

## Regular Board of Directors *Meeting Notes*

### March 8, 2021

#### Presentation of the Safety Report

Mr. Steve Martin, BTU Safety Officer, presented the safety statistics for February 2021, stating BTU had one documented injury, no recordable injuries, and no vehicle incidents. Mr. Martin stated that during the recent winter storm, given road conditions, BTU staff did an excellent job of preparing and performing, resulting in no injuries and no vehicle incidents.

#### Approval of a Resolution to Dissolve the TMPA Decommissioning Fund

Mr. Will Smith, Chief Financial Officer, stated that the BTU Board approved the creation of a decommissioning fund for the Texas Municipal Power Agency's (TMPA) Gibbons Creek Power Plant in August of 2019. On February 10, 2021, TMPA sold the plant to a third party who assumed full responsibility of decommissioning the power plant. As a result, BTU no longer needs to restrict funds for the decommissioning. The Board unanimously approved Resolution BTU-P-269 to dissolve the TMPA Decommissioning Fund and direct those funds to BTU's unrestricted fund balance.



Rodger's Substation

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HEB Grocery – Tejas Center on Villa Maria  
HEB Grocery – Texas Ave. & Hwy 21

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#### BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

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**[www.btutilities.com](http://www.btutilities.com)**

#### Hours of Operation

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

#### Board of Directors

Mr. A. Bentley Nettles, Chairman  
Ms. Rosemarie Selman, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Pete J. Bienski, Jr., Secretary  
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Mr. Paul Madison, Sr.  
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Nick Cook  
Shawndra Curry  
Ken Lindberg  
Clay Lindstrom  
Vicki Reim  
Gary Massey

Doug Lyles, Chief Risk Officer

#### City of Bryan

Kean Register, City Manager  
Will Smith, 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**

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# May

## National Electrical Safety Month



May is National Electrical Safety Month. To celebrate, use the checklist below to inspect your home's electrical system to keep your family safe all year long.

### ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check all cords, plugs, surge protectors, and extension cords for fraying, exposed wire or broken components. Never cut the third prong off a plug to fit a two-prong outlet.
- ☐ Extension cords are for temporary use only. Do not use an extension cord as a permanent fixture. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to install some wherever you require.
- ☐ Do not overload an outlet with multiple high-wattage or heat-producing devices, for example space heaters, toasters, or hair dryers.
- ☐ Plugs should fit snugly into outlets. If yours do not, contact a licensed electrician to upgrade.
- ☐ Major appliances such as washers, dryers, refrigerators, stoves, air conditioners, and hot water heaters should be plugged directly into a wall outlet specifically designed to handle their electrical needs. Do not use surge protectors or extension cords for large appliances.
- ☐ Only use lightbulbs at or below the maximum wattage listed on your lamp or light fixture. There should be a sticker on the fixture indicating the max wattage.
- ☐ If you have young children, consider equipping your home with tamper-resistant (TR) electrical outlets. If your home was built after 2008, this should be standard. Also, consider installing outlet covers on easy-to-reach receptacles.
- ☐ Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) are a type of circuit breaker that shuts off the current when an arc-fault is detected, reducing the chance of electrical fire. Ask a licensed electrician about installing AFCIs in your home.
- ☐ Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are another type of circuit breaker that reduce the risk of electrical shock by de-energizing the circuit if it becomes hazardous. A licensed electrician should install GFCIs near possible water sources including your garage, basement, kitchen, bath, and all outdoor outlets. GFCIs were required in certain areas of new homes beginning in the late 1970s.
- ☐ Test AFCIs and GFCIs at least once per month. (At least one outlet on each circuit will have a button that says TEST on it. Plug a device into the outlet and push the TEST button, the device should not work until the outlet is reset.)
- ☐ Always dial 811 to have your underground lines marked prior to beginning any project that requires digging. Electrical lines can be buried 2-4 feet deep, so even small projects could cause injury and/or damage to utilities.
- ☐ Make sure your electrical panel has accurate labels on each of the circuit breakers, naming the outlets/rooms/appliances to which they are connected.



