




## Texas Electric Cooperatives

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### Communications

2550 S. IH-35

Austin, TX 78704

Telephone: (512) 454-0311 Fax: (512) 486-6254

[www.texas-ec.org](http://www.texas-ec.org)

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 15, 2008**

**CONTACT: Kaye Northcott, Editor, (512) 486-6242, (512) 638-0563 Mobile,**

**[knorthcott@texas-ec.org](mailto:knorthcott@texas-ec.org)**

### **EAST TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OVERCOME OBSTACLES AFTER HURRICANE IKE**

Ten East Texas cooperatives serving more than 219,000 members suffered so much damage from Hurricane Ike that they needed outside crew support for line clearance and restoration. Sam Houston and Jasper-Newton electric cooperatives lost all power. Other affected cooperatives averaged power losses of 50 to 75 percent.

The storm caused the most widespread blackout of electric transmission in Texas history. Entergy Texas said the devastation to its system was worse than when Hurricane Rita blew through three years ago, leaving power outages that lasted for weeks. It was the second-worst outage in the history of Southwestern Electric Power Company (SWEPCO), according to the power generator. East Texas cooperatives receive electricity over high-power lines from both Entergy Texas and SWEPCO.

“At this time it is purely a guess, but all indications are that complete restoration could take seven to 10 days for the least affected and potentially longer for the hardest hit cooperatives,” said Tiffin Wortham, vice president, member services, of Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), the statewide service association. “Of course this is only a guess at this time. Hopefully these time frames will shorten with any luck,” he added.

By Monday, September 15, two days after landfall, the association had dispatched approximately 280 workers and necessary equipment from 32 TEC member organizations to assist the hard-hit cooperatives. Cooperatives receiving assistance included Sam Houston, Jasper-Newton, Deep East Texas, Mid-South, Houston County, Rusk County, Panola-Harrison, Cherokee County, San Bernard and Bowie-Cass.

Stephen Williams, member services manager at Bandera Electric Cooperative, went to assist Sam Houston Electric Cooperative by documenting damage to East Texas co-op lines and property. He reported the following by e-mail on Sunday.

“The contract crews began to arrive at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative today. There were well over 200 trucks and 400-500 men when I was last at the staging area. The co-op was expecting another 200 trucks before the morning. Some other co-op crews are coming, too. It was amazing to watch. Most of these crews were in Louisiana and have not been home in weeks.

“As I drove around I saw the impact of no gasoline. The only store I saw today was equipped to sell gas because it had generator power. There were three police officers keeping the line moving that stretched four or five blocks.

“By the tent city location in Cold Spring there was a Cowboy Church meeting and I was able to go and ask them to pray for the linemen as they come to do this dangerous work. They were glad to do so.”

These are some of the messages electric cooperatives sent to Texas Electric Cooperatives Monday: Eighty percent of **Rusk County Electric Cooperative**'s system was without power. “This is a major outage for the area and will take time to repair,” said Ricki Keeling, Rusk County EC's manager of member services. Crews will be working around the clock until power is restored. The cooperative encourages people with disabilities to contact county services for emergency needs. Keeling warned, “A downed power line can become energized at any time from working crews or improperly installed emergency generators. Stay away from downed power lines and trees contacting downed lines until hazardous conditions have been corrected.”

**Houston County Electric Cooperative** (HCEC) reported Monday morning that 42 percent of its members were without power—a total of 8,062 out of 19,189 meters. Restoration is estimated to be complete within seven to 10 days. “Much of the damage has been from trees falling on power lines and broken cross arms,” said Melody Pinnell, HCEC manager. “Progress has been steady, but debris removal is a slow process. HCEC will be ready to restore power as soon as Entergy’s transmission lines are repaired.”

Those receiving energy from the Midway, Ferguson, Trinity and Groveton substations should prepare for an extended outage lasting up to three weeks, Pinnell said.

Kyle Kuntz, general manager/CEO of **Sam Houston Electric Cooperative**, reported that his cooperative is working closely with cooperatives including Deep East Texas, Jasper-Newton and Houston County electric cooperatives to communicate with representatives of Entergy Texas, Oncor Electric Delivery and SWEPCO to facilitate the timely and orderly restoration of power.

“Together, we are working to resolve obstacles that might unnecessarily extend the restoration of power to critical locations in East Texas such as seats of government, evacuation centers, hospitals, extended care facilities, as well as our member residents, farms and businesses,” Kuntz said. “By maintaining close communication with our power suppliers, we hope to keep the delays in power restoration to an absolute minimum.”

For more information, go to [www.texas-ec.org](http://www.texas-ec.org).

#### Cutlines

Workers and equipment from sister co-ops roll into a Sam Houston Electric Cooperative staging ground to help the Livingston-based co-op bring its system back online.

A massive tree overwhelms a house served by Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

Photo Credit: Stephen Williams