

Neither snow, nor drifts shall long stay team's response to repair, trouble calls

Maintaining and restoring service for customers proved top priority for WTRT and WT Services employees during and after Winter Storm Goliath December 26 and 27, 2015. The howling post-Christmas storm, packing wind gusts exceeding 60 miles per hour and well below zero chill factors dumped up to 22 inches of snow in some parts of the western Panhandle, with the Friona/Clovis region bearing the brunt of the storm. Snowfall was also heavy from Lubbock to Muleshoe. Snow drifts mounded as high as 10 feet or more, piling up to the eaves of some rural homes. The storm proved deadly to the region's fed cattle and dairy industries, with cattle death losses in the dairy and cattle feeding industries projected to soar as high as 70,000 head.

Drifting snow stranded motorists on many roadways in the region during the storm. The efforts of rescue-minded farmers on tractors made all the difference in freeing trapped motorists from engulfing snow drifts.

WTRT and WT Services personnel had their adventures during the storm and in its

aftermath as they went about restoring service.

Keith Hacker, Central Office supervisor for WTRT, and Manuel Cantu and Harvey Bravo, Construction Supervisor, attempted to haul an emergency generator from Hereford to the Oklahoma Lane Central Office on Sunday December 27 amidst howling winds. Their efforts were hampered by a big rig jackknifed at the Black community that blocked Highway 60 and kept them waiting on the side of the road for five hours. They had elected to turn around and return to Hereford upon reaching Friona but law enforcement closed Highway 60. Unable to plow through the drifted snow to Oklahoma Lane, where backup batteries lasted 10 hours before running down, they holed up for the night in the Friona Central Office building where there was heat and light. Fortunately, a Good Samaritan brought them sleeping bags and food to tide them over for the night. Eventually they got the backup generator to Oklahoma Lane on Monday and got it running to supply emergency power.

Fuel duration for the die-

sel-powered generator is 12 hours, so Harvey Bravo, Manuel Cantu and Antonio Enriquez were kept busy hauling fuel to the Oklahoma Lane CO until commercial power was restored.

Some country roads remained closed by snow drifts and deep mud into the second week of January, particularly in the western reaches of the WTRT service area, though drifts also closed some roads in the Frio exchange.

Billy Seiver, Manager for installation and repair and construction, said that with some snow drifts taller than service pickups, trouble and repair teams faced a tough challenge simply getting around.

To expedite repairs in the harsh conditions, a Polaris Ranger ATV was purchased by the Cooperative, allowing service teams to pile gear in the cargo bed, then skirt around clogged roads via fields and turnrows, so that they could complete trouble calls.

Seiver said over 300 trouble calls were received by the Cooperative in roughly the first dozen days of the new
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**BANK DRAFT
PAYMENT NETS
1% DISCOUNT**

WT Services Friona/Bovina customers can get a one percent discount by paying their bill by bank draft.

Customers who authorize draft payment agree to have their bank account drafted for the amount of their outstanding balance on their account with WT Services. Drafts will occur between the 20th and 23rd of each month.

To arrange for payment of your WT Services bill via bank draft and net the one percent savings, contact the WT Services office in Friona at 1010 Columbia to obtain the necessary authorization form that includes bank routing and account information.

WTS scholarship application window currently open

For the third consecutive year WT Services will award scholarships to graduating seniors from Hereford, Friona, Bovina, and Bushland high schools, with recipients to be announced in May.

Application forms have been provided to school counselors at Hereford, Friona, Bovina, and Bushland high schools.

In Hereford, applications may be picked up at the WT Services office at 119 East 4th.

Applications and rules may be picked up at the WT Services office in Friona at 1010 Columbia,

Scholarships are open only to students whose parents or guardians are WT Services customers, or, to students who are WT Services customers themselves. Applicants must be high school seniors who are candidates for graduation this spring.

Scholarship monies will be disbursed in increments per semester.

An official application form, accompanied by two letters of recommendation, and a wallet-size photo must be submitted. One of the letters of recommendation must be from a teacher, principal, or counselor from the high school that the applicant is currently attending.

To be considered, applications must be fully completed, legibly typed or written, have no attachments other than the photo and two required letters of recommendation, and must be received at the

offices of WT Services, Inc. P.O. Box 1776, Hereford, Texas 79045, no later than April 8, 2015.

Applicants may be asked to attend an interview at the discretion of the board of parent company West Texas Rural Telephone Cooperative.

Mechanics of the scholar-

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year. He said many of the service interruptions were due to cold temperatures, moisture, and mice making a home in equipment in the rural countryside.

“Our installation and repair team has worked tirelessly to handle trouble calls, and

Service rate increase will apply to video packages

Rate increases have become virtually an every year event for cable TV providers like WT Services and the past year has been no exception. Rate increases come from the programmers that make their sporting or specialty channels available for viewing. Although cable TV customers and providers alike would like to be able to choose only their favorite channels, these programmers often require cable TV providers to carry numerous “companion” channels in order to receive the one or two channels that cable TV customers most desire.

WT Services has been negotiating major programming channel contracts for the

ships include the following:

* WT SERVICES scholarships may be used at any state or church-sponsored college or university, or at any accredited vocational or technical school.

* Recipients must maintain a minimum of twelve credited hours throughout each semester, or have full-time

student status at vocational or trade schools.

* Upon enrollment or pre-enrollment for the fall semester, recipients must send WT SERVICES a confirmation from the registrar’s office. Should a recipient drop out of school for any reason, the unused portion of the scholarship will be rescinded.

the construction team has helped, including assisting with keeping the roads open,” Seiver reported.

Members of the Installation and Repair team include Clint Ruckman, Gary Parker, Christian Lopez, Larry Watts, Andrew Gaytan, Kenneth

Flores, and Max Sanchez.

Construction team members include Manuel Cantu, Harvey Bravo, Chris Paetzold, Paul de Herrera, Michael Foster, Alonzo Ibarra, Lorenzo Segura, Jorge Nunez, Robert Dixon, Brandon Rocha, and Antonio Enriquez.

last several months. Although local broadcast stations make their signal available free “off air,” they have elected to charge cable TV providers, on a per customer basis, to make the very same signal available to their viewers. This is in addition to the programming fees that must be paid for all common “cable” channels such as ESPN, Disney, Lifetime, FOX Sports, The Outdoor Channel, Speed, etc.)

To ensure that WT Services viewers have continued access to the programming offered by the local broadcast channels and all other programmers it will be necessary to implement a service rate increase early in 2016.

The rate increase applies to all WT Services video packages.

WT Services takes its responsibility to provide quality programming at the lowest possible rates very seriously. Every effort was made to negotiate the most favorable terms with the major programmers. We appreciate your video business and will continue to explore options, as they become available, to minimize the rate increase impact on our customers.

If you have any questions in regard to your video entertainment services, please call our office in Friona at 250-5555, Hereford at 360-9000, or Bushland at 349-1000.