### WARNING SIGNS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BY AN ELECTRICIAN

- ✗ Outlets are warm to the touch, are discolored, make a buzzing or crackling sound, or give off an odd smell (possibly like burning plastic or fishy smell).
- ✗ Your lights dim or flicker, especially when using high-wattage devices.
- ✗ You regularly have fuses blow or circuit breakers trip.
- ✗ A light switch or outlet gives you a shock or tingling sensation when touched.



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# *Beat the Heat:* **HUMIDITY CONTROL**

The expression, "It's not the heat, it's the humidity," gets used every summer in the southern states, especially when the relative humidity levels rise to near 100 percent. While there is not much we can do about the level of humidity in the outside air, there are certainly things we can do to control the humidity inside our homes.

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## *"It's not the heat, it's the humidity"*

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Humidity is the concentration of water vapor present in the air, while relative humidity measures the amount of water in the air in relation to the maximum amount of water vapor it can hold. As the amount of moisture in the air increases, the temperature feels hotter than it actually is because the air is closer to its saturation point, which limits evaporation. When our bodies get too warm, we begin to sweat, and it is the evaporation of our sweat that cools us down. When the humidity is too high, our sweat can't fully evaporate and our bodies can't efficiently regulate our temperature.

Humidity is one of the three primary elements that control air comfort; the other two elements are temperature and air movement. The level of humidity in the air directly affects how hot the temperature feels to us. This is why a summer day in Bryan with 95 degree air filled with humidity from the Gulf of Mexico feels hotter than a 95 degree day in a dry city such as El Paso.

As we approach the warmer months of the year, controlling humidity inside our homes becomes very important not only for our comfort, but also for energy efficiency as well as to protect our home from damage and disease. The ideal comfort zone inside the home is 30 to 60 percent relative humidity. Your Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system plays a large role in removing humidity from the air, while running a dishwasher, taking a hot bath or shower, and boiling water on the stove all add humidity to the indoor air. The capacity of air to hold water also changes with temperature. The warmer the air, the more water vapor it can hold. The colder the air, the less moisture it can hold.

High humidity can cause problems in your home if relative humidity regularly exceeds 60%. These high humidity levels encourage mold, bacteria, and mildew growth. An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report on moisture control in buildings cited evidence of adverse health effects of damp indoor environments, including upper and lower respiratory illness, wheezing, and asthma symptoms, including development of asthma in children.

Prolonged increased humidity can damage your home's structure as well. Microscopic mold fungi are all around us, but damp areas of the home provide an ideal environment for them to settle on surfaces and grow. Over time, mold fungus breaks down and digests these surface materials, leading to rotting of the structure. Excess moisture can also cause wood and plaster to swell, leading to cracks in walls, ceilings, and window sills.

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Humidity levels that are too low can also cause adverse effects, including dry or itchy eyes, dry skin, and by allowing infections to spread more rapidly. Prolonged exposure to humidity levels less than 30 percent can also cause physical damage to the home. When wood loses too much moisture in dry air, it shrinks, resulting in damage to doors, flooring and window sills and panes. Low humidity can also generate excess static electricity, which can damage electrical equipment.

During warmer months, there are some basic steps you can take to lower the humidity in your home to help make it feel cooler and more comfortable. The kitchen and bathrooms are the biggest contributors to higher humidity levels, so use vent fans to get rid of the hot, humid air. The Home Ventilation Institute recommends leaving the vent fan on for 20 minutes after a shower or bath to adequately clear the humid air. Kitchen hood vents that are ducted to the outside can eliminate the excess heat, moisture, grease, odors, and pollutants that are byproducts of cooking. Turn the vent fan on every time your burners are on to get rid of the heated air, and clean the filters often to prevent grease build-up.

You can also run certain appliances at night to minimize their effect on humidity in the house. Modern dishwashers are extremely efficient, using much less water than hand washing. However, dishwashers increase the amount of humidity in your kitchen, which means your air conditioner will have to work harder to make your home feel comfortable. By running your dishwasher at night before bed, the air conditioner is already running more efficiently in the cooler evening air and has an easier time removing the humidity from your home.

