

After Spring Storms, Mississippi Employees Fight Floods

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"Herculean" effort underway

As water levels in the Mississippi River and its tributaries continue to rise, employees at Entergy Mississippi, Inc. are fighting flooding in the company's service territory.

Current crest projections in Natchez and Greenville are hovering at around 65 feet, while the projection for Vicksburg stands at approximately 58 feet. The river has already swamped parts of Memphis and Tunica.



Harrah's Casino in Tunica has been closed since May 1 due to flood conditions.

“Well, we just cleaned up from the tornadoes, and now we are dealing with flooding,” said Robbin Jeter, director of transmission and distribution operations. “This spring is turning into a herculean effort on the part of our employees, and I can’t say enough about how impressed I’ve been with their performance.”

As of May 10, approximately 600 customers in the north, south and delta regions had been de-energized due to flood conditions. Substations have been surveyed for site elevation and critical equipment, and flood mitigation work is in progress at the Baxter Wilson steam plant and the Natchez industrial substation. Employees are also proactively calling customers in affected areas with flood safety information.

“We’re going into this event knowing that it’s going to be similar to a long, drawn-out storm,” said Pete Scott, construction supervisor in Tunica. “We’re going to pace ourselves, stay focused and work towards the goal of getting everybody back on who can take power.”

In addition, the combination of damage from recent storms, current flood conditions, unusually high demand from higher temperatures and routine scheduled maintenance is challenging the ability of Entergy utilities to meet customer demands for power.

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Entergy has already reduced demand by curtailing some industrial and wholesale customers with whom the company has special agreements.

Entergy is required to meet the National Electric Safety Code for transmission line clearance, and the floods are challenging the company’s ability to do so. The threat of Mississippi River flooding means some generating plants along the river, as well as some transmission and distribution lines, may be restricted or taken offline due to limited transmission availability across the system.

Unseasonably high temperatures are also creating additional demands on the power grid as customers use more electricity to cool their homes and businesses. This is occurring at a time when some plants are already offline for routine scheduled maintenance in preparation for summer’s peak demands.



Sam's Town Casino, as well as the public roads customers normally use to access the facility, have been flooded as well.

"This is a very unique situation, and we are facing significant challenges," said Haley Fisackerly, president and chief executive officer of Entergy Mississippi, Inc. "We're working to import purchased power and we've curtailed power sales to those with whom we have agreements, but it's important that our customers are aware that we could face power shortages until these conditions improve."