

Transcript of the College Station electric department's video that was presented during the January 11, 2024 city council meeting:

This presentation is about College Station Utilities. CSU is the electrical utility that serves the City of College Station. We are a municipal utility owned by the city and we pride ourselves on our reliability and customer service. CSU began operation in 1939. We're the ninth-largest municipal electric utility in Texas, and we're in the top 100 in size in the nation. We have been designated as a reliable public power provider by the American Public Power Association continually since 2009.

So how about we tell you a little about our utility? Here is the CSU management team. We have over 150 years of combined experience in the utility business covering investor owned utilities, municipals, and industry. CSU has almost a hundred full-time employees to operate and maintain the system. As a municipal electric utility, CSU is a regulated electric utility. This means in our service territory we're the only ones allowed to provide power.

In 2001, when the Texas market deregulated the 72 municipal electric utilities chose to not participate in this deregulation. As it turns out, many states never moved to a deregulated market. Public Power continues to serve their communities with reliable power at a consistent and reasonable rate. This graphic shows a simplified version of how power gets to your home.

From generation, transmission lines, substations, distribution lines, and finally, the transformer and service to your home. CSU does not own any generation, but does own and operate the other components required to provide power to our customers. This is a map of the ERCOT system of transmission lines that serve about two-thirds of the state.

As part of the ERCOT system, we are subject to respond to any power emergencies that might happen in the system, such as conservation efforts and rolling outages that might be weather or system related. CSU's service territory is fixed by where the city limits were in 2002. As College Station has expanded, BTU provides electric service to additional areas that have been incorporated into the city

As an electric utility, everyone knows that we provide service to new customers, but what else do we do? We operate and maintain the existing system that has over 510 miles of distribution and 20 miles of transmission power lines. Because of the transmission lines, we fall under strict compliance guidelines that if not followed exactly, could lead to fines that can go up to a million dollars per day.

We serve the new multi-story apartment developments in the Northgate area. This area has evolved in the past 10 years from duplexes and rental homes to 20 storey apartment complexes, and it continues to grow. We do projects to improve the aesthetics of the city. This is Harvey Road before and after. Texas Avenue before and after. Not all of the facilities were put underground.

Some of the lines were relocated, rerouted, or combined with other existing facilities. We own and operate eight substations. Each one had an initial cost of six to 10 million dollars. We offer rebate programs to our customers to help them save energy and money. We provide street lighting and street light repair. We were the first city in Texas to install a street light monitoring system so that we can tell when a street light needs maintenance.

And in 2017 we spent about \$2.6 million to replace all the street lights with energy-efficient LEDs, reducing the power consumption for street lights by over half. We provide ongoing maintenance and storm restoration. In order to reduce storm related outages, we are on a three-year tree trimming cycle. We spend about \$500,000 per year on this program.

Another thing that reduces our storm-related outages is that our system is 61% underground. Back in the early 90s, we began using non-wood poles to reduce future maintenance costs and to strengthen our overhead system from storms. Our system now contains about 54% non-wood poles.

Woo-hoo.

Although much of our system is underground, it still must be maintained. We have a program to restore pad-mounted equipment to extended service life. This program costs about \$365,000 per year. We do meter testing and investigations. And in 2021, we completed an advanced metering infrastructure project that allowed us to automate meter reading and to detect customer outages on the system. When it comes to outages, our biggest nemesis is actually quite small.

Aw.

The number one cause of outages in our system is wildlife. The average outage time for our customers for a year was 48 minutes. If you take out major events, it was 20 minutes. That means that 99.9962% of the time the power was on. So what do we consider major events?

This is a breaker in one of our substations. It's about a \$30,000 item. We thought it had failed, but when we opened it up, we found out the cause of the outage was a snake. This was another outage on top of one of our substation breakers, and here was our terrorist. Watch closely on this one or you might miss it. This was birds building a nest on top of a substation breaker.

We actually had one instance where birds were building a nest using rebar ties from an adjacent construction site. This was another snake either going after baby birds or trying to get away from the massive two and a half inches of rain that had just happened. So to alleviate these types of outages, CSU has spent about \$600,000 on additional wildlife deterrent in our substations. Since completion of the installation, we have not had a crawling or walking critter related outage in a substation.

Unfortunately, the fence is not high enough to keep the birds out. So there you have it, the story of CSU and what we do to provide electric service to our customers. As a municipal electric utility, we are a not-for-profit entity. We're funded through our rates and not through taxes. We provide a return to the city of almost \$10 million a year, and what we have to sell to our customers is dependability and quality of service.