

Employee Spotlight

Mark Kuder

Underground Lead Lineman



Story by Jessica Willingham.

Photos by Ryan Stout.

Mark Kuder is a man who makes his own way. Beginning in the City of Bryan's Transportation Department in 2006, he wanted to make a career move within the city—a place he loved. After speaking with a BTU supervisor, Kuder applied to be an Underground Lead Lineman, and has been one ever since. Mark and other BTU linemen maintain electrical lines running from electrical substations to residences and businesses, ensuring a constant flow of electricity to customers. Together with his crew, Mark handles construction and maintenance of underground electric lines. Below, he talks about his first job, his motivation and the event that changed his life.

Why are underground lines important?

It is a standard practice to run electricity lines underground to properties. These types of lines help keep poles and visible electric lines from detracting from the look of a neighborhood. Also, these lines are helpful when storms hit, because they are less likely to be affected by the elements.

What motivated you to become a lineman for BTU?

My mentor and supervisor talked me into applying for

the program. It sounded interesting, so I looked into it. I applied and was hired, and next thing I knew I was learning to climb and all about hot—live electrical—work.

What has your career taught you?

Most of all, that it's not a job for everyone. Safety and knowledge in this field are essential to surviving.

What was your first job? What did you learn?

My first job was sacking groceries at Safeway while I was in high school. I learned that if you work hard and are dependable, you can go far in any career.

What is the best part about being a BTU lineman?

The best part of my job is going home each day, knowing that I've helped people.

What's the most challenging part?

There are many challenges, but the most challenging part of this job is finding people who are interested in getting into the field. As people retire or move on, we need new talent to keep up with the fast-paced demands.

What is your dream job, and why?

My dream job would be raising cattle and farming full-time. I've always been interested in agriculture. I enjoy hunting, fishing, raising chickens and gardening with my family.

What event has made the most impact on your life and work?

Four years ago, I broke both my feet after a fall that happened at my home. I was in a wheelchair for several weeks with two casts. BTU was very supportive as were my friends at BTU. That event made me look at others dealing with disabilities differently. It's difficult when you are not mobile or have other limitations. I'm thankful for a near full recovery and will never forget that experience.





Board Meeting Notes

The BTU Board of Directors met on Monday, December 9, 2013 and discussed the following topics:

Financial

Joe Hegwood, Chief Financial Officer for the City of Bryan/BTU, presented the financial report. Net revenues for the both the City and Rural systems were higher than budgeted. In addition, prorating BTU's October 1st base rate reduction to accommodate for the new Regulatory Charge created a one-time benefit to October's net revenues in both the City and Rural. The City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was below budget due to the timing of spending on transmission projects.

David Werley, BTU Group Manager of Business and Customer Operations, presented to the Board possible modifications to the current electric rate ordinance. He explained that a transmission level service rate is required for customers who own their own power transformers and take delivery service at 69 kV or greater. The Board agreed to recommend the new proposed rate ordinance to the Bryan City Council.

The Board discussed and awarded contract bids to the following:

- Soil Express Ltd. for clearing and installing gates and culverts for the Thompson Creek to Snook right-of-way;
- North Houston Pole Line for upgrading the transmission line for Nall to Briarcrest;
- Trusty Construction, LLC for rebuilding the FM 2154 feeder located in the southern part of BTU's service territory; and
- T&D Solutions to rebuild the service lines from single-phase to three-phase for the Hawk well projects in north Brazos County.

Operations

Randy Trimble, BTU Group Manager of Transmission and Distribution, presented the safety statistics for November. He then presented the SAIDI and SAIFI reports for November, which indicated that the City outages were very few and that several public accidents involving utility poles caused the majority of outages in the Rural.

Mr. Trimble ended the meeting with the presentation of a partial release of an easement located in the Nantucket subdivision in College Station. With the South Loop project, BTU has relocated its facilities and has a new easement to cover these relocated facilities. The Board approved to recommend that the Chairman of the BTU Board of Directors sign the partial release of the easement.



