

2025
MAY MICROBURST STORM
AUSTIN ENERGY AFTER-ACTION REPORT

Austin Energy



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Austin Energy

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

At Austin Energy, serving the community is at the heart of what we do, and the May Microburst storm was a powerful reminder of the importance of that commitment. In just a few hours, this fast-moving weather event caused extensive damage across parts of our service area and left more than 100,000 of our neighbors without power.

Our employees, alongside mutual aid partners, responded with dedication and professionalism under difficult conditions. They worked around the clock to restore service as safely and quickly as possible, often in challenging environments and during extreme Texas heat. Their dedication reflects the very best of Austin Energy's mission to safely deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and excellent customer service to our community.

This After-Action Report provides an opportunity to look back at the May 2025 storm with both perspective and purpose. It documents the many aspects of our response that proved effective—rapid mobilization, coordination across teams and the dedication of our workforce—while also identifying areas where improvement is possible. Each major event presents unique challenges, and from those challenges we gain lessons that make Austin Energy more resilient, more capable and better prepared to serve our community in the future. By capturing those lessons here, we reaffirm our commitment to continuous improvement and to strengthening the trust our customers place in us.

On behalf of Austin Energy, thank you to our customers for your patience and support, and to our employees and partners for your tireless efforts. Together, we will continue building a more resilient energy future for Austin.



Stuart Reilly, General Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 28, a powerful supercell thunderstorm tore through a portion of the Austin metro area, bringing wind gusts up to 90 mph and hail as large as 1.5 inches. This "May Microburst" storm swept through a concentrated area in densely populated neighborhoods, damaging buildings, trees, and infrastructure, as high winds broke poles, downed power lines and destroyed transformers. More than 72,000 customers lost power at the peak of the event, making it the second most destructive weather event in the utility's history in terms of direct infrastructure damage. Over the course of the restoration, there were 124,000 total customers affected and restored.

In response, Austin Energy crews mobilized quickly with support from 311 mutual aid workers. Together, they worked around the clock to replace 91 poles[1] , 52 transformers and more than 32,000 feet of overhead cable. Crews restored power to all customers who could safely receive it in four days.

This report provides a detailed account of Austin Energy's response and recovery efforts to restore power and services to affected areas.

Key Observations and Recommendations

Austin Energy has experienced its three most impactful storms in the last five years—Winter Storm Uri (2021), Winter Storm Mara (2023), and the May Microburst (2025). With each storm, Austin Energy has identified lessons learned and areas for improvement. The response to the May Microburst demonstrated Austin Energy's growth and improvement in many areas, showing an overall successful restoration effort. As a result, this after-action exercise primarily identified opportunities to improve internal processes that will enhance future recovery efforts, rather than revealing systemic deficiencies.

This After-Action Report evaluates the utility's readiness to respond, the effectiveness of its restoration operations and how well improvements from previous After-Action Reports were applied. It validates where past recommendations have been successfully implemented, identifies areas where further progress is needed and highlights opportunities to strengthen operational performance across several key areas.

At a broad level, this report found the following categories for continued refinement and improvement:

1. **Emergency Preparedness:** The May Microburst storm presented a fast-moving, high-impact weather event that tested Austin Energy's emergency response systems. While the utility activated its Incident Command System and mobilized quickly, the scale and complexity of the event revealed gaps in staffing depth, role clarity and mutual aid integration. Austin Energy is working to strengthen its emergency preparedness

[1] At least 10 of the poles damaged in the storm were poles owned and maintained by communications companies.

strategy by expanding training, formalizing mobilization plans and improving documentation and coordination across all operational periods.

2. **Storm Response & Coordination:** The May Microburst placed significant demands on Austin Energy's field operations, revealing both strengths and areas for improvement in restoration coordination, damage assessment and support. Austin Energy is working to strengthen field command structures, improve mutual aid integration and enhance assessment accuracy to support more efficient and effective storm recovery in future events.
3. **Communications & Customer Experience:** Austin Energy implemented new communication strategies during the May Microburst, including the Restoration 1-2-3 framework and neighborhood-level outreach to improve transparency and customer engagement. These efforts were generally well received, but the event also revealed opportunities to further tailor messaging for relevance and timeliness and improve coordination with facility staff for outreach events. Strengthening both public and internal communication processes will enhance transparency, improve customer experience and support more effective emergency response operations.

These observations reflect both the progress made since prior events and the continued need to adapt in the face of increasingly frequent and severe weather events. Austin Energy remains committed to a culture of continuous improvement. The utility aims to reduce customer impacts, improve emergency response operations and ensure greater preparedness for future challenges.









EVENT DETAILS

On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 28, a disturbance in upper-level winds from the northwest, combined with an unstable atmosphere and peak daytime heat, created conditions favorable for severe thunderstorms across Central Texas. Two long-lived supercell thunderstorms developed, each capable of producing destructive winds and large hail.

The first supercell, which ultimately struck part of Austin, developed southwest of Brownwood between 1 and 2 p.m. and tracked southeast along the Colorado River, passing east of Lake Buchanan. It moved through and east of Burnet before continuing south-southeast along the U.S. Highway 183 corridor into the north-northwestern Austin metro around 6 p.m., where surface winds intensified further.

As it moved into central, northern and eastern Austin, the storm produced some of the most intense hail and hail drifts observed during the event. It crossed east of the University of Texas and the I-35 corridor before collapsing near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport around sunset. The strongest straight-line winds in the Austin metro — between 55 and nearly 90 mph — occurred in a concentrated 2- to 3-mile swath from north/northwest Austin through central and east Austin to the airport, where a wind gust of 77 mph was recorded at 6:59 p.m. Wind-driven hail up to 1.5 inches in diameter amplified damage to homes, businesses and electrical infrastructure. In total, the storm damaged 91 poles, along with 32,000 feet of overhead cable and 52 transformers across impacted areas of the city.

