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NEWS from AEP Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERCOT outage orders continue Wednesday, AEP Texas focusing on critical services and customers who have been without power longest

(CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS – February 17, 2021) ERCOT on Wednesday directed AEP Texas to shed load once again. With continued ERCOT orders to remove load off the grid, power outages will continue. AEP Texas crews and employees stand ready to restore power when ERCOT signals that sufficient generation makes it safe to begin.

On Tuesday, AEP Texas restored power to 3,000 customers identified as critical services still without power. AEP Texas also remains focused on customers who have been without power for the longest amount of time. There is limited flexibility with the amount of load that can be rotated, but restoration of service is our priority to provide relief to those who have been impacted the longest.

“Our primary focus is on critical services facilities, such as hospitals, water and sewer plants, as well as customers who have been without power for the longest amount of time,” said Jeff Stracener, AEP vice president of Distribution Region Operations. “We continue to explore any and all opportunities to restore power to customers, even as the generation shortage continues. The number of customers we are able to restore will be limited, but we remain committed to providing relief where possible.”

“We still are awaiting ERCOT’s directive to begin full restoration, but do not have an indication when that will be given,” Stracener said. “Our employees stand ready to begin restoring power. In many cases, the extreme cold and the time that customers have been without service will make it necessary for crews to go to substations and manually switch circuits back on. This cannot be done in advance.”

Why do some neighbors have power when I don’t?

Those customers may be on a different circuit that was not impacted by the outages. Each circuit on the AEP Texas system that delivers power to customers carries a slightly different amount of electricity. When ERCOT directs AEP Texas to drop a certain number of megawatts from its system, we insert that amount into our system and the circuits are selected in an automated system to meet that required amount of load directed by ERCOT to be shed. Your neighbor across the street may be on a completely different circuit that was not part of the automated selection.

We further try to determine where critical services facilities, like hospitals or other customers, such as wastewater facilities, are located on that circuit list. We monitor those circuits to make sure those facilities stay energized for the safety of everyone.

Why can't you restore power to customers who have gone without power by interrupting service to others who have not yet been impacted?

We are rotating some outages on a very limited basis to allow restoration to some critical services customers and groups of customers who have been without power since early Monday morning or before. These rotations will increase as power generation increases.

AEP Texas is required by ERCOT to shed the directed amount of load in order to maintain the stability of the system. The amount of load shed in this emergency has been unprecedented. There is limited availability of other circuits to shed, or electricity to move, thus preventing us from restoring load for most of the customers that remain out of power.