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Bryan, TX 77803

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Bryan Grocery Stores:

Provide Quality Products, Stellar Customer Service and Economical Prices while Brightening the Community

By Louellen S. Coker

Grocery stores provide the bare necessities of life and, through the food they sell, are an integral part of how people enjoy and live their lives. Bryan is fortunate to have several large establishments to meet the grocery, meat, seafood, floral and pharmaceutical needs of its citizens. While each store is different from the other, every site has the common goal of providing its shoppers the utmost in quality products, customer service and economical prices possible. Whether homegrown or a national corporation, all the stores and their employees make the lives of their customers easier and brighter by meeting an essential need.



Helping make your life easier.

Joe Albertson established the philosophy of Albertsons grocery store at the time he opened his first one in Boise, Idaho when he said, "You've got to give the customers the merchandise they want, at a price they can afford, complete with tender, loving care." Albertsons' employees who work in Bryan's 1901 South Texas Avenue location continue their founder's view of

business and work toward meeting the needs and making the lives of their patrons easier. They strive to achieve these goals through exemplary customer service, employee development and involvement in the community since the store opened in 2002.

Bryan's Albertsons, through its 90 high-energy associates, provide a level of customer service that is sure to make any shopping excursion pleasurable. Not only do they want



Located at 1901 South Texas Avenue, Albertsons is Bryan's newest supermarket and strives to make its customers' lives easier.

to be Bryan's number one food and drug retailer, they want to be a part of making Albertsons the world's top supermarket. Employees are handpicked by Store Director, Bonita Hebb who looks for traits such as being team players, having positive attitudes and possessing caring dispositions toward those who shop in Albertsons.

"As we work to make our customers' lives easier," Ms. Hebb

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Albertsons continued from pg. 17 stated, “we are consistently among the top performers in the company for associate interaction, customer service and scan accuracy.” Employees understand the store is large and will offer assistance in a manner similar to a doting relative, ensuring the customer has a positive experience while at the store.

Customers enjoy one-stop shopping in this conveniently laid out store with different full-service departments throughout. Shoppers take advantage of services such as 30-minute film processing, fresh meat and produce departments, full-service bakery and floral departments along with a wide selection of wines and beer. They can also find recipes and information about produce and meats located in department displays.

Albertsons recognizes the needs of its customers are varied and offers services that most other grocery stores do not provide. They currently offer a refund and

replacement guarantee on their hand-selected, carved and trimmed as well as cut-to-order Blue Ribbon Beef and Steakhouse Choice Beef selections.

Another example of this commitment is the fuel center and convenience store located in the main store’s parking lot. Flowers can be wired to any delivery area and customers can call ahead to place deli and bakery orders for in-store pick up. Another innovative pilot program that has yet to come to Bryan is Albertsons Internet shopping with the option of in-store pick up or home delivery. “We get a lot of positive feedback about the special services we offer,” Ms. Hebb reflected. “We continually strive to add programs which will make our customers’ lives easier.”

Bryan clientele often seek employment with Albertsons because, as Ms. Hebb explained, “they have consistently good experiences as shoppers, recognize the attitude of our employees and decide they want

to be part of such a good work setting.” Albertsons offers its employees flexible schedules, competitive salaries and the opportunity to advance in their careers.

“Many of our employees are students. We

understand their primary goal is to be successful in school. We work with them to ensure they are successful at both school and work,” said Ms. Hebb. In

addition to flexible schedules, Albertsons offers scholarships and tuition reimbursement opportunities for its employees. The store also provides many career opportunities through its training programs.

Ms. Hebb tries to maintain a diverse team of employees who reflect the diversity of her store’s customers. Albertsons also has a corporate-wide diversity training program that allows employees to recognize and appreciate diversity in the workforce, marketplace and representation while understanding differences and similarities. The result of this advanced training allows Ms. Hebb to maintain a work environment that embodies an open door policy and team atmosphere.

To the Bryan Albertsons’ employees, customer service extends out into the community. Employees volunteer a considerable amount of their time, money and energy to nonprofit organizations, individuals and groups throughout the city. The store donates product to different charities through varied donations. Just a few ways customers’ lives are made easier includes donated sandwiches to Habitat for Humanity crews, library books to area schools, American Red Cross blood drives, Food Bank support and the Community Partner program.