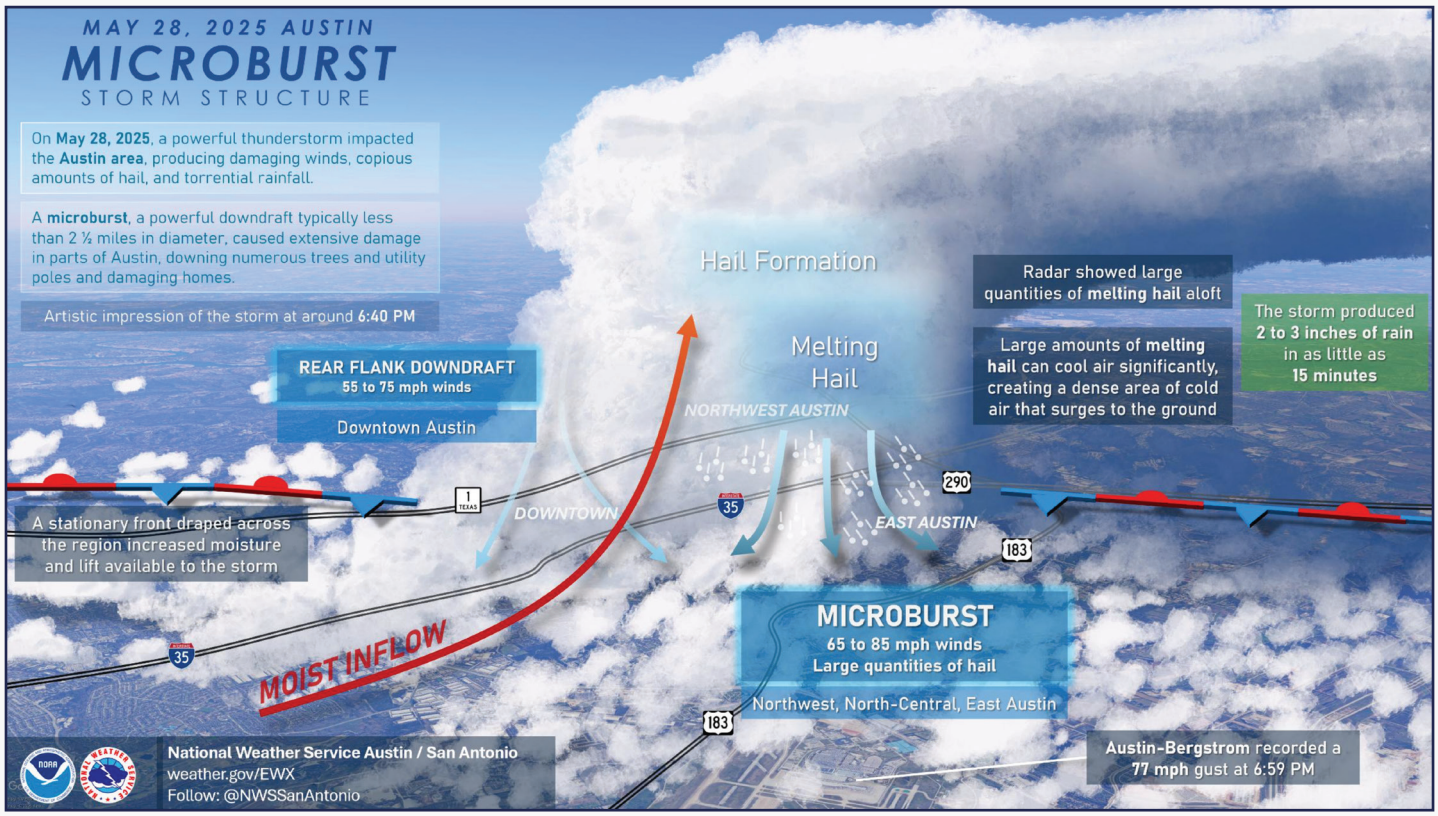
The second supercell tracked farther west toward Marble Falls and Horseshoe Bay, dissipating near sunset without impacting Austin. While severe thunderstorms are common in Texas during late spring and early summer, this storm's direct strike on densely populated neighborhoods in Northwest Hills, Shoal Creek and Cherrywood areas made it especially destructive.







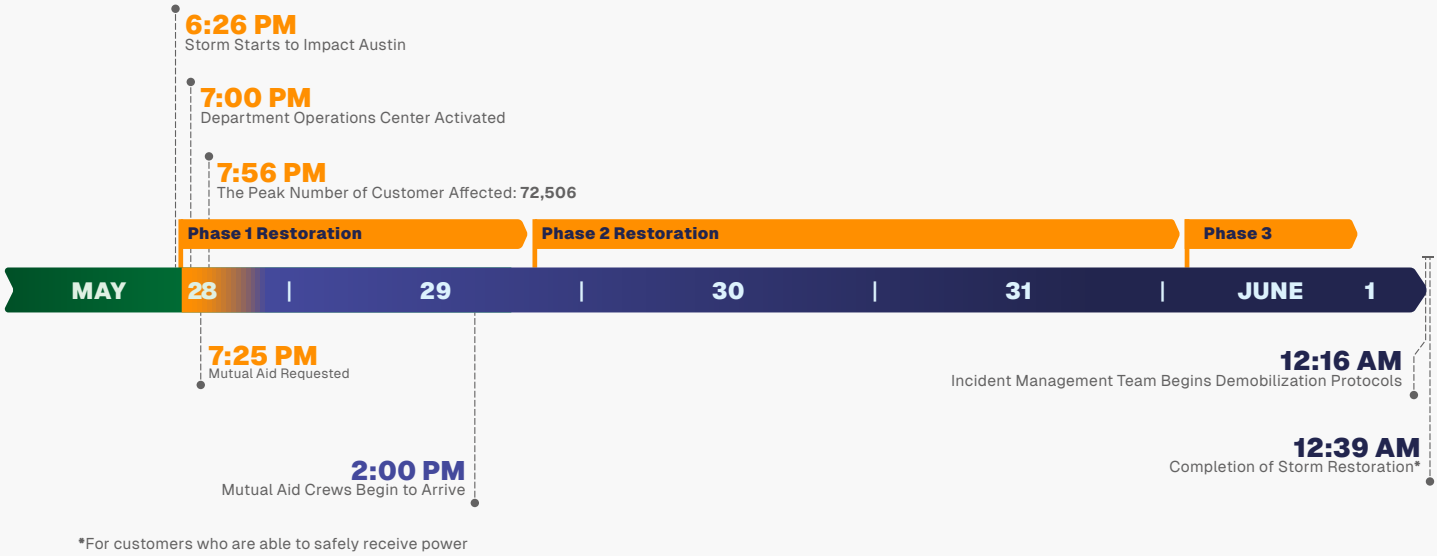
NOAA/National Weather Service Microburst Storm Structure Infographic





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Storm Response Timeline



*For customers who are able to safely receive power

Phased Restoration Approach

Austin Energy takes a phased approach to restoring power after major events. Each phase is designed to prioritize safety, maximize restoration impact and adapt to the evolving conditions on the ground.

Phase 1 Restoration Efforts

In Phase 1, crews focus on restoring power to critical life-safety services such as hospitals, emergency call centers and water treatment facilities. They also work to bring major circuits back online. Circuits are large sections of the electrical grid that serve many customers; restoring a single circuit can bring thousands back online at once and help isolate smaller, more specific outages. During this phase, Austin Energy also assesses the extent of damage to gain a more accurate picture of the situation and inform restoration strategy.

The May storm hit quite suddenly just before 6:30 p.m., and almost as soon as it did, over 40 circuits were knocked offline. As outages spread, Austin Energy activated additional call center staff to handle storm-related calls. At 7 p.m., Austin Energy leadership activated its Incident Management Team and shortly thereafter requested mutual aid. The storm's impact peaked at 7:56 p.m. with 72,506 customers affected. The Department Operations Center (DOC) was activated at 8 p.m. and became the hub for response efforts. Crews worked through the night to determine resource needs and begin critical load and circuit restoration. This initial assessment phase was critical in shaping the full scale and scope of the restoration effort.

Austin Energy's formal mutual aid request was for 160 distribution overhead lineworkers and 100 tree trimmers. Mutual aid crews began arriving at 2 p.m. on May 29, bringing additional support to local teams.

By the end of Phase 1, Austin Energy and mutual aid crews had restored power to 57,182 customers, 78.9% of those affected at peak.

Phase 2 Restoration Efforts

Phase 2 prioritizes outages that affect the largest number of customers, with the goal of restoring service to as many people as quickly as possible. Crews work each remaining incident and Phase 2 continues until only small, localized outages remain. This stage can still involve significant repairs, such as replacing damaged transformers, repairing spans of primary line or removing large fallen trees or branches that are impacting distribution wires.

Phase 2 began at 6 p.m. on May 29 with approximately 353 remaining outages, affecting an estimated 15,324 customers. Mutual aid crews were fully integrated into the response, working alongside Austin Energy teams across the service area. Restoration efforts targeted the hardest-hit areas, including Northwest, North-Central and East Austin, where damage was most severe. By 1 p.m. on May 30, crews had restored service to an additional 3,773 customers, bringing total restoration to 84 percent.

