



RELEASED

24 September 2005 6 a.m.

Rita affects more 34,000 members

LIVINGSTON – Hurricane Rita began to affect East Texas 6 p.m. Tuesday as the outer bands began producing outages in the Eastern portion of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's 10-county service area.

As of 6 a.m., 34,375 members in Polk, Tyler, San Jacinto, Hardin and Liberty counties have been affected. Entergy Texas has also reported that three 138-kV transmission lines that feed electricity into the Cooperative's distribution system are out of service.

At this time, Sam Houston EC is preparing to make damage assessments to its system. Line Technicians and rights-of-way crews are on standby in order to go where the need is greatest as soon as Rita shows signs of weakening.

Sam Houston EC encourages members to stay inside their homes and businesses if you did not get a chance to evacuate. The Cooperative also reminds you to not touch downed power lines as they could still be energized and could cause a harmful shock. Instead, please call your nearest branch office in Livingston (936) 327-5711, Woodville (409) 284-8251, Coldspring (936) 653-5400 or long distance at (800) 458-0381 to report this situation.

Friday morning, the Cooperative implemented its emergency restoration plan. Employees began working 12-hour shifts, the call center is manned 24-hours a day and contractor contacts were notified that their services may be needed by the end of the weekend. Sam Houston EC has secured 100 contractor crews and 50 rights-of-way to assist in this restoration effort in addition to normal cooperative staff. Line Technicians that were assisting in the Hurricane Katrina restoration effort were called back Thursday in order to help in the effort at home.

Be assured that Sam Houston EC is committed to seeing this restoration process to the end. As your electric cooperative, we will not rest until the last light is turned on.