

## **SOUTHWESTERN POWER ADMINISTRATION PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SWPA Responds to Energy Emergency**

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### **SWPA Responds to Energy Emergency**

Tulsa, OK – Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern or SWPA) is doing its part to address the dangerous weather conditions and resulting surge in electricity demand affecting the entire 14-state footprint of the Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (SPP).

As a Contract Participant and neighboring Balancing Authority Area adjacent to the SPP Consolidated Balancing Authority Area, Southwestern works with SPP and SPP's members to keep the lights on year-round, but especially in emergency conditions.

SPP balances the need for electricity with generation of said electricity as the Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) and independent electrical grid operator for a region spanning roughly North Dakota south to northern Texas. If the SPP region becomes energy deficient, SPP will declare an Energy Emergency Alert and direct its member and Contract Participant utilities to curtail energy use to bring electrical demand back within generating capacity limits.

SPP declared such an emergency at the highest level, Energy Emergency Alert Level 3 (EEA3), on Monday, February 15, 2021, and again Tuesday, February 16, 2021, when SPP was unable to meet minimum Contingency Reserve requirements.

When SPP declares an EEA3, utilities within the SPP footprint are asked to responsibly implement temporary interruptions of service to customers, either residential or commercial, to prevent worsening system conditions that could impact a broader area or have longer-lasting effects.

“We were asked by SPP to reduce electrical demand, or load, by four megawatts (MW) yesterday and by eight MW today,” explains Southwestern’s Vice President of Operations Keeth Works. “We asked our wholesale customers to do their part in meeting those reduction thresholds, and they came through with flying colors.”

Works says some of these same customers also provided electrical generation from their diesel and natural gas generating plants to meet their local electrical needs, which enabled Southwestern to use generation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hydropower plants in Southwestern’s marketing area to contribute to the electrical stability of the region, not just for SPP, but for the Mid Continent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) RTOs in other parts of the country.

The generation shortage can be attributed to several factors – most notably the record setting electrical demand due to the extreme weather. Additional factors include scarcity of natural gas, planned outages of generating units, lack of expected imports from neighboring RTOs experiencing similar weather conditions, and equipment failures due to icing and extreme cold.

“This is an unprecedented event,” Keeth Works says. “The National Weather Service reports that these are the lowest prolonged temperatures in most of these parts in 85 years.”

SPP and other utilities, including Southwestern, are asking electric consumers to meaningfully conserve energy during this period, including adjusting thermostats to cooler temperatures; scheduling appliances like dishwashers and washing machines to run during off-peak times or delaying usage altogether; and keeping doors, windows and blinds shut to retain heat in the house.

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**Southwestern Power Administration** is an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy. Its mission is to optimally use Federal resources to safely and sustainably provide clean hydropower, transmission, and related services to benefit our customers, regional communities, and the Nation. For more information, see <http://www.swpa.gov>.