Albertsons is open 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM seven days a week, with pharmacy hours of 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday-Friday and 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday. The fuel center is open 6:30 AM to 10:00 PM for check and cash customers and gas is available 24 hours a day for pay at the pump customers. For more information about Albertsons, please visit www.albertsons.com or contact the store directly at (979) 822-8022 or the pharmacy at (979) 822-8155.



Albertsons provides its customers a clean store in which they easily purchase food, drink and other necessities. Albertsons’ employees truly work to make your life easier.





AppleTree Markets, Inc., with its two Bryan locations at 1760 Briarcrest and 2001 Highway 21, has been a positive part of the community since 1975. AppleTree is managed and operated by local owners and employees who sell local produce and goods carefully selected to meet the shopping needs of its clients. This Aggie-owned and operated company, through its two stores, sell everything national corporation stores offer and emphasize customer and community service.

Customer service is of paramount importance to AppleTree employees. Every employee is accessible to the shopper and strives to make every visit to either of the AppleTree stores a pleasant experience. Tony Kubicek, president and C.E.O. of AppleTree Markets, Inc., maintains the goal of AppleTree is for his employees to “run the store so that customers are treated as the employee would

want to be treated.”

Tracy Davis, Vice President and General Manager of AppleTree Markets, Inc., stated, “Although our stores are totally different demographically, we do whatever it takes to serve our customers.”

Shirley Stratta, Store Director of the Highway 21 location, attributes the success of her store to the ability she has to select her product.

“Because we are independent, we can merchandise for the clientele of the area. We also hire from within our immediate communities, giving us employees who are a reflection of our customers.”

In the Highway 21 store, customers enjoy a bakery, deli, dollar section, full-service floral department, groceries and fresh meat and seafood along with one of the largest Hispanic food sections in the area. Its staff of approximately 55 people is friendly and creates an atmosphere that ensures customers return time and time again.

The majority of Ms. Stratta’s employees have been a part of this store for more than 15 years. Ms. Stratta started her career with AppleTree as a checker and has worked in just about every position in the store over the last 35 years.

The Briarcrest store is a



AppleTree’s 2001 Highway 21 location offers exciting “Dollar” goods (shown above) as well as attractive pinatas for parties (shown left).

little bigger and offers the same amenities as its sister store with the additional offerings of a full-service meat and seafood market, pharmacy, 30-minute film developing along with larger floral, beer/wine and bakery/deli departments. Jimmy Junek, Store Director of the Briarcrest location, proudly remarked, “We offer an excellent selection of quality food and have employees who are willing to help our customers with preparation ideas. We also enjoy floral designers who are on par with those in expensive florist shops.”

Department managers search for the highest quality goods in the Bryan area before going elsewhere to stock their shelves. Because the stores’ vendors are primarily local vendors, customers enjoy the freshest produce and meats available in the area at low prices.

Briarcrest AppleTree

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AppleTree customers enjoy a quality fish market (shown above) and the beautiful floral designs of Elaine Garza, Floral Designer/Manager, (shown right) at the 1760 Briarcrest location.



H-E-B Pantry stores provide Bryan citizens with a nearly 100-year tradition of excellence in exceptional service, low prices and friendly shopping. Started in 1905 with an initial investment of only \$60.00, Charles C. and Florence Butt opened a small family business in Kerrville, Texas that has since grown to be a corporation which serves families all over Texas with 300 locations and 56,000 employees. Bryan's two H-E-B Pantry stores, at 2031 South Texas Avenue and 1905 Old Hearne Road provide jobs for approximately 200 local residents.

Charles Butt, grandson of founder Florence Butt and current Chairman and CEO, developed what he called H-E-B Pantry stores as a way to economically expand H-E-B's presence and protect the company's market share across Texas. These are different than the larger H-E-B Food & Drug stores designed to meet 100% of a shopper's needs and which

contain a floral department, fish market and bakery under one roof. Pantry stores are designed to provide about 85% of the items a typical shopper frequently purchases in a convenient and easy in-and-out environment. Because these stores are smaller and less expensive to build and operate, H-E-B was able to expand in a manageable way and keep prices low.

"These stores go beyond simply protecting the company's market share," Max Castillo, Assistant Store Director of the Texas Avenue store, explained. "Even though they were built with low overhead and maintenance in mind, their quality and prices have created a customer base that is much stronger than anyone anticipated. In fact, Bryan's Pantry stores are so successful, we find the need to expand in the area."