Bryan Texas Utilities

205 East 28th Street • Bryan, TX 77803

email: ContactBTU@btutilities.com

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Board of Directors

- Mr. Carl L. Benner, Chairman
- Mr. Chris Peterson, Vice Chairman
- Mr. Paul Turney, Secretary/Treasurer
- Mr. Art Hughes, Ex-Officio
- Mr. Flynn Adcock
- Mr. David Bairrington
- Mr. Bill Ballard
- Mr. Ben Hardeman

General Manager

Gary Miller

Group Managers

- Larry Gurley
- Randy Trimble
- David Werley

Division Managers

- James Bodine
- Bill Bullock
- Shawndra Green
- Michael Hering
- Ken Lindberg
- Doug Lyles
- Vicki Reim
- Scott Smith
- James Tanneberger

Lee R. Starr, Chief Risk Officer

City of Bryan

- Kean Register, City Manager
- Joe Hegwood, CFO
- Bernie Acre, CIO

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- Billing/Collections/Connects (979) 821-5700
- Electrical Outage/Lines Down (979) 822-3777
- Distribution/Line Design (979) 821-5770



Driving Forward

Story by Jessica Willingham.

Photos by Ryan Stout.

Bryan Texas Utilities is driving forward with an improved drive-through.

If you drive up to the BTU payment window, you'll immediately notice a difference. BTU's drive-through renovation project, which is being completed this month, is just another way BTU is staying modern within the public power industry and innovative in customer service.

The original BTU drive-through was installed in 1991. Today, the drive-through serves 5,000 customers a month and processes 53,000 payment transactions a year. In addition to four kiosk locations and online bill payments, the drive-through is a convenient option for customer payments and service.

"The improvement plans included installing video cameras in two of the three available lanes," said Kathy West, BTU customer service supervisor. "Now, our representatives servicing the customer at the window can see the customer's face clearly, as can the customer see the representative's face."

BTU believes this advanced technology will improve customer service while creating faster, more efficient and more personable customer service.

"The audio is amazing compared to the old system," said Kathy.

Additional improvements to the three-lane customer service drive-through include a lane specifically for after-hours drop off payments. Soon, an additional kiosk will be installed in this lane as well.

"While technological advances—like kiosks and online bill payments—are popular, many customers want a more personal interaction with their service provider," said Allen Wood, BTU special projects manager and manager for this project. "The new video screens and audio allow for easier two-way communication between customers and service representatives," he said.



The improvement plans included installing video cameras in two of the three available lanes," said Kathy West, BTU customer service supervisor. "Now, our representatives servicing the customer at the window can see the customer's face clearly, as can the customer see the representative's face."



One of the greatest challenges, according to Allen, was renovating an older structure.

"BTU's building has been here since the late 1960s," he said. "The age of the building presents renovation challenges, but thanks to our team, we were able to overcome them and construct a really beautiful, functional drive-through with improved service for our customers and improved ergonomics for our employees."

Future renovation plans for the BTU building include a redesigned lobby and customer service area, bringing a more modern feel and functionality to the building.

To pay your bill via the new BTU drive-through, please visit Bryan Texas Utilities at 205 E. 28th Street in Bryan.

Online payments can be made at www.btutilities.com.

Pay Your Utility Bill Quickly and Easily

Easy Payment Options!

In addition to our drive through, we offer four easy options for convenient and quick payment without leaving your home.

Online

Pay online at www.btutilities.com 24 hours a day. We accept Visa, Master Card and Discover.

Interactive Voice Response

You can check your account balance and pay with a credit card by phone

BTU Customer Service

Paying your bill by one of the easy payment options listed or at a kiosk will save you time. If you need to take care of business in our lobby or drive through, our hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday.

by calling our interactive voice response system at (979) 821-5700.

Automatic Bank Draft

Visit www.btutilities.com and fill out the bank draft form; send it to us with a copy of a voided check and we will do the rest.

Recurring Credit Card

Create an online account and set-up your recurring credit card. You can manage your own account.

4 Kiosk Locations!

BTU Main Lobby

Open Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

205 E. 28th Street, Bryan

Texan Market

Open 24 hours a day!

