



The Power Source

Igniting the Future of Florida



November 2025

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Can you share your career journey from military service to becoming Safety Manager at Chesapeake Utilities?

I joined the National Guard in 1999, the night after graduating from high school. After completing my service, I earned a bachelor's degree and began a career in law enforcement. Over time, I transitioned into roles with a regulatory focus, which ultimately led me to join Chesapeake in 2016 as a Natural Gas Pipeline Inspector. In that role, I gained extensive experience in utility construction, natural gas distribution, industrial safety, and traffic safety. During my time as an Inspector, I earned a master's degree in emergency management, graduating in 2022 with honors. This foundation inspired me to pursue a position on the Enterprise Health and Safety (EHS) team, where I now serve as a Safety Project Manager, a role I assumed in 2023.

What lessons from your service do you find most applicable in managing safety and teams today.

The greatest lessons I took from my service are the importance of overcoming adversity, demonstrating leadership, and maintaining an unwavering commitment to the mission. These principles have shaped me as a leader and as a member of the safety team, directly influencing the quality and integrity of my work.

What strategies have you found most effective in promoting a strong safety culture across Chesapeake Utilities?

The EHS team employs a variety of strategies to promote a strong safety culture through projects and initiatives across the enterprise. Among these, I've found collaboration to be the most powerful tool. When EHS partners with Operations Safety and other business units to integrate concepts, we are able to develop and implement best-in-class safety policies and programs that elevate standards across the organization.



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What advice would you give to veterans looking for a career in energy? Are there specific programs designed to recruit veterans into the energy sector?

Veterans seeking to transition into an energy career will find abundant opportunities for growth while leveraging the skills gained through military service. The energy industry is fast-paced and constantly evolving, where strong leadership and adaptability drive success. Several programs and initiatives are dedicated to recruiting veterans into energy roles. These programs provide support with skills translation, job placement, and technical training, helping veterans seamlessly integrate into this dynamic field.

- Troops to Energy Jobs connects veterans with energy companies focused on hiring them. The program provides resources such as a resume translator and job board to help veterans find and transition into energy careers.
- Power4Vets provides training, certification prep, and job placement assistance for veterans seeking careers in the power industry.
- Hire Heroes USA (Project Vanguard) provides education and mentorship to veterans seeking opportunities in the clean energy sector.



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Tell us about your career journey from military service to the energy industry.

Service has always been central to who I am. I grew up in a family deeply rooted in military tradition—my father and brother both served in the U.S. Navy, my uncle retired from the U.S. Air Force, several cousins served in the U.S. Army, and my husband Sam also served in the U.S. Army and competed on the All-Army Wrestling Team. Continuing that legacy, I served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, an experience that shaped my discipline, work ethic, and perspective on leadership. My transition into the energy sector felt like a natural extension of my commitment to public service. After my military service, I continued serving the public through various government roles where community engagement, accountability, and mission-focused work were essential. That foundation ultimately led me to Duke Energy, a place where purpose and community impact remain at the center of everything we do. Today, as a Senior Public Engagement Manager at Duke Energy, I support major transmission, storm protection, and government/FDOT projects across Florida—ensuring communities, officials, and customers stay informed and engaged throughout every phase of project delivery.

What lessons from your military experience have been most valuable in your current role?

The Air Force has taught me lessons that guide me every day. These principles help me operate with clarity, discipline, and empathy, especially in moments that require difficult decisions or complex coordination:

- **Integrity First:** Staying honest, transparent, and accountable is essential when working with communities and local leaders.
- **Service Before Self:** My role requires understanding community needs and putting the customer at the center of our engagement.
- **Excellence in All We Do:** High-impact infrastructure projects demand accuracy, preparation, and unwavering commitment to quality.
- **Calm Under Pressure:** Whether handling stakeholder concerns, navigating shifting project conditions, or responding to emerging issues, composure is key.
- **Teamwork Across Diverse Backgrounds:** Military service teaches you to collaborate seamlessly with individuals from diverse cultures and experiences—a skill that directly enhances relationship-building in public engagement.



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Are there strong opportunities for veterans to transition into the energy workforce?

Absolutely. Veterans bring a unique combination of adaptability, accountability, and mission-focused leadership—qualities the energy sector relies on—making the industry an ideal place for them to continue serving with purpose and impact.

There are growing opportunities in:

- Transmission and Distribution operations
- Grid resiliency and modernization
- Storm response and emergency management
- Environmental science and project management
- Technology, cybersecurity, and data analysis
- Public engagement, policy, and communications

How would you describe the opportunities available in the energy industry for recent graduates?

For recent graduates, the industry offers meaningful careers with long-term stability, innovation, and clear pathways for growth and leadership.

Opportunities span nearly every discipline, including:

- STEM Fields: Engineering, environmental studies, renewable energy, and grid innovation
- Business, Technology and Analytics: Data science, finance, cybersecurity, and supply chain
- Communications and Public Engagement: Stakeholder relations, regulatory affairs, and community outreach
- Project Delivery: Construction management, planning, and field coordination

For graduates who want to contribute to sustainability, strengthen community infrastructure, and work in a field with national impact, the energy sector provides limitless possibilities.

Duke Energy is actively helping build that next-generation workforce through partnerships with institutions like St. Petersburg College. We are creating training pathways, technical programs, and hands-on learning opportunities that prepare students for high-demand energy careers—ensuring our communities have the skilled workforce needed for the future.

What motivates you most about your work in energy?

I'm motivated by the ability to strengthen communities. Every project I support—whether a storm protection initiative, a new substation, or a major transmission upgrade—directly improves reliability, safety, and resilience for families, businesses, and neighborhoods. Being the bridge between Duke Energy and the communities we serve allows me to apply my values, my leadership, and my commitment to service every single day.