Director of the Old Hearne Road store, Mike McKinney, added, "H-E-B has seen such a positive response to our Bryan locations that plans are underway to bring a large format Food & Drug store to the newly renovated Tejas Center. We will offer our customers the same



Trisha Goodrich, General Merchandise Lead (shown top), ensures the South Texas Avenue shelves are fully stocked for her customers.

Bob Luna (shown bottom), Meat Market Manager at the Hearne Road location, stocks only the freshest meats.

exceptional service, low prices and friendly shopping at our new location while providing jobs to more than 300 employees." Plans for the new store include a deli, drive-through pharmacy and more checkout stations among many other exciting options that have not yet been determined.

Mr. Castillo expressed, "We are able to create a friendly shopping environment for our customers because of our employees. We are more than just colleagues in our stores; we are partners and work together to ensure our customers have the best shopping experience possible." H-E-B Pantry stores offer their employees success through training programs, competitive salaries, flexible work schedules, recognition and an open-door management

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Shoppers enjoy quality food and low prices at Bryan's H-E-B Pantry stores located at 2031 South Texas Avenue (shown above) and at 1905 Old Hearne Road (shown right).





Bryan's Kroger provides its community the Right Food at the Right Price daily.

**Right Store.
Right Price.SM**

Kroger moved to its current location at 2104 Texas Avenue in 1977 and continues its 35-year tradition of being the “Right Store” at the “Right Price.” Kroger’s 80 employees strive to provide their customers with a store in which they are comfortable to shop as well as one that meets the particular needs of the community.

Although this Kroger is considered a “neighborhood store” it attracts customers from miles around for its convenient location and multiplicity of services. Customers enjoy a bakery, bank, dollar department, pharmacy, full service meat and seafood markets and full service deli and floral departments.

While built around the structure that the Kroger Company has found successful, this store is by no means a “cookie-cutter” operation. People are comfortable shopping here because the particular products are determined by Bryan’s demographics rather than Kroger’s corporate location in Cincinnati, Ohio. The needs of the area are well-incorporated, as is evidenced by the weekly advertisements the customers receive and the indicators with which they are greeted when visiting the store. “We represent our diverse neighborhood in our holiday recognition, products and staff,” stated Store Director, Wyman Farr.

Respecting the diversity of its communities is a very important

part of Kroger’s mission. Shoppers are not only able to buy foods that meet their varied palates, they enjoy an employee and supplier base that reflects the community. Kroger’s Supplier Diversity Program, established more than 25 years ago, is designed to foster the promotion, growth and development of minority and women-owned businesses.

Mr. Farr explained how his staff works to make Kroger a comfortable place to shop: “Customer service is our main focus in the store. We take pride in knowing our customers personally. Many of my employees have been with this store since its inception 35 years ago.” He commented, “We are really in the people business, we just happen to end up selling groceries as a by-product.”

This store enjoys such a committed and loyal staff because Kroger promotes the vocational advancement of its employees and offers excellent benefits. As a result there is little turnover in its full-time staff. The store maintains such loyal employees because they offer very good benefits. Kroger provides tuition assistance to qualified employees and many corporate training programs that support employees’ career goals. Mr. Farr expressed, “I want my employees happy to come to work. To achieve this goal, I try to make the work environment as inclusive, fun and stimulating as possible.”

Taking an active role in the community is a goal of this Kroger store. Mr. Farr believes “community involvement is important because it allows us to give something back to those who support our store.” The store conducts internal fund-raisers to raise money for charities as well as providing in-kind support by manning the phone banks for telethons, supplying water for walks and contributing full meals for Habitat for Humanity workers. As a corporation, charitable giving is focused on five key areas as defined at www.kroger.com—“being a ‘good neighbor’; hunger relief; education; advancement of women and minorities and women’s health.”

Local groups and nonprofit organizations benefit not only from very active Kroger volunteers but also from several unique avenues of charitable giving from the store itself. Kroger provides assistance by donating cash, gift certificates and products, discounted gift certificates for resell and rebate programs.

Kroger is open daily 6:00 AM until midnight. Pharmacy hours are 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM until 7:00 PM on Saturday and 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM on Sunday. For more information about Kroger, please contact the store at (979) 779-9251, the pharmacy at (979) 779-7648 or visit www.kroger.com.

AppleTree continued from pg. 19

customers also enjoy consistency and friendliness in their grocery store's staff. Mr. Junek has worked with AppleTree for nearly 38 years, and sets a good example for his 100 employees. "We have very little turnover with many of our staff having between five and twenty years experience," Mr. Junek said. He continued, "We make it a point to speak to every customer when we encounter them in the aisles."

