

LPSC Winter Storm Docket – Q&A

- 1) How many MW of generation were offline or otherwise subject to unplanned outages during the Winter Storms?
 - Not Applicable
- 2) What were all identified causes of storm related outages for generation during the Winter Storms for your system? Please also indicate what was the main contributing factor.
 - Not Applicable
- 3) How many miles of distribution and transmission lines do you own and manage in Louisiana? Please separate your response by distribution and transmission.
 - Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PHEC) has approximately 13 miles of transmission line and 935 miles of distribution line in Louisiana
- 4) Did any part of your bulk transmission system suffer unplanned outages as a result of the Winter Storm? Please include the following in your response:
 - No part of our transmission system was affected by this storm
 - a. The length of lines affected;
 - b. The specific cause of the outage;
 - c. The time span each line was offline;
 - d. The expected return to full service time and date; and/or
 - e. The actual return to service of these lines.
- 5) Was any of the utility's bulk transmission system or generating units offline due to planned maintenance when the Winter Storm event was declared? If yes, please provide:
 - No part of our transmission system was affected by this storm
 - a. The name of the transmission system and/or generating unit(s);
 - b. The size (KV) and length of the transmission lines, if applicable;
 - c. Why such maintenance was scheduled in February 2021 as opposed to another time period.
- 6) What was the average restoration time for power outages due to storm damage from the Winter Storms?
 - 10,207.3 total hours off / 9,878 meters in Louisiana = 1.03 average hours per meter
- 7) How heavily do you rely on contracted crews (compared to your own linemen) to restore power during normal outages (Normal outages would be non-emergency events, whereas emergency events are hurricanes or a scenario like the Winter Storms)?
 - PHEC does not hire contract crews to restore power during normal hours

- 8) How heavily did you rely on contracted crews (compared to your own linemen) to restore power during the Winter Storms?
- In this winter storm we relied on contractors for ROW clearance, and we always use contractors for 100% of our ROW clearance. We also used one contractor crew to assist with power restoration (4 contracted employees). We had 16 of our own employees assigned to restoring power. So, about 25% were contracted workers assigned to power restoration, and 75% were our own employees assigned to power restoration.
- 9) Could any of those outages been prevented with different preparation or enhanced vegetation maintenance prior to the Winter Storms?
- PHEC conducts a robust ROW schedule to clear our ROW in advance of storms to mitigate damage to our system. It is possible that some of the outages could possibly have been mitigated by increasing the frequency of our yearly schedule, but adding crews to this schedule is very expensive and would not have been cost effective versus the minor amount of damage that our system took during the storm.
- a. If outages were caused by fallen or sagging tree limbs, could those outages have been prevented with better vegetation maintenance by your company?
- a. See answer above (9)
- b. Please provide all locations within your service area that were included within your vegetation maintenance schedule over the past two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.
- a. Keithville, Springridge, Bethany, South Shreveport
- c. Please provide the locations in your service area that received the most scheduled vegetation maintenance within the two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.
- a. Keithville, Springridge, South Shreveport
- d. Please provide the locations in your service area that received the least scheduled vegetation maintenance within the past two years (2019-2020) and the first 2 months of 2021.
- a. Blanchard and Longwood
- e. Please provide the locations with the most distribution grid damage due to fallen or sagging trees or tree limbs during the Winter Storms.
- a. Mansfield and Stanley
1. If possible, please explain how many customers lost power due to the vegetation damage in these locations?
- a. Approximately 500 members were out of power in the Mansfield and Stanley areas during the storm

- 10) How much of your total operating budget is dedicated to vegetation maintenance in Louisiana? Please provide both a percent of total budget and dollar amount.
- The Cooperative provides electric utility services in Texas and Louisiana. Approximately 38% of its distribution lines are located within Louisiana. The Cooperative dedicates approximately 14% of its operating budget (excluding cost of power) to vegetation maintenance. The Cooperative carries out right of way clearing from each substation. There is no readily available data to provide the total provision for Louisiana only. Using the percent of distribution lines within Louisiana, we estimate that approximately \$475,200 is provided within the budget for vegetation management within Louisiana.
- 11) Please provide a narrative explanation of the “winterization” procedures and protocols utilized by the utility for each of its generating facilities and verification that those procedures and protocols were followed.
- This question is not applicable to PHEC