Make sure your home is properly insulated and sealed to keep the heat and humidity of the outside air from getting inside your home. Minimize the amount of air leaking into your home by caulking window and door

frames and adding or replacing weather-stripping around windows and doors. Ask for advice from your local hardware store or do a little research online. V-seal or V-channel weather-stripping with an adhesive backing is inexpensive and can be easily and quickly installed by the homeowner. Install a door sweep if you can see daylight or feel a draft under an exterior door. Homes that are fully sealed are easier to keep cool and dry.



Make sure your HVAC system is operating properly and keep it maintained in order to adequately remove humidity from the inside air. Schedule routine preventive maintenance with an experienced HVAC technician to make sure the coils and condensation drains are clean and refrigeration and lubrication are at their proper levels. This will maximize the efficiency of your HVAC, which will not only reduce humidity but also save on energy costs and extend the life of your unit.

Finally, make sure your thermostat is on the AUTO setting, not the FAN ON setting. The FAN ON setting continuously moves air even when the AC is not running, which ends up blowing the moisture your AC has removed back into your home before it has a chance to fully drain away, and the constant fan increases energy costs.

# STORM PREPAREDNESS



When severe weather is predicted to enter our service area, BTU makes preparations to ensure that crews are ready to respond to weather-related issues that could affect power delivery. It is important that our customers are also prepared to handle weather-related issues.

The best time to prepare for severe weather conditions is long before the bad weather arrives. In our area, we are susceptible to several different warm weather storm conditions. Here are three different types of severe weather conditions and how to plan for each one.





## TORNADOES

Tornadoes are funnel-shaped columns of violently rotating winds, some of which can reach 300 miles per hour. Tornadoes are usually spawned from strong thunderstorms and can cause severe property damage and loss of life. A Tornado Watch means conditions are favorable for tornadoes to form in your area. A Tornado Warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.

Now is the time to determine where you will seek shelter in your home or business. Always go to the lowest building level – a basement is ideal. In our area of the country, having a basement is rare, so locate the center of an interior room away from windows, doors, and outside walls. If you happen to be in a vehicle or mobile home, get out immediately and seek shelter in the lowest floor of a nearby sturdy building. If you are unable to find shelter indoors, lie flat in a ditch or low area and cover your head with your hands. Never try to outrun a tornado in your vehicle, and do not seek shelter under a bridge or overpass, as wind speeds can increase due to a funneling effect.



## SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

A thunderstorm reaches severe status when it produces a tornado, has winds of 50 knots (58 miles per hour), and/or has hail at least one inch in diameter (quarter-size hail). A Severe Thunderstorm Watch means that conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms in the watch area, and are usually issued several hours in advance of the development of severe weather. A Severe Thunderstorm Warning is issued when a severe thunderstorm is indicated by radar or reported by trained storm spotters.

Once a severe thunderstorm watch has been announced, secure outdoor objects that could be blown away and cause damage. Secure outside doors and close garage doors. If a warning is issued for your area, unplug electronic devices and turn off your HVAC unit to protect against surges caused by lightning strikes. Avoid taking a shower or running water until the danger has passed, as plumbing can conduct electricity if struck by lightning. If you are caught outside when severe thunderstorms approach, find a safe, sturdy building and stay away from windows. Stay away from tall structures such as towers, trees, and utility poles.



## HURRICANES

A hurricane is an intense tropical cyclone, which is a low pressure system with winds of 74 miles per hour or higher rotating around a central eye. A Hurricane Watch indicates the possibility that your area could experience hurricane conditions within 36 hours. A Hurricane Warning indicates that sustained winds of at least 74 mph are expected to affect your area within 24 hours or less. Even though our area is over 125 miles inland from the Texas coast, we can still be affected by hurricane force winds.

One of the most important ways to prepare for a hurricane is to create an emergency supply kit of food, water, and other basic supplies your family will need in the event of a disaster. It is very important to create your kit now, as basic supplies will run short once a hurricane watch is announced. Go to [ready.gov/kit](https://ready.gov/kit) for more information on creating your emergency supply kit.

