



Brownsville Utility Department TMEPA Member Spotlight June 2017



The city of Brownsville [boasts itself](#) as “a city on the move” with “an enthusiastic outlook for the future that position [Brownsville] to be a leader in the region for years to come.” To be such a city, it has to have a backbone of good infrastructure and utilities to make it attractive to its citizens and newcomers. Luckily, the city has a one stop shop for its utilities, and for nearly eighty years has relied on Brownsville Utility Department for its power and adding other services over the years.



Like much of the South in the early 1900's, electric power was available in Brownsville but from private sources. The birth of the Tennessee Valley Authority totally changed things, bringing in the era of federal and local governments working together to build out electric service so that it is available to everyone.

In 1939, the City of Brownsville purchased the electric distribution system from the West Tennessee Power and Light Company, which had been serving Brownsville for approximately 30 years. When it was bought by the city, the electric utility had 3 full time employees with revenue of \$20,518. There were 769 customers, with an average monthly residential electric bill of \$2.25.



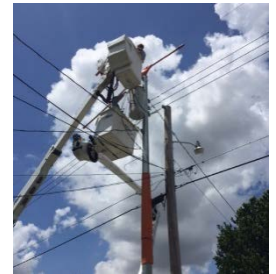
In 1959, Dr. Chapman, Mayor of Brownsville, initiated the purchase of the gas distribution system of Brownsville from West Tennessee Gas Company. At this time, the responsibility of the day-to-day operations and management of the gas, water, and sewer departments was turned over to the Power Board and the name was changed to the City of Brownsville Utility Board. This made for a complete system serving all utilities of the city.

In 1975, the Brownsville Utility Department became a distributor of Propane. The Utility Department now serves natural gas and propane not only to Brownsville but to other parts of Haywood County with approximately 1,000 total customers.



As the needs for water and wastewater service have grown in the area, Brownsville Utility Department has grown to meet the utility needs of some of the surrounding communities. Because it is a leading utility in West Tennessee, This includes operating the water and wastewater systems for the Town of Stanton and the Haywood County Utility District water system.

Brownsville Utility Board members are considered to have been instrumental in the growth of Brownsville. The board has governed the utility with a conservative mindset that has held utility rates among the lowest in the state. By 2017, the Brownsville Utility Department has grown from serving its original 769 customers to over 17,000 metered customers with assets of over \$45 million.



In 2008 at the request of the city of Brownsville, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a private act to allow the Brownsville Utilities Department to become the Brownsville Energy Authority. This restructured the utility as a standalone entity separated from the city, but its board is still appointed by the city and has kept a strong relationship with city government. The utility is an avid supporter of the Relay for Life to fight against cancer, and it participates in the National Night Out, a community building campaign promoting safety and crime prevention.

[Contact Brownsville Utility Department](#)

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Brownsville Utilities by the Numbers

Total Employees: 43

Electric Service:

- 5,357 customers
- Three Substations: Brownsville, Dupree, & Industrial Park
- Over 120 miles of Distribution line
- Purchases power from Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)



Water Service:

- 5,356 customers
- Two Water Treatment Plants: Dupree Street & Powell Street
- Over 260 miles of water main
- Average treating 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD)
- Water sourced from the Memphis Sands Aquifer
- Five wells
- Six pumps
- Five elevated tanks
- 930 Fire Hydrants
- Operates water systems for Haywood County Utility District & City of Stanton, Tennessee
- Regulated by TDEC

Wastewater Service:

- 5,045 customers
- Two Wastewater Treatment Plants: South Washington Avenue & Tibbs Road
- Over 85 miles of main
- Treat @ 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD)
- Operates city of Stanton, Tennessee's wastewater system
- Regulated by TDEC



Gas Service:

- 5,365 customers
- Over 240 miles of natural gas main (10 psi – 120 psi)
- Gas supplied by Texas Gas through a 4" high pressure main
- Regulated by TRA

Propane Service:

- Started distributing to Brownsville and Haywood County in 1975
- Approximately 1,000 customers

Awards & Recognition:

- Central Service Association Utilitrak Pioneer Award - 2016
- Top Performer of TVA EnergyRight Solutions - 2015
- 50 plus years of Continuous Membership at Central Service Association
- 25 years of service with DIC

