



BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

## Regular Board of Directors *Meeting Notes*

**June 8, 2020**

### Hear Visitors

Six citizens addressed the BTU Board to express their opinions regarding the potential sale of the Texas Municipal Power Agency (TMPA) Gibbons Creek Plant.

### Approval of a Construction Contract for Lake Bryan Restrooms

The Board authorized a contract with G.A.M Construction, Inc. to construct restroom facilities in the Lake Bryan park.

### Presentation of Texas Regional Entity (TRE) Audit Results

Mary Downs, BTU Regulatory Compliance Officer, presented the results from the TRE audit of BTU's performance under certain North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) reliability standards. The audit reviewed BTU's function as a Transmission Operator, Owner, Planner, and Distribution Provider.

### Update Regarding BTU COVID-19 Customer Operations

Vicki Reim, BTU Division Manager of Customer Operations, presented an update regarding customer operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public access to the BTU main building has been temporarily modified due to the pandemic. Ms. Reim discussed the actions that were taken to aid customers including enacting a moratorium on late fees and disconnects for non-payment. These changes and efforts were very similar to those taken by other utilities across Texas and the U.S.

### Update Regarding Proposed Distribution Service Center

Mr. Randy Trimble, BTU Executive Director of Energy Delivery, presented an update on the proposed Distribution Service Center. The service center is set to be located on property near the old Atkins Power Plant currently owned by BTU. Staff are working closely with the Williamson Group Architects to design and construct the center.

### Presentation of the City and Rural Pro-Formas and Financial Measures

Mr. Doug Lyles, BTU Chief Risk Officer, presented the annual City and Rural five-year financial forecast and key financial measures.

### Approval of a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Gary Miller, BTU General Manager, presented the proposed FY21 Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) for all BTU departments. The Board of Directors took action to approve the proposed plan for recommendation to the City Council.

### BTU Awarded Diamond Designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) as a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3)

The American Public Power Association has awarded Bryan Texas Utilities the "RP3 Diamond Designation" for the third consecutive time. Mr. Miller stated BTU scored a perfect 100% on grading criteria. BTU Board Members congratulated Staff on their achievement.

**BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES**  
**KIOSKS**  
BTU Drive Thru – 205 E. 28th St. (Open 24 Hours)  
HEB Grocery – Tejas Center on Villa Maria  
HEB Grocery – Texas Ave. & Hwy 21

**WAYS TO PAY**



**CASH**



**CHECK**



**CARD**

Bring your BTU account number, BTU bill, keycard or reminder letter.

BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES



**BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES**

205 East 28th Street • Bryan, TX 77803

email: ContactBTU@btutilities.com

**www.btutilities.com**

**Hours of Operation**

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

### Board of Directors

Mr. Flynn Adcock, Chairman

Mr. Carl L. Benner

Mr. Pete J. Bienski, Jr.

Mr. Paul Madison, Sr.

Mr. A. Bentley Nettles

Ms. Rosemarie Selman

Mr. Paul Turney

Mr. Buppy Simank, Ex-Officio

Mr. Jason Bienski, Ex-Officio

### General Manager

Gary Miller

### Executive Directors

Randy Trimble

David Werley

Wes Williams

### Division Managers

James Bodine

Shawndra Curry

Ken Lindberg

Clay Lindstrom

David McIntyre

Vicki Reim

Gary Massey

Doug Lyles, Chief Risk Officer

### City of Bryan

Kean Register, City Manager

Joe Hegwood, Chief Financial Officer

Bernie Acre, Chief Information Officer

### Important Numbers

Billing/Collections/Connects

**(979) 821-5700**

Electrical Outage/Lines Down

**(979) 822-3777**

Distribution/Line Design

**(979) 821-5770**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**



BryanTexasUtilities



BTU\_BryanTX



cityofbryan



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# BEWARE OF SCAMS!

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A scam is a dishonest attempt to obtain something of value from you, such as money or personal information. Scams have been around for centuries, from the old “shell game” bets to snake oil salesmen selling “cure-all” tonics. Today, scammers are much more sophisticated and have many more tools to use to steal people’s money.