Questions Pertaining to Rolling Blackouts:

- 12) Please describe the procedures used by the RTOs and by you to determine which load should be shed and for what duration.
- The RTO will notify PHEC of the amount of load that must be shed due to the emergency situation and then PHEC follows it’s established “Manual Load Shedding Plan” until the amount of load required is curtailed
- 13) Did your utility undergo in any mandated or self-imposed rolling blackouts?
- PHEC did not undergo any rolling blackouts of any kind
- 14) How many of your meters were turned off intentionally due to rolling blackouts versus lost power naturally due to storm damage from the Winter Storms?
- PHEC did not undergo any rolling blackouts of any kind. Our member’s lost power due to downed lines or load issues in specific areas, but not due to controlled outages
- 15) Were any Load Modifying Resources (“LMRs”), including interruptible load, utilized during the Winter Storms?
- No LMRs were utilized during this storm
 - a. If no, please identify any interruptible customers who were not interrupted during the Winter Storm and provide a narrative as to why they were not interrupted. Included with this response, please also identify any interruptible load that did not fulfill its obligation to interrupt load when called.
 1. PHEC did not identify any interruptible customers as this was not necessary during this storm

Questions Pertaining to Fuel Generation Needs Throughout the Winter Storms:

- 16) Please describe the impact of the Winter Storms on fuel costs and the expected impact on upcoming utility bills.
- PHEC does not buy fuel directly for generation and cannot respond with facts on conditions that drove fuel pricing up. PHEC saw a dramatic increase in the price of purchased electricity due to the winter storm.
- 17) Please describe any factors that limited the ability to import fuel to serve load and quantify the level of imports that were limited.
- Not Applicable
- 18) Please indicate whether there were any fuel suppliers who failed or refused to deliver the contracted quantities of fuel during the Winter Storms. If there were any failures or refusal of delivery, please indicate:
- Not Applicable
 - a. The name of the fuel supplier;
 - b. The amount of fuel that was not delivered;
 - c. The generating unit(s) to which fuel was not delivered;
 - d. The reason provided by the fuel counterparty for failure to deliver; and
 - e. Whether or not that generating unit had to cease or curtail operations as a result of the failure of the fuel supplier to deliver contracted-for quantities.
- 19) What are your suggestions on how to spread the fuel costs through the Fuel Adjustment Clause (“FAC”) such that these costs are not incurred on a single bill?
- PHEC would suggest spreading this cost over multiple years to avoid adversely affecting Louisiana rate payers
- 20) What are your suggestions on other ways to share the risk of such effects to the FAC rather than flowing those costs through to customer bills?
- PHEC has no suggestions
- 21) How much did the price of fuel go up during the Winter Storms and for how long did it stay at those peak prices?
- This is not applicable to PHEC, due to the fact that the cooperative does not procure fuel
- 22) Ultimately, who bears the risk of Locational Marginal Pricing (“LMP”) changes throughout MISO? Throughout SPP?
- All Louisiana rate payers share this risk
- 23) Could different measures have been taken in preparation for the Winter Storms in order to prevent fuel shortages? If so, why were those measures not taken?
- PHEC does not generate its own power, so this question is not applicable

Questions Pertaining to Customer Service and Communication:

- 24) How many customers do you serve in the state of Louisiana?
- PHEC serves 9,347 meters in Louisiana
- 25) How many customer service representatives do you have in Louisiana answering phone calls or making live calls to your customers? Please provide the job title and business address for each of these employees.
- PHEC does not have any CSRs located in Louisiana. All of our CSRs work in our headquarters @ 410 E. Houston St., Marshall, TX 75670. All of our CSRs take calls for both our TX and LA members. We have 6 CSRs working full time and taking calls for our membership during business hours.
- 26) Do you make live phone calls (non-recording) to communicate to your customers?
- Yes, PHEC CSRs do make live calls to our Members throughout the work day
- 27) Do you answer phones with live personnel or use pre-recorded messages to answer phone calls?
- We answer phones with pre-recorded messages, but the member always has the option to use a prompt to access a live person. PHEC's own CSRs answer calls during office hours, and we use a live calling service for calls received outside of regular office hours. During this storm we utilized our 24/7 calling service (CRC) the entire week, because our employees could not make it to the office due to the icy road conditions.
- 28) Do you have a local (area code within your Louisiana service territory) customer service number, or do you utilize a 1-800 number?
- We utilize a 1-800 number
 - a. Please explain the advantages or disadvantages of utilizing a local number over a 1-800 number or vice versa.
 1. PHEC has members in both Texas and Louisiana so the 1-800 number allows us to post one phone number for all of our members to call to resolve issues or report outages
- 29) Does your company have local, customer service offices or facilities within your Louisiana service area?
- PHEC does have a warehouse in Louisiana for our LA based Linemen to work from, but we do not have any Member Services facilities in LA.
 - a. If so, please explain any perceived or realized advantages of such local facilities.
 1. Having a warehouse in Louisiana is beneficial to us for the following reasons:
 - a. Allows LA based Linemen to report for work in LA and not have to travel to the TX warehouse for assignments.

1. Yes, PHEC does communicate directly with our members on social media both during outages, and at other times if members pose a question to us
 - b. Do you find a social media presence is helpful in responding to your customers?
 1. Yes, PHEC has found that social media is very helpful when responding to Members. Social media is also very helpful in disseminating information to a great number of our members in a very short period of time due to the viral sharing of our posts by our Members.
- 36) Do you have an automated or advanced meter system?
 - PHEC does not have an advanced metering system. We can read meters from a handheld device
- 37) Does your utility utilize an online outage map accessible to customers?
 - No, PHEC does not have an outage map accessible to Members, as we do not have an outage management system to provide this data to us
- 38) Are your systems able to identify whether a customer has power or does not have power?
 - No, our systems are not able to provide this information to us. We do have an outage system to determine if members are out of power
 - a. At any point during the Winter Storms, did your company ask customers who did not have service to curtail their usage?
 1. Yes, at 2 different times we did ask members to curtail their power usage as we were preparing for SPP to tell us to shed load, which never actually happened
- 39) If your company realizes their customer service or communications systems are not working, what is your company's response to this issue? What mitigation measures are taken to address any malfunctions? What mitigation measures are taken to explain any deficiencies to your customers?
 - PHEC's response would be to update our Members of any issues by using all other available communications options to relay the issues and what we are doing to resolve the issue. Then we would use all available communication outlets to communicate when the non-working system(s) are back online.
- 40) Do you have a public relation, customer service, or other team in charge of crafting and sending out notifications and public outreach messages to your customers?
 - No, all communications are performed in our office with office employees
- 41) Do you target messages based on relevancy to your customers or simply send general notifications across your entire service territory, regardless of its relevancy for each customer?
 - PHEC sends both targeted and general notifications to the membership based on if targeting certain relevant members is possible or not