The result of AppleTree's philosophy of customer service is a pleasurable shopping experience. Mr. Davis explained, "We have a can-do attitude for our customers. We will do whatever it takes to ensure we have what they need, even if it means going to a competitor's store and purchasing an unavailable product." Mr. Junek and Ms. Stratta commented, "It takes us all to run the store. We feel that if you treat the customer right, they'll be back."

"Community involvement,"

Mr. Davis expressed, "is also a large part of giving back to the community that supports us. Our community involvement includes everything from donating to and supporting the local food bank as well as supporting the local schools and other organizations geared toward helping children."

AppleTree also supports the community while building Bryan's economy through its continued practice of working with handicapped young adults. "These employees have all turned out to be true blessings to both the store and our customers," stated Ms. Stratta.

Employees enjoy flexible work schedules, competitive pay, career advancement opportunities, excellent benefits, insurance and a 401k program.

Mr. Kubicek stresses the importance of employees. As a result, employees support each other with the unified goal of providing customers with the best possible service.

AppleTree prides itself on

knowing its customers and spending the time required to ensure their needs are met. Customers appreciate the attention and care they receive and remain loyal to the stores, with many being multigenerational shoppers. Mr. Junek concluded, "We make a point to know our customers on a first-name basis. We have a special bond because we provide them the food they need for all the events in their lives. We are a family-oriented store and strive to pass that feeling on to them."

AppleTree provides quality service and products at both of its stores. The Highway 21 store is open daily 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM and can be reached at (979) 778-0134. The Briarcrest store is open daily 6:00 AM to midnight with pharmacy hours 9:00 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday and 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM on Saturday. Customers can contact this store at (979) 846-9600.

H-E-B continued from pg. 20

policy. Each location creates a friendly shopping atmosphere by playing music geared toward the demographics of customers, airing sporting events over the PA systems as well as having live and multilingual announcements throughout the day. Mr. McKinney stated, "We really enjoy watching the transformation some of our customers go through. They walk in with the cares of their day very evident and smiles come to their faces as those cares slip away while shopping. We regularly see them singing along or laughing at our employees' live and creative announcements we run everyday."

Both stores employ persons who have many years of experience and have the expertise

to stock a wide variety of the "necessities," allowing customers to quickly purchase the freshest meats, produce, dry goods and general merchandise. Their inventories reflect the culture of the community that forms a five mile radius around the stores, making them truly an extension of their customers' pantries.

H-E-B Pantry stores have been successful due to the organization of the stores and the low prices shoppers find. Mr. McKinney observed, "Pantry stores are designed for efficiency. We consider what our shoppers buy and stock just those items, eliminating unproductive shelf space. The reward is low prices and convenience."

H-E-B's service extends out into the community. While employees participate in local charities as well as corporate

programs, the Assistant Directors of both stores strive to increase their commitment to community projects. Mr. McKinney expressed the sentiments of both stores when he affirmed, "Our employees find it truly amazing and fulfilling to see the impact of our community involvement, whether in the excited eyes of a child we work with through the schools or youth sports or in the gratitude of people who benefit from food drives and our disaster relief donations."

Bryan's H-E-B Pantry stores are open daily 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM. For more information about H-E-B, please visit www.heb.com or call the Old Hearne Road location at (979) 778-1077 or the Texas Avenue store at (979) 775-3088.

What America Means to Me

39th Annual Youth Tour Essay Contest

Four area high school students will have the opportunity to join hundreds of other teenagers from around the nation on a 12-day, all expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C.

In June 2004, Bryan Texas Utilities will send four students to our nation's capital to promote a better understanding of rural electrification, become familiar with our country's historical and political environment and meet their elected officials.

This contest is open to all high school students in the BTU service area whose parents are not employed by BTU. Students are requested to write a 750-1,000 word essay about "What America Means to Me." BTU's judging committee will review all entry forms and essays submitted by 5:00 PM, Friday, April 16, 2004 to determine the four award winners. Winners will be notified by May 7, 2004.

For entry details and an entry form for the 39th Annual Youth Tour Essay Contest, please visit www.btutilities.com or contact contest coordinator, Mike Connor at (979) 821-5830.

