Altus initiates recovery operations for ice storm

by 97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- A severe ice storm swept through Oklahoma and northern Texas on Thursday, Jan. 28, causing significant damage to the base. The housing area lost power at 4:35 p.m. and the industrial portion blacked out at 9:35 p.m.

The base initiated emergency response operations to provide relief to Airmen and their families. The ice storm damaged power lines, facilities, communications and trees throughout the base. Approximately 200 family members have taken shelter at designated locations on base. Essential services and meals are being provided to base personnel and their dependents.

Altus AFB is currently coordinating with Lackland AFB and Dyess AFB, Texas, and Vance AFB, Okla., to provide relief with personnel and equipment to include diesel generators, bucket lifts and line trucks.

Altus AFB is working closely with the city of Altus and Jackson County Emergency Management officials on recovery efforts. Altus AFB has provided heaters, diesel fuel and electricians to support local recovery efforts.

A timeline for the return of power is undetermined. Altus AFB personnel continue to repair infrastructure in anticipation of the return of commercial power and are taking actions to protect essential facilities against continued adverse weather until power is restored.

Col. Ty Thomas, 97th Air Mobility Wing commander, and Airman 1st Class Jeremy Winston, 97th Civil Engineering Squadron, remove fallen tree limbs Jan. 30. More than 40 people volunteered to clean up the debris that littered the base due to an ice storm that hit Jan. 29. (see more photos inside)
Ice accumulation

Windy Trails Golf Course was blanketed by an ice storm that hit Jan. 29. Ice accumulations were approximately one and a half inches. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Leandra D. Hernandez)

Downed powerlines/poles

Power line poles broke outside of Altus AFB during an ice storm that hit Jan. 29 causing power outages for more than 150,000 people in the southwest Oklahoma region. The city of Altus power representatives, Southwest Rural Electric representatives as well as members of the 97th Civil Engineering Squadron are working together to resolve the power outage. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Leandra D. Hernandez)

Looking at the power grid

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. -- As of 3 p.m. Feb. 2, 97th Air Mobility Wing Commander Col. Ty Thomas issued a limited evacuation order, which allowed non-mission essential personnel and their dependents to depart the immediate area to locations within 250 miles from the base in order to find temporary lodging until base facilities are restored to normal. The order permits limited reimbursement of expenses associated with this movement.

Most family members in the designated shelter locations evacuated once the order from the commander was given. Essential services and meals are still being provided to base personnel and their dependents who remain in the area. The dining facility will remain open but will scale back from 24-hour operations.

Early Feb. 3, power returned to base housing, which is home to 52 percent of the personnel assigned to Altus AFB. However, the main portion of the base remains without power, and estimates on when power may return continue to be undetermined. Within the city of Altus, power has been restored to approximately 60 percent of customers. More facilities off base are expected to have power as the week progresses.

Base housing residents may call Balfour Beatty Communities Military Housing at (580) 379-4002 for information about insurance claims associated with losses incurred by this storm. Claims for items outside privatized housing may be routed through the Base Legal Office at 481-7294.

The severe ice storm, which swept through the Altus area Jan. 29, caused seven injuries. The 97th Medical Group provided care for 12 individuals.

The base child development center will resume operations temporarily at the youth center Thursday, Feb. 4. The child care service will be available only to emergency essential personnel engaged in recovery efforts. The hours will be 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Altus AFB is currently receiving assistance with recovery operations from Lackland, Sheppard and Dyess Air Force Bases, Texas, and Vance AFB, Okla., with personnel and equipment to include diesel generators, bucket lifts and line trucks. Fifteen Airmen are assisting with the recovery effort, which has been nicknamed "Operation Ice Station Zebra."

Emergency response personnel assisted the Commissary with the installation of their generator, which mitigated the loss of perishable goods valued at $1,800.

Altus AFB is working closely with the city of Altus and Jackson County Emergency Management officials on recovery efforts. The base has provided heaters, diesel fuel and electricians to support local recovery efforts.

Base personnel continue to repair infrastructure in anticipation of the return of commercial power and are taking actions to protect essential facilities against forecast adverse weather until power is restored. More information will be released as soon as details become available.

For more information and photos on the recovery operation, visit www.altus.af.mil.

The Altus AFB web site shows this and other information regarding reimbursement for the evacuation order:

This order covers transportation, POV only, based on 50 cents per mile, up to 250 miles one way.

Reimbursement starts 2 Feb 10--no reimbursement for travel or lodging prior to this date.

Lodging Rate not to exceed Locality Rate within the 250 mile radius; check www.dtic.mil/perdiem.

Lodging receipts are mandatory for reimbursement.

No lodging reimbursement if staying with friends or relatives.

Per Diem for members/dependents based on local area (75% on 1st/last day of travel) w/in 250 mi.

Dependents 12 & older –100%; Dependents under 12 –50%.

Standard CONUS rate applies if location is in excess of 250 Miles ($70 lodging/$39 per diem).

Use of GTC Authorized for expenses beginning 2 Feb 10.

Limited evacuation order ends NLT 12 Feb 10; Wing CC may terminate earlier if conditions on base are suitable for earlier return of personnel and dependents.

Telephone recall procedures will be used to do so; personnel must ensure your chain of command has current contact information for personnel and/or dependents.

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Notes & Events

Discovery Center
Airmen & Family Readiness Section’s Discovery Center is a resource for the Altus AFB community to conduct research, look for job opportunities, and check emails. The center was a "Year Of The Air Force Family" initiative to support families both permanent party and transient. The Center houses five "dot-com" computers with a copier and color printer and several resource books to help with job seeking, resume writing, relocation, and Readiness.

