

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

I just hung up the phone after talking to officials with AEP about the electrical problems during the ice storm in February. I filed a complaint with the Texas Public Utilities Commission (PUC) about AEP's response during the outage. My complaint was specific in that AEP was not able to do the "rolling blackouts" ERCOT ordered. Karnes Electric was able to do them. My understanding is that Karnes would turn the power on in a section for two hours and then again, every eight hours or so. That allowed refrigerators and freezers to cool down, and allow time for food preparation and heaters to warm up the house.

AEP did a great job keeping the power on for at-risk citizens such as nursing homes, hospitals, and such. They did keep the power on in several areas and it was never lost. But in large areas they just shut us off. I do understand that they were limited on what kilowatts they could transmit. I do not fault them for the situation, and I think they tried very hard to do their best. But ERCOT seemed to believe all were capable of "rolling blackouts" and they were not. I just had a great phone call from AEP that was wide ranging with an honest exchange. We discussed natural gas shutdowns from the cold (which is not them) that caused huge problems. The natural gas transmission is under the Texas Railroad Commission. They said there is confusion as to what caused the failure of the windmills all over Texas. The solar power shutdown was because ... the sun was not out. The conversations are ongoing, but it is my belief this is a state problem, caused by the failure of state agencies such as ERCOT and the PUC. That regulatory oversight is in the lap of the State Legislature. Perhaps the leaders in Austin need to address those problems and fix them instead of worrying about what bathrooms people use and who can play which sports. That should be left to local authorities. They need to worry about Texas' electrical grid.

I want to repeat that there were so many "angels" in our county that fed those without power. Our community came together and helped each other. How wonderful that is!

Thanks for listening. Let's keep Atascosa County moving forward!