Resiliency is a team effort

Water and electricity services keep each other running. They are interdependent, especially during an emergency or during extreme weather conditions. When Mother Nature brings adverse conditions to our area, El Paso Water and El Paso Electric work together to supply essential resources to our community. Experience from previous weather events has made us resilient and aware of how to fill gaps or meet needs that are often out of our control.

EPWater uses electricity to clean and deliver water and wastewater to and from homes and businesses. El Paso Electric utilizes water in their power generation processes. When there is a shortage in supply in either water or power, the utilities often work together to calibrate or adjust usage to meet community demand. The effort is a behind-the-scenes process that has helped keep water and electricity running for our customers, including during the recent February 2021 freeze.

We trust that our resiliency will stand up to familiar challenges we are seeing this year: a decreased water supply from the Rio Grande and increasingly hot temperatures.

Working together

Thanks to the lessons from the 2011 freeze, EPWater invested $40 million to be prepared for extreme weather. Along with insulating exposed equipment, we installed backup generators at wells, plants and booster stations. Following the 2013 drought, EPWater drilled additional wells to gain access to more groundwater that is needed in drought years when river water is in short supply.

On the rare occasion when EPE power resources are stretched by demand, we work with EPE to allow them to reduce our power supply (with advance notice) since we have backup power. That way, they can continue to keep the lights on for other customers. During February’s freeze, we proactively switched some of our wells to backup generators to relieve the local power grid.

We have also occasionally turned to EPE on short notice to help us with urgent equipment needs to keep our water and wastewater systems running while we performed emergency repairs. They use similar equipment at their plants, so immediately finding something in supply locally can make a huge difference in keeping our facilities operational.

Community conservation

Our location in the Chihuahuan Desert and annual rainfall of only 9 inches per year means arid conditions are normal for us. Yet, we can feel the pinch when our river season is shorter. Just as EPE and EPWater work together to back each other up, we ask all our customers to make wise decisions about water efficiency this summer. Together, we can take steps to keep our community resilient.