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## MEDIA ADVISORY

### AEP URGING HIDALGO COUNTY RESIDENTS TO CONSERVE ENERGY DURING EXTREME COLD WEATHER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2014

**Edinburg, Texas** – As the Rio Grande Valley continues to experience extremely cold temperatures, AEP Texas is asking Hidalgo County residents to reduce and conserve energy this evening. Residents can expect temperatures to dip into the mid 30's overnight, with daytime highs only creeping into the 40's.

"We are projecting higher than normal usage of electricity tonight due to the lingering cold temperatures," said Tom Coad, AEP Texas manager of distribution systems for the Rio Grande Valley. "This higher usage, in turn, can strain the electric transmission and distribution system and lead to possible load shedding if demand outstrips our capability to meet that demand," he said.

AEP has a few simple steps Hidalgo County residents and businesses can do to avoid rolling blackouts and power outages in their neighborhood.

#### Energy Conservation Tips:

- Lower thermostats to 68 degrees.
- Avoid using major appliances such as washers and dryers in the evening hours.
- Set energy-saving features on office equipment to put them into sleep mode when not in use.
- Turn small space heaters to their lowest setting.

Emergency Management Coordinator Oscar Montoya says adjusting the amount of heat used in homes and businesses is vital to conserving energy. "Lowering the thermostat just one degree can reduce energy use by 5 percent, which will go a long way in preventing the overload of transmission lines and reduce power outages," he said.

Mr. Montoya advises residents to be cautious when using space heater or similar equipment; failing to follow instructions or improper use can lead to serious injury.

#### Heater Safety Tips:

- Keep flammable items and young children away from the heat source.
- If you are using a gas heater, ensure it is working properly to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Do not use outdoor cooking utensils or your oven in your kitchen for heat.
- Do not burn charcoal or wood indoors.
- Ensure you have a working smoke alarm. Many fires every year are caused by faulty heaters or unsafe methods.

For media interviews with Emergency Management Coordinator Oscar Montoya please call 956.289.6549.

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**Hector "Tito" Palacios**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 2*

**Joe M. Flores**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 3*

**Joseph Palacios**  
*Commissioner, Precinct 4*

## OFFICE OF HIDALGO COUNTY JUDGE RAMON GARCIA

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