



March 3, 2021

Winter Storm Recovery Efforts

On Feb. 14, 2021, Winter Storm Uri passed through the Alexandria area bringing a wintry mix of sleet, snow and freezing rain. The city experienced a handful of power outages related to ice on power lines and transformers and the customers affected had service restored within 24 hours.

In an unprecedented event, temperatures remained below freezing for the rest of the week and a second winter storm, Viola, struck the city on Feb. 17. This storm brought heavy amounts of freezing rain and caused more significant power outages, with more than 3,300 residents losing electrical service. Eighty percent of city customers who lost electricity had service restored that day, and everyone who could take power was restored within 48 hours.

In addition to electrical outages, the city's water system lost water pressure, triggering a citywide boil advisory on Feb. 17 and the need for citizens to minimize water use for several days. While the 15 city water wells within the city limits were not affected, the 31 water wells in the Kisatchie National Forest that support the city system lost power from their provider, Cleco, for more than 24 hours. City generators were able to power eight of the Kisatchie wells, however due to extremely high water demand from burst pipes as well as resident's efforts to drip pipes to prevent freezing, demand exceeded production and the overall water pressure dropped below 20 psi triggering the boil advisory.

While the city significantly increased water production once full power was restored at the Kisatchie wells, the extended period of sub-freezing temperatures and high number of broken and leaking water lines resulted in a slow recovery of the system. Normal water pressure was finally restored the morning of Feb. 22 and the boil advisory was lifted the morning of Feb. 24.

As the result of the week-long sub-freezing temperatures and the back-to-back winter storms bringing large amounts of sleet and freezing rain, most local roads were impassible throughout the week. All city buildings were closed and many businesses were closed from Feb. 14-Feb. 21.