Community outreach included media availability in Northwest Austin to highlight the complexity of repairs in areas where numerous poles had been pulled down by high winds and fallen trees, as well as staffed support locations from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Delores Duffie Recreation Center and McCallum High School. Austin Energy also sent targeted outage alerts encouraging customers experiencing extended outages to seek alternative accommodations when feasible.

By the evening of May 31, remaining outages were smaller and more complex, prompting the transition to Phase 3 the next morning.

Phase 3 Restoration Efforts

On June 1 at 6 a.m., Austin Energy entered the third and final phase of restoration, which focuses on the remaining small outages. These incidents are often labor-intensive and may involve specialized repairs, such as replacing individual service lines, addressing secondary connections or completing equipment-specific work. In some cases, customers must first make repairs on their side of the service before Austin Energy can safely restore power.

At the start of Phase 3, approximately 15 outages remained, affecting approximately 653 customers[2]. Crews worked steadily throughout the day, reducing the total to 494 customers by midday and to roughly 276 by evening.

By June 2, only one outage remained, affecting two customers. At midnight, Austin's 311 customer service system resumed normal operations, and the Incident Management Team transitioned to demobilization protocols at 12:16 a.m. By 12:39 a.m., Austin Energy considered 100 percent of storm-related outages resolved. Final communications announcing the completion of restoration were issued at 2 a.m., and by 1 p.m. the last mutual aid crews had departed, after fulfilling a mandatory rest period.

[2] Restoration numbers reflect cumulative progress. Some customers may have had service restored more than once as crews continued repairs.

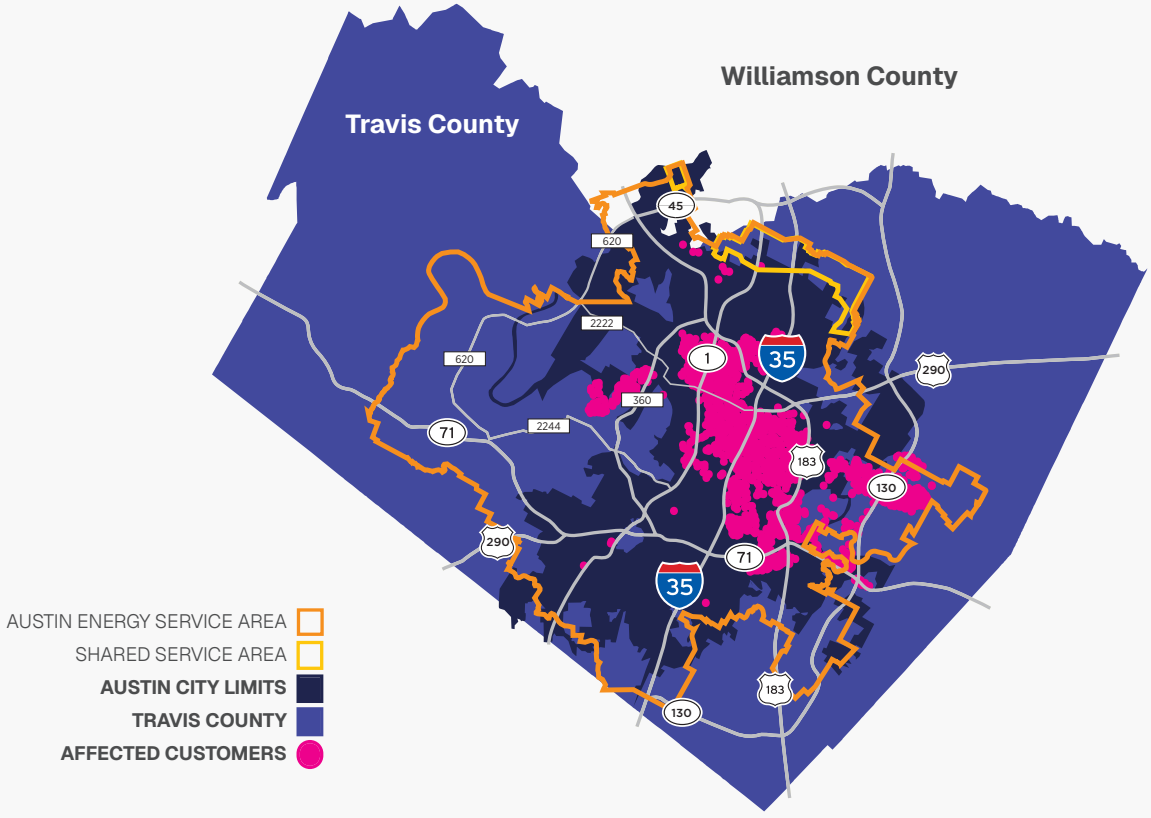
May Microburst Storm: Affected Customers Over Time

At peak, 72,506 customers out



May 2025 Microburst Storm Outages

Peak Numer of Affected Customers: 72,506





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VALIDATION OF PAST IMPROVEMENTS

In the aftermath of Winter Storm Uri (2021) and Winter Storm Mara (2023), Austin Energy completed over 190 follow-up actions aimed at strengthening emergency preparedness, coordination, communications and other critical response areas. As part of this After-Action Review, those actions were reassessed in light of the May 2025 Microburst to evaluate their effectiveness.

The review found that most of these actions were effectively implemented, which means the associated challenges did not reoccur during the microburst response. In other cases, implementation was partially effective or requires additional reinforcement. Those items have been carried forward as new findings in this report, with corresponding follow-up actions.

Effective Implementation

Several actions taken in response to past storms proved effective and measurably strengthened the May 2025 response:

- **Clearer Incident Management Team structure —** Enhanced definitions of roles and section responsibilities supported more consistent communication and coordination across workgroups.
- **Faster, more reliable damage assessment —** Dedicated, trained personnel deployed in two-person teams with revised protocols, improved scoping speed and accuracy, enabling more efficient field crew response and reduced restoration times.
- **Restoration 1-2-3 framework** — Provided customers with clearer expectations of restoration sequencing and timelines, reducing confusion and improving transparency.
- **Enhanced outage map and customer alerts** — System upgrades supported higher traffic volumes and delivered more timely, accurate information.
- **Improved mutual aid readiness —** Pre-drafted contracts and standing agreements accelerated the deployment of external crews.

Partially Effective Implementation

Some follow-up actions were only partially effective. While improvements were made after past storms, related challenges resurfaced during the May microburst in areas related to software training, essential staffing activation and role clarity, contracts and logistics coordination. These issues are now documented as new findings in this After-Action Review with updated follow-up actions to close remaining gaps.

Opportunities for Reinforcement

A smaller set of actions were technically complete but would benefit from continued reinforcement to ensure consistent adoption. Examples include expanding the use of job aids and reference checklists, as well as standardizing recurring training across all operational periods.

Together, these validations demonstrate how lessons from prior storms directly enhanced Austin Energy's microburst response and are laying the groundwork for continuous improvement.

Observations and Follow Up Actions

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency preparedness is essential to protecting the public, ensuring reliable service and minimizing the impact of severe weather. The May Microburst tested Austin Energy's readiness and response systems, providing valuable insight into operational strengths and areas for improvement. While the utility demonstrated strong coordination through its emergency response structure, the event also revealed opportunities to improve planning, field support and internal processes. The following observations outline targeted improvements to support faster, more coordinated and more effective emergency response operations.

Observation 1 — Emergency Preparedness Strategy

Austin Energy's emergency preparedness strategy is built on the principles of scalability, coordination and continuity of operations. The activation of the Incident Command System (ICS) provided a structured framework for managing the storm response. However, the event highlighted the need for deeper staffing capacity, clearer role definitions and a formalized process for integrating external crews. Addressing these gaps will improve Austin Energy's ability to scale emergency operations, ensure consistent role coverage and integrate mutual aid resources more effectively during complex events.