- a. If the answer depends on a scenario, please expand on those different scenarios to provide a full understanding of how your teams attempt to best communicate with customers.
 1. One example of targeting certain members would be when we send our Texas monthly magazine to our Texas membership, and our Louisiana magazine to our Louisiana membership. PHEC will also try to make our Facebook posts as targeted as possible to affected members when we are communicating about outages so that members that are not affected do not have to read through all of the associated outage posts.
 - b. Does your company believe that targeted messages (or different forms of messaging) are more useful in ensuring accurate, relevant communication to customers? Why or why not?
 1. Yes, PHEC does believe in targeted massaging to our Members when it is possible to do so, to limit the anxiety that members may have about weather related outages and pre-planned necessary outages
 - c. What are barriers to communicating tailored, relevant information to each customer that would cause a company to rely only on general communications?
 1. The main barrier that PHEC sees to targeted communication would be the cost associated with targeted communications outside of social media
- 42) Were you able to get accurate information to your customers before, during and after the Winter Storms?
- Yes, we were able to communicate accurate information to our members before, during and after the storm mostly using Facebook. We also communicated by utilizing phone system messages and our live answering service. We communicated after the storm using our CSRs once we were able to return to the office.
- 43) What is your utility's total yearly operating budget?
- PHEC is a Texas corporation that serves consumers in Texas and Louisiana. The budget provides for expenditures within Texas and Louisiana. Our total operating budget, excluding power cost, is \$9,265,089 for 2021.
- 44) How much of your utility's total yearly operating budget is allocated to customer service? Please provide dollar number and percentage.
- PHEC allocates \$1,057,500 which represents 11% of its operating budget (excluding power cost) to customer service within Texas and Louisiana
 - a. Please break down the dollars allocated to customer service based on categories your utility spends in, such as, but not limited to:
 1. How much money is spent on human customer service representatives?
 - a. PHEC estimates that \$644,000 is spent per year on customer service representatives for our Texas and Louisiana consumers.
 2. How much money is spent on automated systems?

- a. PHEC spends approximately \$265,000 yearly on automated systems
3. How much money is spent on physical customer service locations (places where the public can contact either physically or by telephone an individual dedicated to handling their customer service issue)?
 - a. PHEC's physical customer service location is owned by the Cooperative. As a result, our major expenses are for maintenance and repair, water, sewer, etc. The Cooperative spends approximately \$50,000 a year for these costs.
- 45) How much does it cost (rough estimate based on current employment) to hire and maintain one customer service representative?
 - PHEC estimates it costs approximately \$100,000 per year to hire and maintain one customer service representative.
- 46) Do you feel your customer service and communication allowed for your customers to adequately prepare for events that unfolded during the Winter Storms?
 - Yes, PHEC does feel that we communicated to our Members to allow them time to prepare for the winter storm. PHEC began to notify members of the impending weather several days prior to when we began to receive outage reports. During the time before the storm we notified our membership many times over Facebook and our website about preparing for extended outages and how to prep during storm conditions.
- 47) Do you believe useful and helpful customer service was provided by your company to your customers during the Winter Storms?
 - Yes, PHEC believes that our warnings about the coming weather and notifications about how to prepare for outages, as well as our updates as the storm unfolded, were very helpful to our Members. Many members have communicated this to us on our Facebook page and through emails sent to us during and after the storm.
- 48) Based on your company's customer service performance in the Winter Storms, does your company plan on increasing the amount of budget they allocate to customer service?
 - At this time, PHEC does not have plans to increase our customer service budget as we feel that we were properly prepared for the storm and communicated to our membership effectively throughout the storm
 - a. Will your company ask for a rate increase to do so?
 1. No, we will not ask for a rate increase for this purpose

Closing Questions:

- 49) Please provide all temperature forecasts you received for your Louisiana service territory (and the source of those forecasts) for February 14-20, 2021 and the actual temperatures experienced on those dates.
- PHEC received our weather forecasts on an ongoing basis throughout the storm from our local news stations.
- 50) In your opinion, was your utility adequately prepared for the Winter Storms?
- Yes, PHEC believes that we were adequately prepared for the Winter storms
 - a. Did you customers benefit from your level of preparedness?
 1. Yes, we feel that our membership benefitted from our preparation as we did not experience the level of outages that many of the other electric providers in our area did, and the comments from our Members on our Facebook page reflected this reality
- 51) In your opinion, was your response to the Winter Storms sufficient or to a standard of excellence your customers deserve?
- Yes, PHEC feels that our response to the Winter storm was to a standard that our Member's deserve, and the comments from our membership that we received through email and on Facebook reflected this reality