Scam attempts can take place over the phone, in person, through email, and even via text message. Aggressive scammers use fear and confusion to prey on their victims. Here are a couple of common utility scams and ways you can protect yourself:

## THE POWER SHUTOFF SCAM

In this form of fraud, the scammers will contact the utility customer claiming to be from BTU and demanding immediate payment or else their power will be shut off. This demand can be through an email, by phone, or even in person. The scammer will typically demand immediate payment in cash, a prepaid debit card, or will ask for your credit card information. Scammers can even use software to make a phone call appear to come from BTU.

BTU **does not** call residential customers to demand immediate payment. BTU does send a written termination notice to customers facing disconnection with instructions of how to pay an outstanding balance. If you receive an email, phone call, or a personal visit from anyone claiming to be from BTU, call 979-821-5700 before you respond in any way. Our customer service department can determine whether the contact is legitimate. Also, BTU customers can check account balances online to determine if their account is in arrears.

## THE METER SCAM

This scam was seen in our area in late April. The scammer contacts the customer saying the State of Texas has mandated utility meter upgrades and that several letters had been sent to all customers over the last few months regarding the meter mandate. The scammer then tells the customer the upgrade deadline has passed and their current meter is no longer compatible. The scammer then demands an immediate meter deposit in order to “upgrade” the customer’s meter. We have had reports that the scammers were demanding a \$1,700 deposit, or a person could pay \$998 now and pay the rest later.

Again, BTU **does not** call residential customers to demand immediate payment. The scammer is using the confusion tactic to get people to act. There is no state mandate regarding meters, and BTU uses meters with current technology.

## ATTENTION

If you are ever contacted by someone claiming to be from BTU and you are being told to act on something you haven’t heard before, be very suspicious. Call BTU at 979-821-5700 to verify the information you have received. Follow BTU on Twitter (@BTU\_BryanTX) and Facebook (Bryan Texas Utilities), as we post Scam Alerts when we learn of scammers working the area.





# PROVIDING RELIABILITY *for the Future*

Highways crisscross Texas to move people and commodities conveniently across many miles. Electric transmission lines are similar in that they transfer large volumes of electric power at high voltages across long distances. Bryan Texas Utilities (BTU) has more than 185 miles of transmission line in the service territory with voltages of either 69,000 volts (69kV) or 138,000 volts (138kV). These BTU lines interconnect to the Texas electric grid operated by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) to move power throughout the state.

With growth comes the demand for more energy, and thus the demand for infrastructure to supply those needs. BTU had 768 customers in 1919, compared to more than 62,000 today – with most of that growth, sometimes 7% in one year, coming in the last couple of decades. The west side of the Bryan/College Station area is anticipated to become a hotspot for growth, anchored by the Texas A&M University (TAMU) System's RELLIS Campus. The campus is quickly becoming a hub for advanced research, technology development, higher education and career training. Home to unique public and private sector collaborations, the campus boasts partnerships with business giants such as the Kubota Corporation, the 3M Company, and the Army Futures Command (AFC).

As locals may know, the RELLIS Campus has a rich history. The U.S. Army first utilized the 2,000-acre tract as an airfield for training pilots during World

War II and again as an air force base during the Korean Conflict. While the university used the site in between war times, it wasn't until the 1960's when a lease was created that led to the eventual full ownership of the tract being transferred from the US government to the TAMU System. The newly dubbed Riverside Campus played host to several research entities, including the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute for many years. In 2016, John Sharp, the TAMU System Chancellor, announced a bold and visionary plan to drive the campus to realize its full potential. From that plan the RELLIS campus, named for the six Aggie core values of Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, and selfless Service, was born.

The growth that follows such an endeavor as the RELLIS Campus is substantial. Fortunately, BTU already had a plan in place to build a 138kV transmission infrastructure on the west side of the service territory prior to the RELLIS initiative announcement. The Steele Store Substation that has served a portion of the west side of the service territory since the early 1960's began an expansion in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) to accommodate anticipated growth and improve reliability in that area. Additionally, a new 10-mile 138 kV transmission line was constructed to connect the Steele Store Substation to the Snook Substation.





BTU’s future transmission plans include the rebuild of an existing 5-mile 69kV transmission line to 138kV to connect the Steele Store Substation to a soon-to-be-constructed Smetana Substation. Once this project is completed, BTU will begin the next phase of 138kV transmission expansion by rebuilding another existing 5-mile 69kV transmission line and converting it to 138kV. This line will connect the Smetana Substation to the new Leonard Substation. The last piece of the puzzle is a 2-mile connection from the Leonard Substation to the Atkins Substation near Downtown Bryan. This long-term plan creates another loop of transmission lines necessary to further improve electric reliability and prepare for future residential and commercial growth on the west side of Bryan that will be spurred on by the RELLIS Campus development.