Key Findings

1. **Limited Bench Depth of ICS-Trained Personnel Across Roles:** During the storm response, some sections and positions had limited ICS-trained personnel available to serve in the roles. This constrained assignment coverage throughout the duration of the response, placing additional burden on staff.
2. **Gaps in ICS Role Definition and Preparedness:** Several ICS roles would benefit from additional development. In some cases, personnel recently assigned to roles were unfamiliar with responsibilities and learned tasks in real-time.
3. **Need for a Documented Mobilization Plan:** The absence of a documented mobilization plan highlighted a preparedness gap in how external crews are integrated during emergency events. While Austin Energy successfully leveraged past mutual aid experience to bring on additional crews, a fully defined process for staging, onboarding and assigning roles and responsibilities would improve personnel and equipment tracking, ensure accountability and enhance coordination with the Department Operations Center (DOC).



4. **Limited Emergency Management Support at Field Locations:** The response effort revealed an opportunity to embed additional emergency management personnel into field operations at service centers and mutual aid staging areas to promote consistent documentation, improve coordination with the DOC and enhance logistics.

Follow-Up Actions

AI 1.1 — Expand the Incident Management Team (IMT) roster and bench depth to include nearly all Austin Energy employees, ensuring broader organizational readiness and role coverage during emergency events.

AI 1.2 — Develop a pre-established, standing, rotating on-call list to ensure Command and General Staff and other commonly-needed IMT positions are readily available for activation in the event of an incident.

AI 1.3 — Review current ICS positions to determine needs for expansion or further development.

AI 1.4 — Maintain a minimum of three identified and trained staff members to each ICS position to ensure adequate coverage across operational periods.

AI 1.5 — Update and develop standardized position checklists for each ICS role to support consistent execution of responsibilities.

AI 1.6 — Develop a formal mobilization plan for onboarding and offboarding mutual aid and external crews. The plan should include defined roles and responsibilities, staging procedures and processes for personnel and equipment tracking.

AI 1.7 — Integrate Emergency Management-trained personnel into field locations to support on-site documentation, coordination with the DOC and logistical functions such as Emergency ProCard use and the setup of appropriate workspaces.

Observation 2 — Software, Systems and Training

Several software and other systems are essential to Austin Energy's ability to coordinate operations, share outage and restoration updates and support decision-making during emergency events. These platforms enable real-time information flow across teams and help maintain situational awareness. During the May Microburst, these tools played a key role in the response. However, staff training, system navigation and inconsistent notification processes affected how effectively information was shared and how well teams coordinated. Addressing these items will improve staff fluency with emergency communication platforms, ensure consistent notifications and strengthen cross-team coordination during activations.

Key Findings

1. **Challenges Using Software and Reporting Systems:** Staff reported difficulties navigating and using internal and cross-functional software platforms, including the Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS) and Veoci. Veoci is a new emergency response management system used to coordinate response actions. Some staff lacked sufficient training or experience to be fluent in Veoci operations, which limited its effectiveness. Additionally, complex forms and inconsistent navigation reduced efficiency.
2. **Inconsistent Activation and Notification Systems:** Prior to the May storm, activation notifications migrated from SendWordNow to Veoci. This was the first broad use of Veoci for notifications, and it caused confusion among staff. Traditional phone and text notifications were inconsistent and communications from command staff were delayed. Some Incident Management Team (IMT) communications did not reach affected groups, which impacted awareness of meetings and active participation for some, especially remote participants.

Follow-Up Actions

AI 2.1 — Establish required annual, role-specific training on all software systems used during IMT events.

AI 2.2 — Develop and distribute quick-reference guides (cheat sheets) to assist users with software systems during activations.

AI 2.3 — Conduct iterative training on the Veoci response management system to ensure staff gain fluency and confidence during emergency activations.

AI 2.4 — Provide ongoing training on Incident Command System (ICS) forms to improve staff familiarity and ensure consistent documentation during Incident Management Team (IMT) events.

AI 2.5 — Establish Veoci as the standard platform for all Incident Management Team (IMT) notifications.

AI 2.6 — Validate Veoci notifications by using the system for routine IMT activities, such as quarterly meetings, exercises and position-specific workshops.

Observation 3 — Training and Coordination

Effective training and coordination are essential to ensure all personnel — including internal staff and mutual aid crews — are prepared to operate within Austin Energy's emergency response framework. While there are numerous opportunities for training on key systems and emergency management topics both internal and external to Austin Energy, dynamic situations and evolving personnel make frequent repetition and real-time reinforcement essential. Doing so will improve field consistency, operational safety and the quality of customer support during emergency events.

Key Findings

1. **Need for Enhanced Onboarding for Mutual Aid Crews:** Austin Energy received feedback from Mutual Aid crews requesting a more streamlined onboarding process. The existing process delayed deployment of crews to the field, leading to operational inconsistencies.
2. **Need for Enhanced Training for Customer Care Representatives:** Customer Care representatives play a critical public-facing role during outage events, serving as a primary point of contact for customers seeking information and support. During the May Microburst, it became clear that additional training is needed to help representatives explain the newly adopted phased restoration process and interpret outage data with greater assurance.

Follow-Up Actions

AI 3.1 — Operations will collaborate with Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) to enhance the onboarding process for mutual aid crews. This initiative will include the review and revision of the existing Mutual Aid Playbook that outlines Austin Energy's policies, safety protocols and operational procedures. The revised playbook will be provided to each responding company to ensure alignment with Austin Energy's expectations during emergency events.

AI 3.2 — Develop and deliver targeted training for Customer Care Representatives on the phased restoration approach. This training will focus on strengthening confidence and clarity in communicating with customers about the restoration process, including the purpose and progression of each phase during emergency events.

AI 3.3 — Develop and deliver training on the phased restoration approach for all relevant Incident Management Team (IMT) members and operational units with defined roles in the IMT structure to ensure staff understand the sequencing, responsibilities and operational objectives associated with each phase.



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STORM RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

Austin Energy's ability to respond effectively to large-scale weather events depends on the coordination of restoration activities, accurate damage assessment and access to reliable field tools and equipment. Crews worked diligently to restore power under challenging conditions, and many aspects of the response were executed successfully. However, the event also revealed areas where processes and coordination can be improved. Observations in this section highlight key findings related to field operations, mutual aid integration, assessment accuracy and equipment readiness. Addressing these issues will improve operational efficiency, resource coordination and field performance in future emergency responses.

Observation 4 — Restoration Coordination

Restoration coordination is critical to ensuring safe, efficient and timely power restoration during emergency events. Key components of this coordination rely on effective alignment of field operations, deployment of mutual aid and job sequencing across shifts and crews.

Key Findings

1. **Need for Enhancements in Operational Coordination:** During the May Microburst, there were instances where improved coordination could have supported more efficient restoration. Opportunities for enhancement were observed at both the command and field response levels. At the command level, coordination involves Operations section leadership aligning tactics with operational period objectives. At the field level, coordination is critical when multiple crews—such as those responsible for pole setting, tree trimming and line construction—must work in sequence to restore power. Strengthening coordination across these levels would help streamline restoration efforts and reduce delays.
2. **Need for Command Structure at Mutual Aid Staging Area:** The mutual aid staging area would benefit from a defined command structure, which has been determined to be a best practice when deploying or receiving mutual aid. The main objectives are to support consistent work issuance, oversight and efficiency in mutual aid crew deployment.
3. **Unclear Crew and Shift Information:** Accurate personnel and shift information was not consistently communicated from the Operations section to the Planning section during the activation, leading to inefficiencies in onboarding, offboarding and situational awareness across operational periods.
4. **Limited Radio Access for Field Personnel:** Some field personnel did not have access to radios during the event and personnel are often dispatched to areas with unreliable cellular service.

