



Office of the Mayor
Tommy Sloan

The State of Texas has experienced an unprecedented week with the winter weather storm. I wanted to update you at the local level to discuss the City of Coleman's readiness to face any local challenge and encourage our community to continue to stand united as we proceed into the recovery efforts of this event.

The health and well-being of our community, our constituents, and employees is always our top priority. The City of Coleman has always stood unified with Coleman County Officials in emergency situations. We want to reassure our residents that during this time, the City operated under the comprehensive plans and processes in place to help ensure the safety of our Residents and to ensure that City operations could continue, and services could be delivered.

The purpose of this communication is to let our Citizens know the events related to the loss of power in the City beginning in the early morning hours of Monday, February 15, 2021.

The great State of Texas has a large power grid consisting of five primary power companies being American Electric Power (AEP), CenterPoint Energy, Oncor, Texas New Mexico Power and Sharyland Utilities. These power companies provide electricity for Texas year-round which includes high peak demand traditionally in the summertime and operate at a lower capacity in the wintertime. Electric demands are traditionally lower in the wintertime, so some generating plants are taken offline. Normally, the offline plants are not winterized, therefore; they freeze up under extreme cold conditions which delays them from being placed back online. Unfortunately, the whole State of Texas experienced extreme freezing cold conditions which caused a much higher demand for electricity than the remaining power plants capacity to generate electricity.

At roughly 1:30 am Monday morning on February 15th the electric power grid was approaching maximum capacity and forced ERCOT to inform the power companies to reduce the load on the power grid to avoid a total collapse across the State of Texas. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power across Texas. If the power grid were to collapse across the state it could take months to restore the grid. It is the responsibility of each power company to determine how they will reduce the load for their company.

The City of Coleman is under contract to purchase electricity through Constellation Energy. Their electricity flows through an AEP substation outside the City of Coleman. Normally when there is an electricity shortage, the power company (AEP) will place the users on a rolling blackout schedule to allow everyone to share in the shortfall. Unfortunately, AEP chose to place the City of Coleman on a controlled blackout, which means AEP decides when the city will receive electricity.

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The City's Electrical Department immediately responded Monday to the loss of power and determined it was not a problem with the city's electrical infrastructure. It was determined that electricity was not being allowed to flow from AEP's substation into the city. City officials were told by AEP that the city was on a rolling blackout schedule and officials accepted that explanation as fair. As the day progressed and the city failed to receive power in the same way as surrounding communities, the City Manager worked with Constellation to contact AEP, ERCOT and the Public Utility Commission for resolution. Throughout those discussions, AEP and ERCOT each indicated that the decision to deny power to Coleman was made by the other organization. The Coleman City Manager requested that they at least place the city on a rolling blackout schedule so our citizens could warm their homes periodically and was denied. Early Monday morning Coleman City Manager requested help from Dr. Glenn Rogers, our State Representative. Representative Rogers worked with city officials all day Monday contacting AEP, ERCOT and other state agencies looking for resolution. The plan was to continue the search for help Tuesday when Coleman lost all sources of communication: telephone, cell phone and internet. Communications began to be restored sporadically Tuesday afternoon. Later Tuesday afternoon, AEP agreed to turn on one circuit at 5:00 pm to allow the City of Coleman to power up one section of the town. This section would provide power to the water treatment plant, the pump stations, the communication towers, the wastewater facility, gas, and convenience stores. This would give the city the ability to provide the maximum services to all the citizens and send water to the Coleman County Special Utility District to service their customers in the rural area. Also, this section was next to the hospital so an emergency power line could be built to service the hospital. After local AEP crews made the necessary repairs to turn on the circuit, then AEP notified the City that the circuit would not be turned on. AEP claimed ERCOT instructed them not to turn the power on.

After being denied electricity from AEP, City and County leaders regrouped and called upon our political representatives that serve our community, Texas House Representative Glenn Rogers, Texas State Senator Charles Perry, and Congressman August Pfluger. These representatives were very interested in our situation and recognized that our city was not receiving necessary electricity on a schedule that would protect our elderly and disadvantaged population. The City explained to these representatives that our citizens deserve the same treatment as our neighbors who were receiving electricity on a rolling blackout schedule or receiving power uninterrupted. Every one of these representatives recognized that something was not right when the City of Coleman was not placed on a rolling blackout schedule, like other communities. After several conversations with Representative Rogers and Senator Perry, Representative Rogers informed the City Manager at 9:18 p.m. that he had just spoken with the Governor's Chief of Staff and the Chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Within minutes, the City received a call from AEP that the City would receive power. AEP turned the power on around 10:00 pm Tuesday evening and the City's Electrical Department completed the final connections necessary for full restoration by 12:45 am Wednesday.

All members of City Staff, Sheriff's Department, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Texas Forestry Service, Texas Department of Public Safety, Game Wardens, local AEP staff and others that helped meet the needs of our citizens performed admirably in their duties and we are extremely proud of the work they performed.

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As we begin the recovery of our community, we are asking residents to be compassionate towards one another during this time. We are encouraging you to support your local businesses and offer encouragement to public service workers (city, county, school, hospital, and the business and retail industry) who still show up every day and interact with the public as part of our commitment to our Community.

As eyes were on Coleman Texas, we were able to showcase what Coleman is all about - we are community of strong, unified, and resilient West Texans, who will not only survive, but thrive, and come out stronger....for we are Coleman, Texas.



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