

February 16, 2021

BEC restores power amid extreme weather conditions and state-mandated outages

Contributed

Bandera Electric Cooperative, and all utilities across Texas, are experiencing an unprecedented event with state-mandated rolling power outages and extreme weather conditions.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to more than 26 million Texas customers and ensures the reliability, safety and integrity of the Texas grid. ERCOT establishes policies and predetermined emergency curtailment procedures that all electric utilities, including BEC, must follow.

One rule in particular, governs the situation when electricity generation cannot keep pace with consumption, or when demand exceeds supply, putting the entire grid at risk. To circumvent this situation, ERCOT requires all utilities to reduce electric load to maintain grid balance.

On Feb. 15, ERCOT declared an Energy Emergency Alert Level 3 when operating reserves dropped below 1,750 Megawatts. ERCOT directed utilities to begin rotating outages throughout the state to reduce demand on the system and prevent catastrophic failure. Therefore, BEC began cycling its distribution feeders on and off for 15-45 minutes, every hour to reduce the energy burden on the electric system.

BEC maintains a detailed operations plan should an emergency event occur. Outlined in the plan is the responsibility to protect critical facilities, such as water treatment facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, first responders, police and fire facilities. The plan exempts from rotation nine of 54, or just under 17 percent, of our distribution feeders that support critical facilities.

“I can assure you that the dedicated employees of BEC are working around-the-clock to provide support for our members during this historic

event,” BEC CEO Bill Hetherington said. “I ask for your patience and assistance.”

To help reduce demand, please turn your thermostat down to 68 degrees, disconnect any electrical devices not in use, and minimize the use of large appliances such as washers and dryers. To learn more about Energy Emergency Alerts, please visit BanderaElectric.com/EEAFAQ.

About Bandera Electric

Bandera Electric Cooperative currently serves more than 27,000 members and provides highly reliable electric service to more than 36,000 meters in a seven-county territory in the Texas Hill Country. As a member-owned cooperative, BEC continually searches for new, innovative programs to promote energy efficiency and quality member service. Find more information about BEC at BanderaElectric.com or by calling 866-226-3372.