Follow-Up Actions

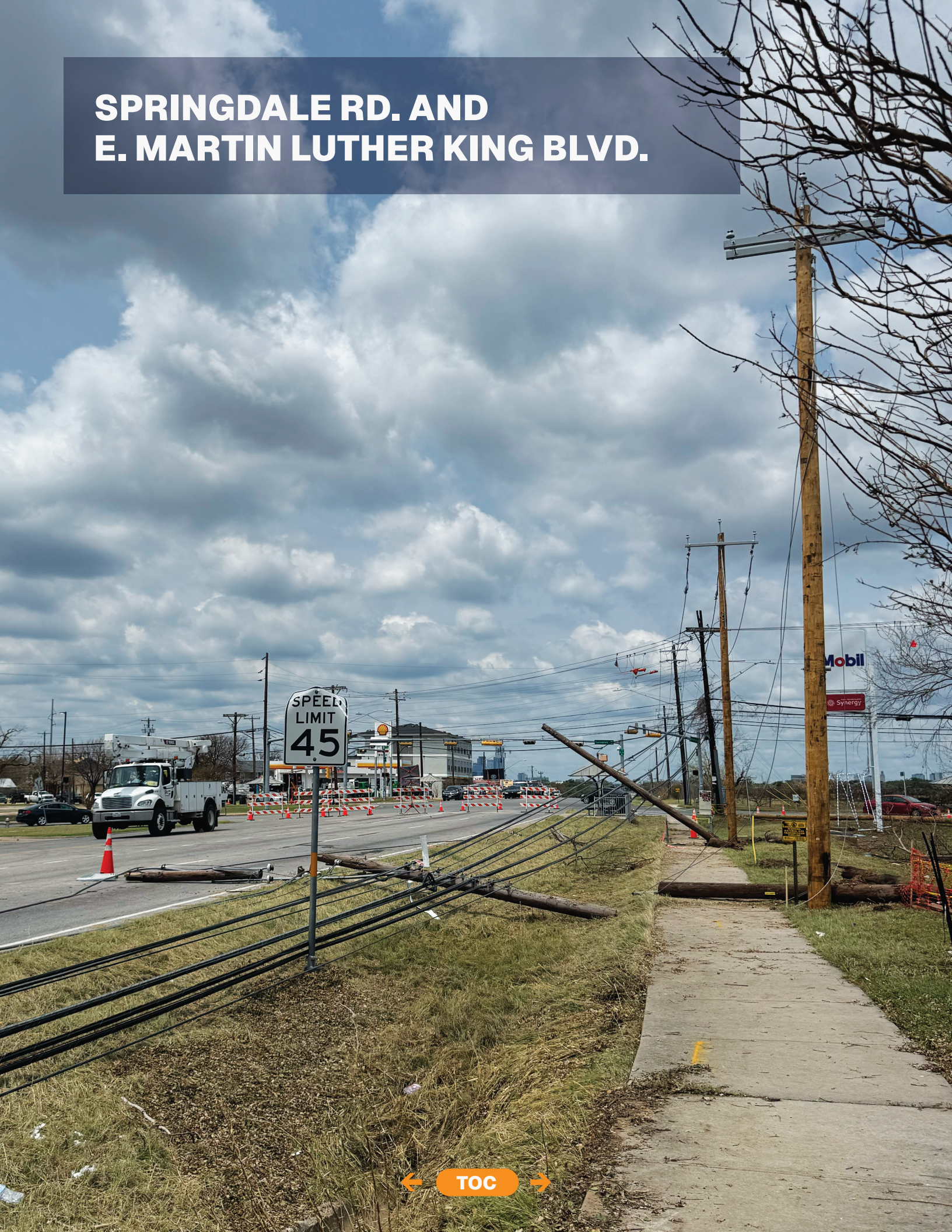
AI 4.1 — Improve recurring tactical meetings with the Operations Section Chief and Branch Directors to include updates on the overall restoration plan and restoration goals for each operational period.

AI 4.2 — Reaffirm and follow the designated work shift for internal Field Operations (Day 0600–2000 / Night 1800–0800). External and mutual aid crews will follow a designated Day shift (0600–2200).

AI 4.3 — Standardize mutual aid requests to clearly specify the number, type and qualifications of crews required to support restoration efforts.

AI 4.4 — Establish improved tracking methods to ensure the correct sequencing of Field Operations crews for complex outages that require multiple crew assignments.

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AI 4.5 — Evaluate the establishment of an Area Command structure at mutual aid staging sites to include logistics, work management, vegetation management, contract inspections, safety and documentation functions.

AI 4.6 — Transition Operation's personnel tracking and shift assignments to Veoci to improve transparency and centralize communication across operational periods.

AI 4.7 — Conduct a review of current radio distribution protocols to assess whether additional field teams beyond those currently assigned—such as damage assessors or other support roles—should be granted access to radios during emergency events, particularly in areas where cellular service may be unreliable.

Observation 5 — Damage Assessment

Accurate damage assessment is essential to prioritizing restoration work, deploying crews effectively and minimizing delays during emergency events. Coordination among Patrollers, the Damage Assessment Team and Single Outage Teams generally supported initial field assessments, but the response revealed opportunities to improve accuracy and efficiency through role clarity, enhanced training and the potential use of aerial inspections. Addressing these items will improve field alignment, enhance assessment reliability and support faster, more informed restoration decisions in future events.

