

1980s

Midwest Electric Cooperative

At the beginning of 1980, revenue had dropped, construction increased considerably due to commercial load, and inflation had caused expenses to rise. Because of this, a rate increase went into effect with the January 1980 billing. In 1981, MEC began commercial meter reading. In the early 1980s, power supply became an increasingly serious problem. Midwest and other co-ops who were served by SPS (Southwestern Public Service), organized Golden Spread Electric Cooperative (GSEC) to have a more secure and stable power supply. In following years, GSEC would purchase power from SPS and distribute to GSEC member co-ops. The co-op also connected the Yancy Tap metering point, a 69KV transmission line that ran from south of Post to the Garza substation. This reduced demand on the Dermott metering point and allowed for alternate power supply capability for each of MEC's three substations.

In 1985, the Roby office was expanded, adding a data room, engineering room, three offices, and an additional set of restrooms. The following year, SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) was installed; the main computer was in the Snyder office and related equipment was placed at our Yancy, Garza, Justiceburg and Fluvanna substations. SCADA is a computerized in-house monitoring system that features recloser and switching capabilities.

In 1987, the cooperative transferred Data Processing to Central Area Data Processing (CADP) in St. Peters, MO, to allow for more efficient billing. The same year, engineering and system data was also entered into the computer. Midwest received the contract to serve the new Price Daniel Unit of the Texas Department of Corrections, a 1,000 bed medium-security prison east of Snyder.

1989 marked the beginning of a decline in oil load for the co-op; line construction was drastically reduced and kWh sales declined. At the end of the year, MEC went to system-wide meter reading.

Stamford Electric Cooperative

Adapted from Stamford Electric Cooperative, Inc.: The First Thirty-Seven Years by C.M. Lester

Rate of increase in the Fuel Cost Adjustment was only about 10% instead of the expected 20-30%. By the end of 1980, SEC had 370 new services and had built 37 new miles of line for a total of 3,735 services on 2200 miles of line. Most new services were oilfield; approximately 60% of the total revenue was from oilfield. For the year, 6,385,450 kWh were purchased at a cost of \$1,741,841.00. SEC concluded the year by working on a rate study to present to the Texas Public Utility Commission (PUC) to increase rates.

By the end of 1981, rates from the power supplier had raised by another 11%. Between 1948 and 1981, SEC's oil services grew to nearly 1,600. In 1982, the audit revealed that power cost was 69.4% of total expenses and rates from the power supplier increased again, this time by 2.64%. A two-year work plan was approved, and the board voted to return 1962 Capital Credits. SEC also received Safety Accreditation, which was valid for 3 years. All the requirements for the rate increase were met and the increase went into effect. Wholesale power rates continued to increase by an average of 6% each year well into the mid-1980s; coupled with the few services per mile of line, made the cost of maintaining the rural electric system very expensive.

1984, however, was a monumental year for the co-op, distributing 68,000,000 kWh of electricity for a revenue of \$5.5 million. In 1984, SEC converted to an automated billing system. By 1985, however, a

weak farm economy and reduced oil exploration caused growth to slow for the co-op. As the decade wound down, the economy was still down, kWh sales declined, and a couple of ice storms proved to be a dismal expense for the cooperative.