Call
for
Entries



**Youth
Tour
2004**

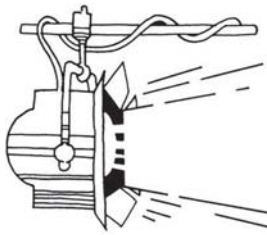
**Entry Deadline:
Friday, April 16, 2004**



BTU Triathlon Comes to Lake Bryan

Bryan Texas Utilities is proud to sponsor the first annual BTU Triathlon at 7:00 AM on Sunday, April 4, 2004. Racers will complete a 500m swim, 31k bike ride and 5k run for this endurance event. Participants will receive a commemorative t-shirt and finisher medals. Overall male and female winners will be awarded \$500. For more information, please contact Sharon Parker at (979) 695-7050 or brazostriathlon@yahoo.com or log on to www.powerpedal.com/triathlon.html. Register early at signmeupsports.com as late as March 24, 2004.

Register at signmeupsports.com
by March 24, 2004



Employee Spotlight



Flo Fields — Dispatching Service with a Smile

By Louellen S. Coker

Florence Fields, lovingly called Flo by her friends and coworkers, has been a Service Dispatcher for Bryan Texas Utilities since she joined the company in 1981. She has brightened the lives of colleagues and customers throughout her tenure with BTU.

Originally the sole dispatcher, she works with all departments as she processes connect and disconnect orders, coordinates street and security lights and takes trouble and outage calls from customers and assigns field people to correct the problems. She also is the third person backup to the system operators on duty in the event of a power outage. Mrs. Fields also follows up with customers to ensure their power is indeed restored.

During her 23 years at BTU, Mrs. Fields has seen many changes. She reflected, "I remember when all orders and outages were recorded by hand. We now use a state of the art Supervisory Control and Data

Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor line loads and potential problems before they become outages." She continued, "The SCADA system has improved my work load, significantly decreased the number of outages we experience and increased customer satisfaction." The dispatch department currently has eight system operators who manage the phones 24 hours a day.

Mrs. Fields has been a part of the Bryan community since she moved here after she married in 1957. She feels her time in and knowledge of the area is a true asset to BTU. "Because I have been here to grow with the area, I am able to work with the service men more effectively and in the end we have happier customers," she explained.

Her life outside BTU is very active and provides a perfect balance to the rigors of her position. One of her favorite hobbies is gardening. She fills her need to be out in her yard by caring for her rose, hyacinth, jasmine, canna, lily and crepe myrtle plants. "I really enjoy flowers," stated Mrs. Fields, "especially during the spring when my crepe myrtle plants bloom in every color."

She added serenity to the beauty of her flowers earlier this year when she created a 12 by 12 foot rock garden among her flowers. Mrs. Fields created the perfect contrast to her flowers by using sand and river rock to form

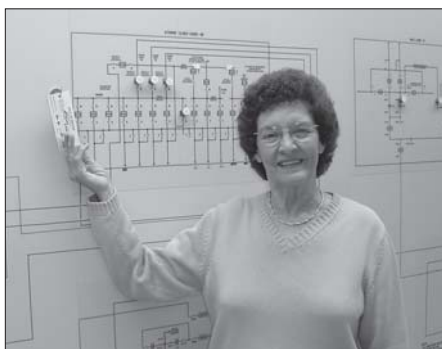
the structure of the rock garden "I am particularly proud of my rock garden because I did it all myself from conception to creation," she said excitedly.

When the weather keeps Mrs. Fields inside, she busies herself in the kitchen baking goodies to share at BTU. Laughingly, she said, "My coworkers seem to enjoy the things I create in my kitchen; so much so that they tell me the only good thing from my eventual retirement will be their ability to lose weight!"

Mrs. Fields is also very active at First United Church in Bryan, of which she has been a member for six years. She attends Bible studies and the Sunday morning Adult Sunday School class. She is currently the chairman of the Fellowship Committee, where she and the other committee members plan events away from the church.

Even though she is very active, Mrs. Fields carves out time in her schedule each year to travel. She takes guided trips with a group of friends or her daughter, Sheila Fields. While she does not know where her travels will take her next, she mentioned, "I am looking forward to taking an Alaskan cruise in the near future. Everyone tells me how beautiful and remarkable this trip will be."

Mrs. Fields is an exemplary employee and brightens the day of those around her through her dedication to her job, her colleagues and BTU customers.



Flo Fields provides her customers and coworkers the utmost in care as she monitors BTU's dispatch lines.