Key Findings

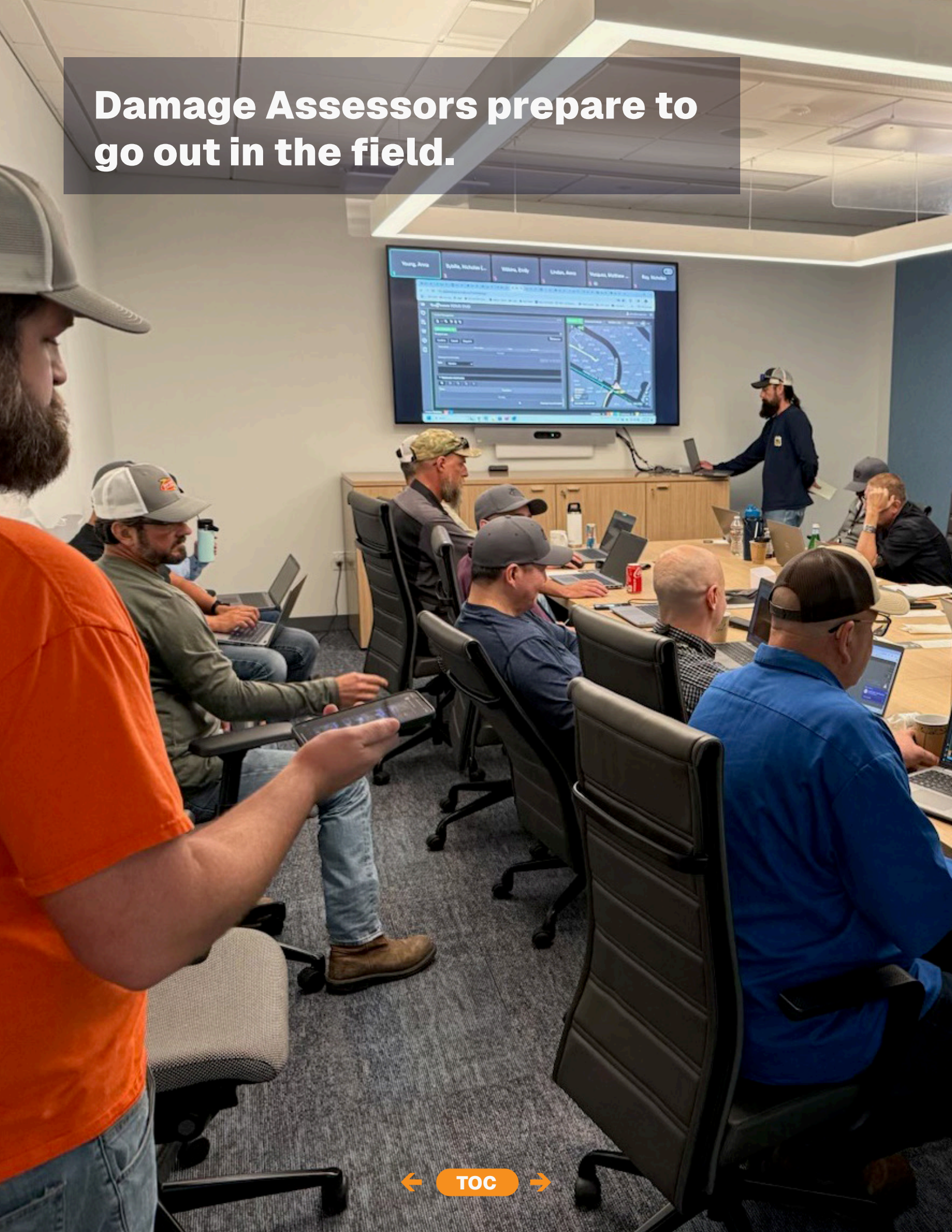
1. **Coordination Opportunities Among Field Teams:** While overall coordination was effective, there were instances of misalignment between Patrollers, the Damage Assessment Team and Single Outage Teams.
2. **Inaccuracies in Initial Assessments:** In some cases, crews were dispatched to repair equipment that was not damaged, often tying back to customer calls. At times, this resulted in dispatching a line construction crew for work that could have been addressed by a troubleshooter, highlighting the benefit of having a damage assessor or troubleshooter verify damage before work packets are created.
3. **Training and Role Clarity:** Damage Assessment data in ADMS was inconsistent resulting in Work Management packets being incomplete or inaccurate. Additional training is needed for the Damage Assessment and Single Outage Teams to ensure accurate damage assessment information and consistent data entry into ADMS.

Follow-Up Actions

AI 5.1 — Reassign Patrollers, the Damage Assessment Team and Single Outage Teams to the Energy Control Center (ECC) Branch to improve coordination and streamline field operations during emergency events.

AI 5.2 — Establish a formal process for the ECC, in coordination with the ADMS Intelligence Team and Damage Assessment Leads, to issue damage assessment locations and deliver findings to Work Management for timely and accurate work packet creation.

AI 5.3 — Implement annual training for Damage Assessment and Single Outage Teams to improve assessment accuracy, ensure consistent data entry into ADMS, strengthen communication among field teams and reinforce role clarity.



Damage Assessors prepare to go out in the field.



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COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Observation 6 — Public Communication and Outreach

Effective public communication is essential to keeping customers informed, managing expectations and providing access to services during emergency events. During the May activation, Austin Energy implemented new strategies such as setting clear, timely expectations, introducing the Restoration 1-2-3 framework, sharing consistent field updates through photos and videos, and piloting neighborhood-level outreach through in-person events at community centers and City of Austin facilities. These efforts were generally well received and helped customers better understand the scope and progress of restoration work, while also providing valuable opportunities for direct connection. The response also highlighted opportunities to strengthen coordination, clarify roles and refine communication tools to better serve the community during future activations.

Key Findings

1. **Opportunity to Refine Messaging and Delivery:** While Austin Energy's revised communication strategies were effective, there is an opportunity to further tailor messaging to be more actionable, relevant and timely—both system-wide and at the neighborhood level—to help customers make informed decisions during extended outages.
2. **Insufficient Coordination for Some Outreach Activities:** Some outreach events revealed insufficient coordination with facility staff, which may have contributed to low turnout and missed opportunities for engagement.
3. **Limited Cross-Departmental Support:** Opportunities exist to expand outreach efforts by engaging other City of Austin departments to provide broader disaster recovery services beyond utility support.
4. **Communication Challenges for Customers Without Power:** Providing important information to customers who experience an extended power outage without the ability to charge mobile devices or receive news through traditional media outlets remains a challenge for the industry and local governments.

Follow-Up Actions

AI 6.1 — Collaborate with Operations to identify and integrate system-wide and real-time updates such as outage status, crew deployment and restoration timelines into clear, actionable messages for customers across all communication channels.

AI 6.2 — Lead a review of reconnection door hangers to determine how they can better support customers during restoration, and identify opportunities to add helpful information or resources.

AI 6.3 — Expand existing contacts and build a broader network of trained communications staff to activate in the field during emergency events. These contributors will capture and share timely, high-quality photos and videos that support real-time customer updates and illustrate restoration progress.

AI 6.4 — Create and maintain a comprehensive checklist to guide the planning, coordination and execution of outreach events. The checklist will include key contacts, supply needs, staffing protocols, facility coordination expectations and post-event debrief procedures.

AI 6.5 — Identify and pursue partnerships with other City of Austin departments to broaden the range of services offered at outreach events, including access to disaster recovery resources such as battery-powered device chargers and hand-crank radios, public health support and community assistance programs.