Harvey Mitchell Parkway and Villa Maria Road, Bryan

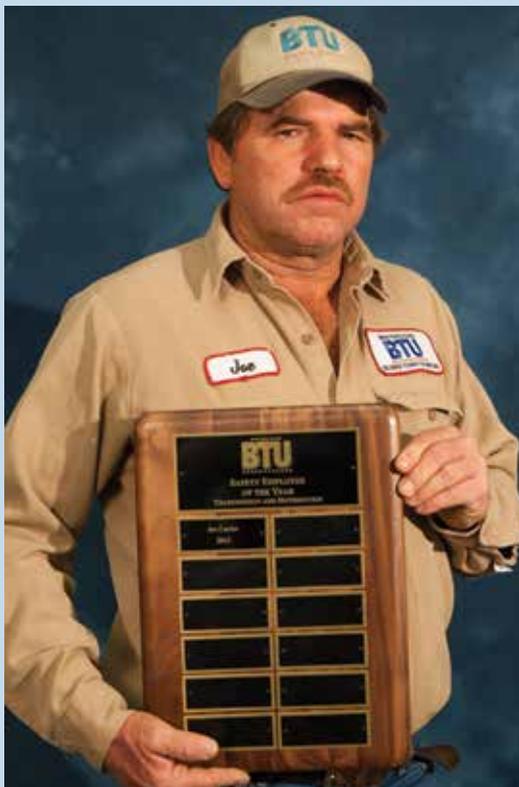
HEB

Open 6 a.m. to midnight

Texas Avenue and Villa Maria Road, Bryan

Open 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Texas Avenue and Highway 21, Bryan



Joe Carter Named BTU's 2013 Transmission and Distribution Safety Employee of the Year

Joe Carter, a Lead Lineman in BTU's Distribution Operation Division, was named the 2013 Transmission and Distribution Safety Employee of the Year by BTU's Safety Committee. Joe was nominated for his noteworthy involvement in and contribution to promoting safe work practices throughout the year.

Joe humbly said, "I am honored to be recognized by the people with whom I work. It is a pleasure to be surrounded by like-minded coworkers who maintain a clear focus on safety all year long."

This award is bestowed annually to the nominated individual who has made a significant contribution to safety throughout the year. A plaque with the names of the recipients will be displayed at the BTU Distribution offices.

**ENTRIES DUE
FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 21
5:00 PM.**



BTU OFFERS TEENS A CAPITAL TRIP

THIS YEAR'S CONTEST

This year, BTU will select three youths to represent our service area through its Government-in-Action Youth Tour competition. The winners will join over 1000 other teens from around the United States on an all-expenses paid (except for any souvenirs they'd like to buy) trip to Washington, D.C., June 12-20, 2014. Children of BTU customers who are not employed by BTU and are area high school students in their sophomore, junior or senior years are eligible to enter.

Students must write an essay discussing the topic *What would life be like without electricity?* An additional requirement for this year's Youth Tour application is a letter of recommendation from a teacher or principal.

For complete information about the contest and to enter online, please visit www.btutilities.com. Entries are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, February 21, 2014. Winners will be notified by March 3, 2014.

You may submit your application and essay in one of the following manners:

- online at www.btutilities.com
- email to pbuckner@btutilities.com
- mail or hand deliver to Paul Buckner at the BTU headquarters at 205 East 28th St., Bryan, TX 77803

HISTORY OF THE YOUTH TOUR PROGRAM

The Government-in-Action Youth Tour began in 1957, after then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) annual meeting. Inspired by his comments regarding the importance of young people visiting Washington, D.C., "where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents," some of the Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington, D.C. to work in the Senator's office over the summer to learn about the federal government in action.

The following year, rural electric officials in Iowa sponsored the first group of 34 students on a week-long tour of our nation's capital. It wasn't long before other states were inspired by the idea, which increased the total number of students sent each year throughout the summer. In 1959, 130 youths traveled to Washington and in 1964, NRECA decided to coordinate the program, arranging each group's schedule to be in the capital during the same week. During the first year that NRECA coordinated the program, 400 students participated from 12 states. Since then, the Youth Tour has continued to grow to the point that it now sends nearly 1,500 students and chaperones on the Tour each year.

GOVERNMENT- IN-ACTION YOUTH TOUR ENTRY CHECKLIST

- **COMPLETED
APPLICATION**
- **ESSAY**
- **LETTER OF
RECOMMENDATION
FROM TEACHER OR
PRINCIPAL**
- **SUBMIT ONLINE OR
DELIVER TO THE
BTU OFFICE**



FOOD FOR FAMILIES FOOD DRIVE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

STORY BY LOUELLEN S. COKER. PHOTOS BY RYAN STOUT.

BTU employees volunteered their support along with countless others across the Brazos Valley for KBTX Media's 18th Annual Food for Families Food Drive on December 11, 2013. From the wee hours of the morning to close to midnight, volunteers tirelessly organized and loaded thousands of pounds of food items—contributed by an overwhelming number of charitable donors—into waiting trucks.

