

...What Co-ops are for
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Bandera EC and many of the state's 65 other distribution cooperatives supplied line crews with foul-weather gear - even if they couldn't supply their homes with power - and the lineworkers in turn restored power to millions between grid-mandated rolling outages. Those workers faced fender benders, exhausting conditions and 12-plus-hour shifts as they knocked ice from poles and hammered at frozen gates and chains to keep power flowing to co-op members.

But for many, the work wasn't done when their lights were back on. Not when others still needed help.

About a dozen co-ops sent workers to other cooperatives after ice broke thousands of poles across Co-op Country and residential heating demand overwhelmed other electrical equipment, stretching thin co-ops and crews.

"When our system was on the ground and members were without power, it was reassuring to know we had support from our co-op family," said Kathi Calvert, general manager at Houston County EC.

Borne out of hardship and guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Texas' electric co-ops worked together, helped along by the very members they serve, to do what they've always done.

"Our crews in the field were constantly stuck and having to be pulled around due to the icy conditions," said Bryan Chandler, operations manager at Heart of Texas EC. "Our members came to our aid with food, fuel and tractors to help pull trucks."

It took everyone working cooperatively.

"This was definitely the worst winter storm I have worked in," said Doug Grimm, a 20-year lineworker veteran for Bluebonnet EC. "We did what we always do: Come together and get the job done."

Chris Burrows is a TEC senior communications specialist. This article appeared online at www.texascoopower.com.

Broadband legislation would help bridge digital gap

Two bills introduced this spring would help improve access to broadband in rural America.

Farm Bureau supports both the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (EBRIDGE) Act (S. 1695, HR 3193) and the Broadband for Rural America Act (HR 3369).

The EBRIDGE Act

The EBRIDGE Act seeks to ensure local communities can partner with the private sector

in carrying out broadband projects and gives communities more flexibility in complying with their funding match requirements.

"Broadband is critical for farmers, ranchers and rural communities," American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall said. "With 17% of rural Americans still without reliable broadband, the digital divide restricts access to essential education, health care and business resources, as well as limits farmers' capacity to use the latest technology to meet sustainability goals. Farm Bureau appreciates Reps. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Michael Guest (R-Miss.) for introducing the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility Act."

The bill would eliminate barriers to investments in broadband in distressed communities by making them eligible for Economic Development Administration grants. It would also clarify that eligible recipients may include public-private partnerships and consortiums to leverage private sector expertise in project development and provide flexibility in the procurement process to account for the limited availability of broadband services in distressed communities.

The measure would clarify that funds can be combined with other federal resources and provide flexibility on accounting for in-kind methods to meet non-federal cost share.

The Broadband for Rural America Act




The Broadband for Rural America Act would provide more than \$7 billion in authorizations for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) broadband connectivity programs.

"Farm Bureau appreciates the Agriculture Committee's commitment to strengthening our rural communities and thanks Ranking Member Thompson (R-Penn.) for introducing the Broadband for Rural America Act, which would provide greater investment in USDA broadband programs, as well as foster greater coordination among federal broadband deployment efforts," Duvall said.

The measure would authorize \$3.7 billion per year for critical rural broadband programs, including the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program, the Middle Mile Broadband Program and the Innovative Broadband Advancement Program. It would target limited resources so assistance is focused on the most rural and least-connected residents, who are often the most expensive to connect. The bill would also promote borrower accountability and develop new tools to ensure promised services are delivered to rural communities.

Texas milk is a local food

Milk travels from the cow to the grocery store in about 48 hours.

-  Dairy cows that are cared for by farmers provide milk.
-  Milk is cooled to below **45°**
-  Tankers transport milk to a milk plant.
-  **FOOD SAFETY**
Testing is conducted for quality and safety.
-  Milk is pasteurized, homogenized and put into cartons and bottles.
-  Milk is transported to the grocery store.
-  Customers buy cold cartons of milk.

NATIONAL Dairy Month

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