May 28 – June 2

170+
Posts

5 Platforms
(Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and Nextdoor)

586,800+
Impressions

6.57%
Average Post Engagement Rate

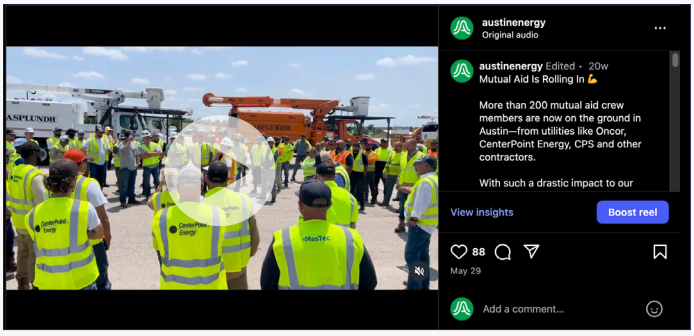
88,600+
Followers on



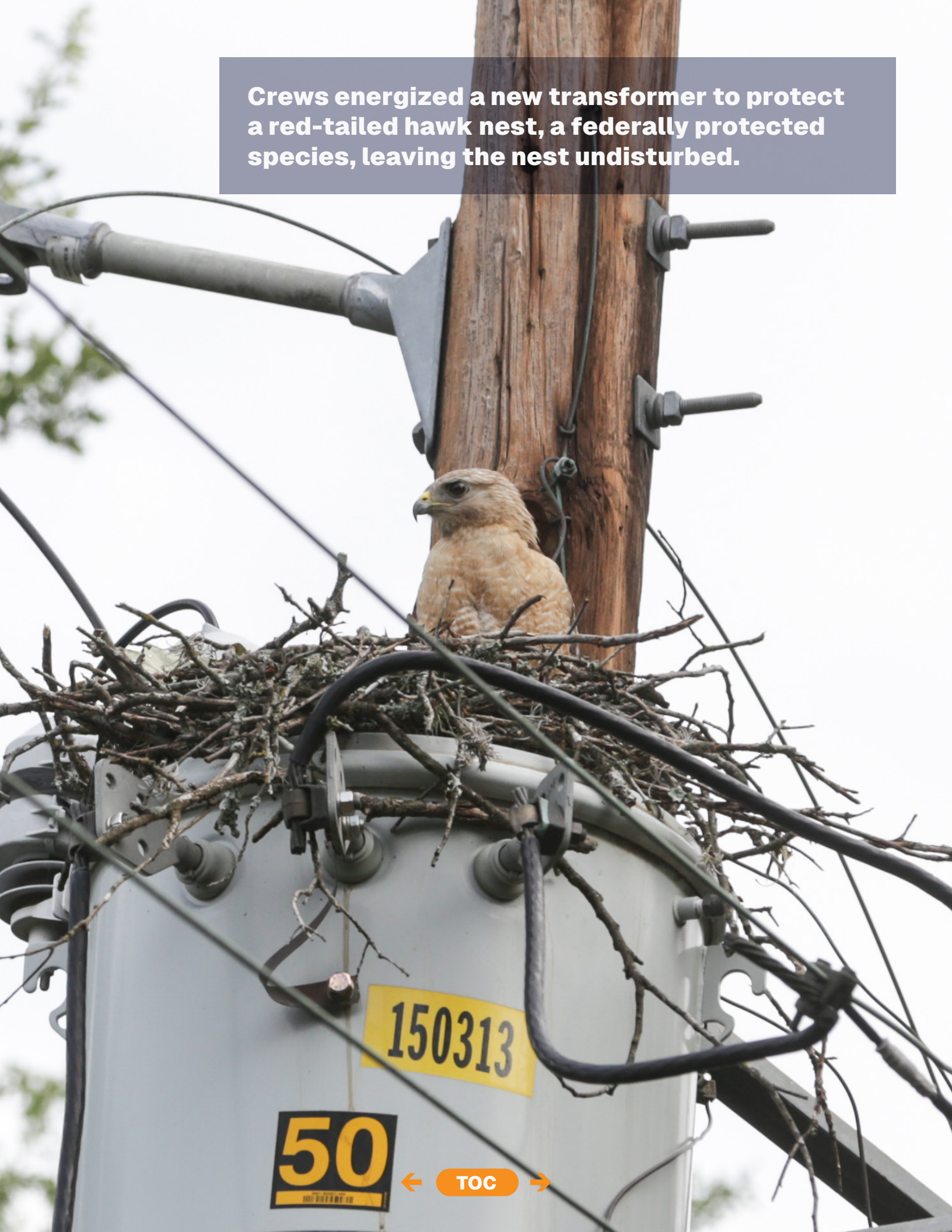
Daniel B. is part of the Austin Energy System Restoration and Troubleshooter teams.



Stuart Reilly, General Manager talking about power restoration efforts.



More than 200 mutual aid crew members are now on the ground in Austin—from utilities like Oncor, CenterPoint Energy, CPS and other contractors.



Crews energized a new transformer to protect a red-tailed hawk nest, a federally protected species, leaving the nest undisturbed.

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CONCLUSION

Austin Energy recognizes the disruption caused by the May 2025 Microburst and extends its gratitude to customers for their patience as crews worked around the clock to restore service. The storm was the third most destructive in the utility's history and tested every part of its emergency response system.

This After-Action Review confirms that many of the improvements made after Winter Storm Uri and Winter Storm Mara strengthened Austin Energy's performance during the May microburst event. Updates to the Incident Management Team structure supported clearer role execution, refined damage assessment protocols produced more reliable restoration estimates, the Restoration 1-2-3 framework improved customer understanding of restoration sequencing and pre-arranged mutual aid agreements accelerated crew deployment. Together, these measures contributed to a more coordinated response and more dependable communication with customers. At the same time, the event underscored specific challenges that constrained efficiency in parts of the response.

The evaluation reinforced the importance of validating past improvements and reinforcing measures that have not yet become routine practice across the organization. By building on effective changes, addressing gaps and ensuring consistent adoption of tools, training and procedures, Austin Energy can embed lessons learned into daily readiness.

Looking ahead, the findings and follow-up actions in this report will guide Austin Energy's continued work to strengthen emergency preparedness. These efforts mark the next stage in a cycle of continuous improvement that will enhance resilience, ensure accountability and deliver more effective service to the community during future severe weather events.







May Microburst Storm Restroation

May 28 – June 1, 2025

124,000 total customers affected and restored

72,500 customers affected at the peak of the storm

91 power poles replaced

52 transformers replaced

32,000 feet of overhead cable restored

25,000 outage-related inquiries fielded

APPENDIX

After Action Review Methodology

Austin Energy's Corporate Quality Services (CQS) team led the coordination of a five-step After-Action Review process, which aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the event and identify areas for improvement.

Corporate Quality Services is an internal team dedicated to continuous improvement within Austin Energy. The team is committed to enhancing operational efficiency, strengthening organizational processes, mitigating risks and advancing quality across the utility.

With a comprehensive understanding of Austin Energy's operations, workflows and organizational structure, as well as specialized expertise in utility-related areas, CQS provides objective assessments and data-driven recommendations.

In addition to the internal process, Austin Energy collaborated with NSAI, Inc., a third-party organization, during the Winter Storm Mara After Action Review. NSAI, Inc. conducted an audit of the After-Action Review methodology to provide oversight and feedback. As the National Standards Authority of Ireland, NSAI specializes in standards and certifications related to Quality Management Systems, enabling them to effectively evaluate Austin Energy's After-Action Review process. Based on their analysis, the auditor concluded that Austin Energy's process was effective in highlighting recommendations and areas for improvement.

The five-step process phases are:

- **Plan**
- **Discover**
- **Analyze**
- **Improve**
- **Report**





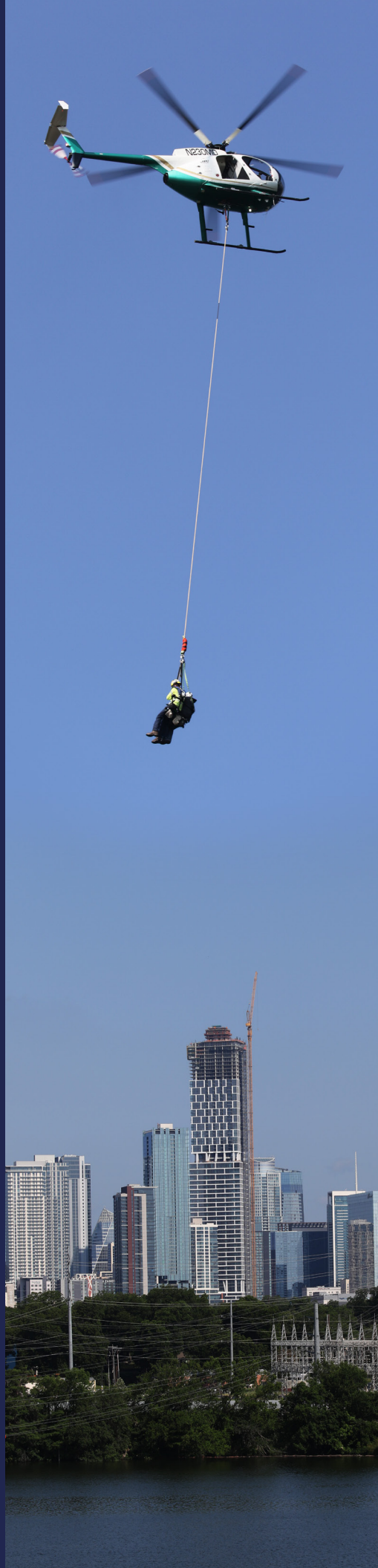
The Plan phase. The scope of the plan phase encompassed all relevant aspects of Austin Energy's emergency response to 2025 Microburst event. Gathering documentation and reports related to the event was a crucial part of this phase, as it allowed Austin Energy to have an overall understanding of the incident. Additionally, internal stakeholders such as Incident Command teams and Austin Energy leadership were engaged to ensure key individuals and teams were included in the review process. In addition, external stakeholders were identified, and their perspectives were considered. This included considering comments and questions from City Council and input from mutual aid personnel.