Airmans Attic
Airmans Attic is open to active duty AF members E5 & below, and their dependents. A great place for Jr. Enlisted members to find things they need for Free. Due to generous donations there are many types of items available: kitchenware, household goods, movies, books, electronic equipment, furniture, computers, arts and crafts, toys, games, sports equipment and much more. Need a charger for your cell phone, chances are we have it. As always, all items are first come and first serve, only for personal use, and not for profit. Bring in the kids to pick out a toy, there are so many to choose from! And don’t forget military uniforms and items are available free for all ranks of active duty military members. Come get what you need, and consider donating unused items back to Airmans Attic in keeping with the “pay-it-forward” concept.

Magic 1-2-3 class
The Magic 1-2-3 class is for parents with children under age six. Topics include: understanding young children and their behavior; building self-esteem; listening and talking to your child; helping young children learn to cooperate; discipline for young children: emotional and social development. Please call 481-5376 to enroll or for more information.

TDY, PCSing, or have relatives visiting
The Loan Locker has many household items available to borrow for PCS & TDY members with orders. However, permanent party, civil service, & retirees are also able to utilize this service, but some restrictions may apply.

Drop box moved
The Lions Club Used Eyeglasses Drop Box has moved to the West door of the Broadway United. The Lions Club wants to thank everyone for their Donations.

Volunteers needed
ACMI House is looking for volunteers to provide transportation to victims seeking shelter and volunteers for the Sexual Assault Response Team. Volunteers will receive free training and resource materials. For more information, call Kori at 482-3800.

Library program offered
The Altus Public Library provides a 30 minute storytime for preschoolers every Wednesday morning from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Children 3 to 5 years are welcome. For more information call 477-2890.

Girl Scouts
Join Girl Scouts where girls grow courageous and strong. Come discover the fun, friendship and power of girls together through field trips, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and environmental stewardship. For more information please contact Lindsey Miller at 580-379-4214 or WPSUsecretary@sbcglobal.net.

Soccer sign-ups
Altus Soccer Club in now taking Spring registrations. Sign ups will be held at Hibbett sports on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 6 and 7 with Saturday signups from 9 a.m to 4 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Registration fees are $40 for ALL players. You can call Altus Soccer club at 318-2721 or call BJ Weidner at 5 8 0 - 4 7 7 - 0 2 4 8 . Returning players can mail a check with the childs name to P.O. Box 68 Altus, OK 73522. Or visit out website at www.altussoccerclub.com

Armed Services YMCA planning events for military families

The Armed Services YMCA has events planned for this month for military families.

The 6th Annual FREE Daddy & Daughter Valentine’s Dance will be held on Friday, Feb. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Club Altus. A girl’s first prom should be with her daddy, so all dads and daughters are invited to dress up for this wonderful evening of music, dancing, flower and desserts absolutely free. ASYMCA will take photos, and have flowers for all the valentine girls. Reservations are requested (but not required) by calling 471-9733.

And, on Saturday, Feb. 13, the ASYMCA will present the Sweetheart Express with two departures from Quartz Mountain Whistle Stop. The trip begins at the Quartz Mountain Whistle Stop at the junction of Highway 44 and 44A, where boarding begins on Saturday Feb. 13 at 12:45 and 3:45 p.m. The air conditioned passenger train features large panoramic windows, reclining seats and spotless restrooms. The twenty mile romantic round trips depart the station at 1 and 4 p.m., and the route journeys over the storied “Orient Line” that linked Kansas City with the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Cheesecakes, chocolates, brownies and non-alcoholic champagne will be served on board, and roses and photos for every sweetheart on board. For ticket information, call Joan at 471-9733 or Leslie at 471-4674.
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Assistance from Dyess AFB

Members of the 7th Civil Engineering Squadron from Dyess AFB, Texas, work on power lines to bring power back to Altus AFB. Airmen from Dyess and Lackland AFB, Texas, came to assist Altus with the power outage that was caused by an ice storm that hit Jan. 29. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Leandra D. Hernandez)

Need to talk?
Call 649-9218

A Military & Family Life Consultant is now available to listen and help. Consultations are free and anonymous. No records are kept.
Altus continues ice storm recovery

97th Air Mobility Wing volunteers work to clean up the fallen tree limbs at the Wings of Freedom Park Jan. 30. Due to an ice storm that hit Altus Jan. 29, power outages and debris covered much of the base and town.

Base personnel wait in line at the AAFES Shoppette gas station to refuel their vehicles Feb. 1. Altus AFB received a generator from Vance AFB, Okla., which allowed the Shoppette to open Jan. 30. Many of the gas stations in the city of Altus, including the base, lost power due to an ice storm that hit Jan. 29.

Altus AFB families take shelter at the Fitness Center Feb. 1. More than 200 Airmen and their families have taken shelter at the Fitness Center and the Medical Clinic during the power outage, which was cause by an ice storm Jan. 29. The Fitness Center, Medical Clinic and Solar Inn Dining facilities were designated as shelter locations. The shelters are being powered by generators to sustain a hospitable environment during the power outag.
JAPAN’S 4TH KC-767 TANKER, DELIVERED.

On January 8, Boeing delivered the fourth KC-767 aerial refueling tanker to the Japan Ministry of Defense—on schedule and on cost. Japan’s KC-767 tanker fleet provides the advanced capability to perform vital self-defense, refueling and airlift missions. Moreover, it reflects Boeing's ongoing commitment to delivering the world’s most capable and advanced multirole tanker aircraft.