Other preparations include filling your vehicle's gas tank, as pumps will not work if electricity is out. Also, withdraw enough cash to last several days, as ATMs and credit card machines will be shut off if the power is out. If your power is out, avoid opening your refrigerator or freezer as much as possible. A fully loaded freezer can keep food frozen for up to 48 hours if the door has not been opened.

For any type of severe weather, always stay tuned to local news and weather outlets for the latest information. Consider investing in a hand crank radio and flashlight so you can stay up to date on the latest news without the need for batteries or electricity. Some models even have USB ports to charge phones and small electronic devices. Remember, preparation for severe weather events can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the storms, as well as reducing the storm's impact on you and your property.



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# CELEBRATING DRINKING WATER WEEK

*May 2-8, 2021*

You use it every day, but you don't ever really think about it. It's an essential part of life, but how much do you really know about the City of Bryan's drinking water? As we celebrate National Drinking Water Week, which is May 2-8, 2021, we recognize the vital role that water plays in our daily lives.

Bryan's drinking water comes from deep below ground. The city uses 10 wells in the Simsboro formation of the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer as the primary source of our drinking water. Bryan also has two reserve wells in the Sparta formation. All of the locations of our wells are in the northern section of Brazos County.

So, how does the water get from thousands of feet below ground to your home? Once the water from the wells reaches the low-service (transfer) pump station, it passes through cooling towers before being stored in two ground storage reservoirs. These reservoirs can store up to 1.5 million gallons of water. The water is drawn from these reservoirs by the low-service pumps, chlorinated and delivered to the ground storage reservoirs at the high-service pump station. The reservoirs at this location can store 10 million gallons of water. The water is then drawn from these reservoirs by high-service pumps and delivered simultaneously to the city's water distribution system and elevated storage reservoirs. That's where it enters your home, so you can enjoy a refreshing glass of water.

Bryan's water quality meets or exceeds all primary and secondary drinking water standards. Since our water is sourced from a deep groundwater supply, it is less susceptible to outside pollution and is easier to treat than

surface water (which means fewer chances for treatment mistakes). You can even see the City of Bryan Drinking Water Quality Reports from the last several years at:

<https://www.bryantx.gov/water-services>

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*"Bryan's water production staff take great pride in ensuring Bryan residents have a reliable source of water at a very consistent quality – the ingredients for a very safe water supply," said Charles Rhodes, Production and Field Operations Manager.*

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Last year, single-family homes in Bryan used more than 1.85 billion gallons of water for things like bathing, cooking, drinking and irrigation.

National Drinking Water Week was established in 1998 by the American Water Works Association, which formed a coalition with the League of Women Voters, the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators and the US Environmental Protection Agency. The first week of May was established as Drinking Water Week, and the week-long observance was declared in a joint congressional resolution signed by then President Ronald Reagan.

More information about Drinking Water Week is available on the AWWA website. You can learn more about Bryan's Water Services Department at:

<https://www.bryantx.gov/water-services>

# MAY 29-31, 2021 IS THE ANNUAL TEXAS ENERGY STAR® SALES TAX HOLIDAY WEEKEND.



May 29-31, 2021 is the annual Texas ENERGY STAR® Sales Tax Holiday weekend. During this period, you can buy many home appliances with no sales tax applied. The following ENERGY STAR® appliances are included in the program:

- ★ Air conditioner, the sales price of which does not exceed \$6,000
- ★ Clothes washer
- ★ Ceiling fan
- ★ Dehumidifier
- ★ Dishwasher
- ★ Incandescent or fluorescent lightbulbs
- ★ Programmable thermostat
- ★ Refrigerator, the sales price of which does not exceed \$2,000

Both in-store and online purchases qualify for the tax savings, as long as the order is made during the event hours. Utilizing this tax-free opportunity can not only save you money up front, but can also save you hundreds in reduced energy costs over the lifetime of the ENERGY STAR® rated appliance. For example, ENERGY STAR® certified clothes washers use 25 percent less energy and 33 percent less water than their traditional counterparts.