The Discover phase. This phase involved gathering information including Guidelines and Work Processes, Emergency Operations Plans (EOP), incident logs and lessons learned from previous storms.

The Analyze phase. This phase involved analyzing the data gathered and identifying underlying root causes. By examining the contributing factors, the team identified patterns, systemic weaknesses and areas where processes or procedures may have fallen short. The analysis also included validating the effectiveness of past improvements to determine whether prior corrective actions delivered the intended results.

Analyzing the incidents allowed Austin Energy to assess how well its emergency response aligned with the specific needs of customers, stakeholders and the requirements of its utility operations. This phase also involved ensuring questions from key stakeholders like City Council were addressed through the findings of the After-Action Review.

The Improve phase. This phase focused on using the insights gained from the previous phases to identify strategies for enhancing the utility's emergency response. Austin Energy leveraged the findings to generate recommendations for improvement, considering both immediate corrective actions and long-term solutions.







TOC

The goal was to identify practical recommendations and effective strategies that would strengthen Austin Energy's ability to mitigate future incidents and optimize overall emergency response capabilities. This phase emphasized customer-centric and utility perspectives to ensure that the strategies are tailored to the specific demands and challenges faced by Austin Energy's utility operations.

The Report phase. Austin Energy summarized the findings by defining major observation topics (each, an aggregated observation) then listing associated recommendations for improvement. This comprehensive After-Action Review report serves as a valuable resource for Austin Energy, providing a detailed account of the 2025 Microburst event and the proposed strategies for improvement. In addition, by compiling this information, Austin Energy ensures that its insights and recommendations are effectively communicated and can be easily referenced by key stakeholders and decision-makers within the organization.

While the Report Phase concludes the After-Action Review, the work continues as Austin Energy focuses on implementing the recommendations derived from the AAR.

The implementation process involves a series of activities to enact the recommended changes. Austin Energy will record each recommendation's actions and provide a completion status to key stakeholders to ensure accountability and transparency.

Leveraging Incident Command

Austin Energy's internal review team leveraged its Incident Command structure to systematically capture strengths and weaknesses related to the utility's emergency response to the storm. Based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command structure provides a framework for effective coordination and communication among various sections responsible for different aspects of emergency management.

By using this structure, Austin Energy was able to identify and address specific areas of improvement within each section, with the objective of leading to the improvement of the collective whole.

For the May Microburst, Austin Energy's Incident Command structure consisted of the following primary areas. Each section is staffed by an individual or teams who worked 24/7 on a rotating basis through the entirety of the event:

Agency Administrator: The Agency Administrator is the executive authority responsible for policy-level decisions, setting priorities, protecting public trust and ensuring resources are aligned to strategic goals. The Agency Administrator maintains communication and coordination with the City Manager's Office.

Incident Commander: The Incident Commander was responsible for the overall management of the incident. This role provided strategic direction and coordinated the efforts of all other sections within the Incident Command structure.

Public Information: This section was responsible for managing public communications and ensuring timely and accurate dissemination of information related to the storm and Austin Energy's response efforts. Public Information facilitates communication with the media, customers and other stakeholders to keep them informed about restoration progress, safety guidelines and other relevant storm-related updates.

Liaisons: This section was responsible for coordination and communication with regulatory officials including the Mayor, City Council Members, other elected officials, and state and federal regulatory bodies. The Liaison Officer also plays an important role in collaborating on messaging with the Public Information Officer prior to it being approved by the Incident Commander and ultimately the Agency Administrator.

EOC Representatives: This section generally serves as the point of contact between Austin/Travis County Emergency Operations and Austin Energy's Incident Command activation. This role facilitates coordination, collaboration and information exchange between Austin Energy and other City Departments.

Safety: This section focused on ensuring the safety of personnel and the public during the emergency response. The team developed and enforced safety protocols, conducted risk assessments and provided training and guidance to mitigate potential hazards and accidents.

Planning: The Planning section was responsible for gathering and analyzing information, developing situational assessments and documenting the Incident Action Plans. They worked closely with other sections to ensure that the response efforts were coordinated and adaptive to the various phases of outage restoration by coordinating resource lists, leading the IMT through the Planning "P" briefings and meetings every operational period and ensuring the response efforts aligned with established emergency management protocols and procedures.

Restoration Operations: This section was responsible for the actual restoration of utility services, including damage assessment, field crew dispatch, power restoration, line clearance (tree trimming/vegetation management) and any necessary repairs or replacements.

Mutual Aid: This section facilitated coordination and use of resources from neighboring utilities and external crews, who served as mutual aid partners during the event. This role established and maintained effective partnerships with other entities to leverage additional personnel and equipment for the emergency response.

Customer Care: This section addressed customer concerns and inquiries related to the storm and utility service disruptions. They monitored and managed support for medically vulnerable, critical load and key account customers. They deployed outreach teams into impacted neighborhoods and hosted in-person events at community centers and City of Austin facilities. They provided support, information and assistance to customers.

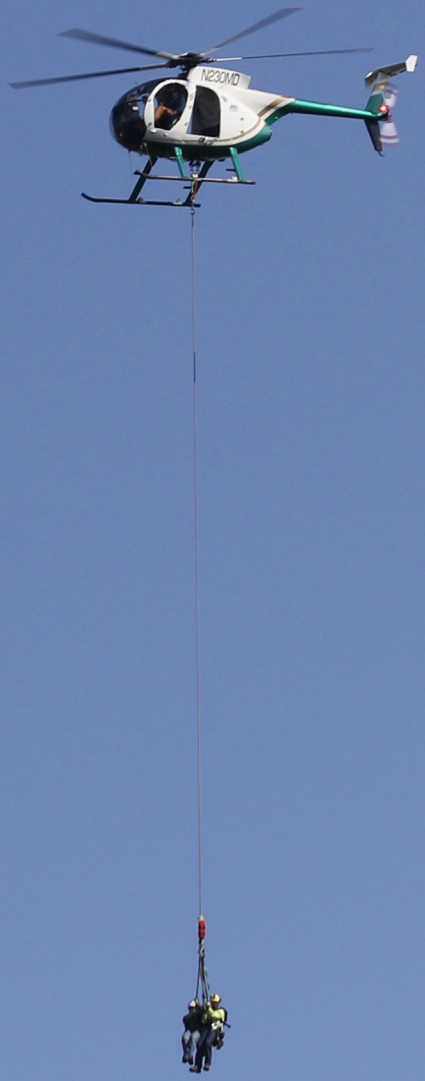
Technology: This section managed and supported technological systems and tools used during the emergency response. They ensured the availability and functionality of communication systems, data management tools and other technology-driven resources necessary for Austin Energy's response.

Logistics: This section managed the procurement, deployment and distribution of resources and supplies needed for the emergency response. They ensured personnel, equipment, materials and other necessary resources were available and distributed throughout the response effort.

Finance and Administration: This section handled the financial and administrative aspects of the emergency response. They managed emergency ProCard issuance, maintained records, supported contractual and insurance activities and provided support services to other sections within the Incident Command structure.



2025 MAY MICROBURST STORM AUSTIN ENERGY AFTER–ACTION REPORT



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