls offices allow customers to pay their electric bill 24 hours a day with a credit card or cash. This has been a tremendous benefit to all Ripley Power and Light customers but especially to our “prepay” customers.
- In 1995, Ripley Power and Light Company purchased energy efficiency loans from TVA and began offering low-interest financing for energy-efficient upgrades to customers’ homes such as heat pumps, insulation, windows and appliances.

Ripley Power and Light has 29 employees. Allmand credits the employees for the utility’s accomplishments. “At Ripley Power and Light, we are fortunate that our employees are like family, many of whom have worked the majority of their professional careers at the utility. The hard work of our employees is a major reason that Ripley Power and Light has earned the loyalty and appreciation of our customers.”