



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Fort Worth District**

# News Release

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## **Corps of Engineers powerhouse at Sam Rayburn Reservoir jumpstarts power in Rita-ravaged Jasper County**

*FORT WORTH, Texas* – An energized team at the Sam Rayburn Powerhouse is restoring electricity to parts of Jasper County today.

The Sam Rayburn Powerhouse, one of only three hydroelectric generating facilities operated by the Corps of Engineers in Texas, has been tasked to do what is termed a “black start” to restore a grid after hurricane Rita caused widespread power line damage and blackout of power. The “black start” process generally involves the starting of a black start unit, diesel generator or combustion turbine, and supplying start-up power to a power plant along a given transmission path. As more power plants carry individual islands of customer loads, they are eventually connected and the power system becomes more stable.

This plan required careful planning and coordination between the Jasper-Newton Electric Co-op, Entergy Power, Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency, Southwestern Power Administration and Corps team members at Sam Rayburn Reservoir.

According to Mike Carver, the Powerhouse superintendent, the procedure has some elements of risk associated with it. “The Corps normally wouldn’t attempt something like this, but due to the circumstances and the urgent need to get power to critical-need facilities, our commanders decided to just do it,” said Carver.

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## Sam Rayburn Powerhouse

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The Powerhouse, which is staffed 24 hours a day, is equipped with two generators each capable of transmitting 25 megawatts of power. The “black start” began on Saturday afternoon about 2 p.m. after the Corps received word that the line repair crews had restored power lines to the critical facilities. Within 30 minutes of being notified that the power lines were ready, the system “black start” was coordinated by the Jasper Newton Electric Cooperative and the Sam Rayburn Power Plant began charging the first section of power line.

The generator was first used to charge the Mill Creek Substation near Jasper, then the Peachtree Substation and the Union Substation, and was finally halted by a failed circuit switch at the Kirbyville Substation. At 11 a.m. today, the Sam Rayburn Power Plant was carrying 1.7 million watts of load, powering the Jasper City Hall, Police Department, Sewage Treatment Plant, Super Wal-Mart, and Lowe’s and is expected to be further loaded as the power lines and switchmen are made available.

“We expected that some adjustments would need to be made along the way, but the Jasper-Newton Co-op has limited the jumpstart to only the most critical facilities so as not to overload the generator and to maintain the island’s stability,” explained Carver.

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