Including BTU's donations of food staples and \$1,000, the Food for Families Drive took in over 216,000 pounds of food and over \$165,000.00 from generous contributors. The donations will be used to help feed hungry families throughout the Brazos Valley.

In response to the record and heartfelt support of the community,

Theresa E. Mangapora, Executive Director, Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB) reflected, "On behalf of the Brazos Valley Food Bank, I am humbled and appreciative of the businesses who make this part of their annual holiday tradition, the families who use this effort to teach the next generation the importance of giving and the literally hundreds of people who graciously donated hours of their time to make this effort a resounding success again in 2013. The BVFB would find it difficult to meet its annual mission without this extraordinary event coordinated by KBTX. I challenge everyone to continue to give throughout the year. Donated food, donated funds and volunteer hours are always welcomed and needed at the BVFB."



Most Needed Items

- Beans (canned or dried)
- Canned Meats and Proteins (beans, beef stew, chili, peanut butter, tuna, soups and chicken)
- Canned Vegetables (especially corn and green beans)
- Canned Fruit (peaches, pineapple and mixed fruit)
- Dry Staples (coffee, cereal, flour, macaroni and cheese, ravioli, sugar, pasta and rice)
- Paper Products (toilet paper, paper towels and child diapers)
- Pop-top Can Items (tuna, fruit and soups)

We cannot accept items which are:

- Homemade
- Perishable (frozen or refrigerated)
- Already Opened
- Without Labels
- In Glass Containers

You can find more information about needed items or volunteering with the Brazos Valley Food Bank on the web at www.bvfb.org.

SmartHOME Incentive Programs Help BTU Customers Save Money & Live Comfortably

Story by Louellen S. Coker. Photos by Brenda Rumfield.

BTU's SmartHOME program has helped many improve their homes by giving residential customers money back on qualified projects. Qualified projects include installing proper insulation, ENERGY STAR® rated windows and/or solar screens.

One residential customer who benefited from these programs is Brenda Rumfield. For this retired social worker, incentive payments were key in determining the breadth of her ability to make improvements to her 1940s era home. She explained, "I knew I had to do some work

on my house; and after talking with Paul Buckner (a BTU Energy Accounts Manager), I learned that the SmartHOME program would help offset some of the costs and allow me to make more improvements than I originally thought would be possible."

Over the years, the structure had natural deterioration: a few rotten areas, drafty windows and was in need of painting. Ms. Rumfield took advantage of two SmartHOME incentives and the scope of her project included replacing all 18 windows in her home and adding outside wall

insulation on the original structure. She also improved her home by replacing the original wood siding with hardy board siding.

"These improvements had been on my project list for a while," said Ms. Rumfield. "After hearing about the program, I called BTU and was promptly connected with Paul. He walked me through what was an unbelievably easy process that included completing an application and a really quick approval, ready access to him for guidance throughout the process and fast turnaround of

Ms. Rumfield took advantage of two SmartHOME incentive programs to help her save money as she improved her home with new windows and outside wall insulation.



Before



During

“I’m looking forward to seeing the difference in my utility bills. The comfort level of my home is so improved; there’s no way it isn’t more energy efficient.”

payment from the program. The most difficult part of the project was the weather delays from our wettest fall in years.”

Ms. Rumfield was more than delighted that Paul not only came out to her home to discuss the projects within a week of her submitting the application but he also answered her questions readily and even pointed out several things that she would want to discuss with her chosen contractor.

She stated, “I found Paul to be very personable, informed, enthusiastic and genuinely interested in helping me

get my projects completed and save money as a result. He was very easy to communicate with and, if there was any red tape, I wasn’t aware of it.”

With secure windows and insulation in her walls, Ms. Rumfield is now enjoying a warm and cozy home without drafts. She is eager to note the improvements over the summer months as well. She said, “I’m looking forward to seeing the difference in my utility bills. The comfort level of my home is so improved; there’s no way it isn’t more energy efficient.”

The success of Ms. Rumfield’s

most recent projects along with BTU’s SmartHOME incentive payments have allowed her to start moving forward on her next home improvement project that involves installing proper attic insulation.

Do you have a similar home improvement project you’re hoping to complete? We invite you to learn more about the SmartHOME program by visiting www.btutilities.com to see if you qualify and to apply. The SmartHOME program is subject to qualification guidelines and the availability of funds.

The success of Ms. Rumfield’s most recent projects along with BTU’s SmartHOME incentive payments have allowed her to start moving forward on her next SmartHOME project: attic insulation.