BTU’s long-range preparation and forecasting led to power being available as growth intensified, and will now help support future development. New substations, aluminum conductors, and steel and concrete poles serve as much more than just vehicles for the transportation of electricity in and around the RELLIS Campus. This infrastructure is helping support the innovation of ideas and formulation of technologies to push our community and the world forward.

**Steele Store Substation ►**





# Outdoor Electrical Safety

Texans are spending more time at home this year, which means more time spent outdoors at home as well. Whether doing chores around the house or enjoying a backyard cookout, it is always important to follow these electrical safety tips:

## ***Examine your extension cords before each use.***

Check extension cords for cracked or damaged sockets, bare wires, and loose connections. Dispose of and replace damaged cords immediately. Never cut off the ground pin on a three-prong plug in order to fit an outlet with only two slots, as it could lead to a shock hazard. Do not use an indoor extension cord for outdoor purposes. Also, do not run extension cords over driveways or through doors, as vehicles can damage the cord's insulated sleeve and closed doors can pinch and break wires. Don't connect multiple extension cords together. This can result in a voltage drop and overheating, as the cords are designed to carry power only for the distance of the cord's length. Instead, use a single longer cord instead of connecting multiple shorter cords.



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## ***Use power tools properly.***

Never carry a power tool by its cord, as it can pull the wire connection loose and cause a shock hazard. Don't yank the cord out of a plug, as it can damage the prongs and the receptacle. Store power tools inside a shed, garage, or house. Power tools that are stored outside can build up moisture internally and can short out or become a shock hazard. For the same reason, don't use power tools in the rain or in wet conditions. Unplug the tool when it is not in use.



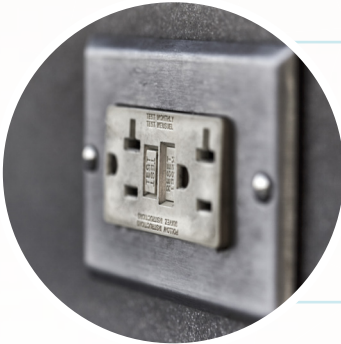
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## ***Use outdoor lighting properly.***

Use only outdoor-rated bulbs in outdoor light fixtures, and never use a bulb that exceeds the fixture's maximum wattage. Today's LED bulbs use far less energy than standard incandescent bulbs, which means they are much cheaper to operate and emit much less heat. For instance, a 20 watt LED bulb emits the same amount of light as a 100-watt incandescent bulb and will last over 15 times longer before it has to be replaced. If you want to use decorative lighting for an outdoor event, make sure the lighting is rated for outdoor use.



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### ***Use GFCI outlets anywhere near water.***

Ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets are designed to prevent electrocution by cutting off power when it senses an interruption in current. If a device plugged into a GFCI outlet is accidentally dropped in water, the plug will cut the power off as quickly as one-thirtieth of a second. Older homes should have non-GFCI outlets replaced, or you can use portable GFCI adapters which plug into regular wall receptacles.

### ***Call Texas 811 at least 48 hours before digging.***

If you have a home project that will require digging, always call 811 well in advance to avoid damaging underground utility lines. Even if you are only going to move a shrub, contact 811 before every digging project to protect yourself. The service is free of charge, and if you don't call 811 and hit a utility line, you will be responsible for the cost of repairs to the line! If your project involves planting trees or bushes, make sure you plant them far away from the underground utility lines to avoid potential problems with roots. Also, watch out for overhead utility lines as well. Plant in a location so that the mature tree branches will be at least 20 feet away from power lines.



### ***Don't prune trees within 15 feet of electrical lines.***

BTU follows a four- to five-year tree trimming cycle. This means trees that are in the right-of-way of power lines will be trimmed every four to five years by professional tree trimmers. Don't attempt to trim branches yourself that are located within 15 feet of power lines. If a branch is broken or poses a risk of contacting power lines, call BTU for assistance.

### ***Don't block or cover utility boxes/transformers.***

If the utilities in your neighborhood are located underground, the utility boxes and transformers will be located at ground level, possibly in your yard. Do not plant any vegetation near these structures in an attempt to make them more aesthetically pleasing. Not only is digging around these structures is dangerous, but obstructing them poses a safety hazard in case power must be cut off in an emergency. Also, if technicians need to repair or replace these devices, any vegetation around the structures will be removed. Teach children not to play on or near these structures, and do not tamper with utility infrastructure in any way.





# BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY

*Most of the schools in our area have been vacant since the middle of March, but it appears that schools will reopen in some form later this month. In anticipation of students finally heading back to school, here are some safety tips to keep our students happy and healthy.*

**Be extra careful in school zones.** When schools reopen, school zones will get busy quickly. Watch out for crossing guards, and exercise patience. Allow yourself extra time if your morning commute takes you through school zones.

**If your child rides a bike to school, review bike safety rules.** Make sure the child knows to always wear a helmet when riding a bike, even for a short ride. Choose the safest route to the school and practice with your child until they can demonstrate traffic safety awareness. The rules of the road apply equally to all vehicles, so have your child ride on the right-hand side of the road and come to a complete stop at stop signs, and only cross the road at intersections.

**Choose and use a backpack correctly.** The American Occupational Therapy Association reported that an estimated 55 percent of students who use backpacks do so incorrectly, and that can contribute to back, neck, and shoulder pain as well as the development of poor posture. Choose a backpack that is lightweight, has wide padded shoulder straps and a padded back. Make sure your child wears both straps at all times to help distribute weight more evenly. The most important safety tip is this: do not overload the backpack! Your child's backpack should weigh no more than 15 percent of his or her body weight. For a 50-pound child, this equates to 7.5 pounds. For a 75-pound child, this equals just over 11 pounds of backpack weight. Any more weight can cause a child to slouch or hunch to compensate for the extra weight.

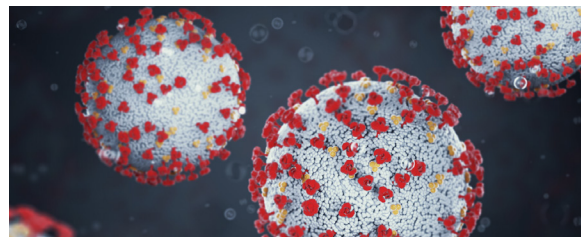


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**Safety at the bus stop.** How buses will run this fall is uncertain, but bus safety remains a constant. Have your child get in the habit of arriving at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time so they can walk safely and unhurried to the bus stop. Teach the child to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before stepping into the street to board the bus. Once on board the bus, the child must remain seated and follow the driver's instructions.



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**Follow the school's COVID-19 guidelines.** As the opening of schools draws nearer, school districts will provide health and safety guidelines for parents and students alike to help prevent coronavirus outbreaks. Relay the importance of following these guidelines to your child, and practice the safety guidelines at home to provide a model for your child to follow.





## June Update: Construction underway at Midtown Park

**Construction on several parts of the Travis Bryan Midtown Park project are well underway, and progress can start to be seen.**

City staff are working finishing up work with consultants to soon complete the design guidelines for the overall development of the park, including the public and private components. Once complete, Bryan's regional park will be the premier recreational and sports destination in the Brazos Valley. Planned amenities include a large indoor sports and event facility, a 2-mile perimeter walking trail, a lake with two piers, upgraded baseball and softball fields, an amphitheater, a grand lawn, many acres of open space, and a greenbelt.

### Other recent progress includes:

- **Midtown Park Boulevard from Villa Maria north through the park.** The first phase of this road is estimated to be substantially complete in late June, with the traffic signal at Villa Maria installed later in 2020.
- **A lake bypass channel that will allow the upstream water to flow around the lake prior to it being excavated.** Construction is also substantially complete on this phase.
- **A sedimentation and detention pond. Work has begun and is anticipated to be complete by the end of the summer.** The first pond will be located directly behind the upcoming Big Shots Golf™ development, and the dirt removed from this pond will be used to build a berm along Williamson Drive to elevate the back corner of the park in preparation for future ballfields.
- **Excavating the lake.** Construction plans are being completed, and staff anticipate awarding a bid for the project at a July City Council meeting. Once started, the lake excavation work will take approximately one year.
- **Travis Fields reconstruction.** This phase was approved by the Bryan City Council at its June 9 meeting. Construction should begin within the next few weeks and is anticipated to be complete by early 2021, in time for Little League season.

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**Follow progress and learn more about Travis Bryan Midtown Park at [BryanTX.gov/MidtownPark](https://bryantx.gov/midtownpark).**