



Eastern Oklahoma State College food service workers Susie Smith and Linda Fox work to fill more than 1,000 sack lunches for relief workers contracted in from surrounding states by Kiamichi Electric Cooperative. Photo by Steven Akins

Eastern cafeteria provides relief to workers

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Copy Editor

Eastern cafeteria staff worked overtime last week providing warm meals to a small army of emergency relief workers contracted by Kiamichi Electric Cooperative.

A severe winter storm tore through Oklahoma on Jan. 12, 13 and 14, leaving more than 3,000 Kiamichi Electric customers without power in this area. Some of the damage has been repaired, but reports say it could take weeks for everything to be completed.

When Kiamichi's

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- Todd Minshall

Todd Minshall needed to feed the more than 160 workers brought in from Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, his thoughts turned to Eastern.

"I used to work at Eastern," Minshall said. "So I knew about the cafeteria and thought I would see if they could help us feed these workers."

Food service manager, Novella Ballew, agreed that she and her staff could

do the job. The cafeteria extended its hours, both opening earlier and closing later, to accommodate the workers. They also provided workers with sack lunches.

"I [had] people coming in around 4 a.m. to get breakfast going," Ballew stated. "Some of them stayed until after 10 p.m. and they [did] it gladly. We're short-handed, but they [were] just fantastic and ready to help."

Ballew estimates that approximately 1,000 sandwiches went out with the sack lunches.

"Thank goodness for Novella and the cafeteria staff," Minshall added. "We're really appreciative to those who are helping

and putting in the overtime hours so that these guys can have a hot meal."

"They (the workers) have just been really happy to be able to get three meals and the cafeteria offers a much wider variety of food than anywhere else they might go,"

Eastern president, Dr. Richard Bernard said that this is just one way Eastern and its employees have reached out to help the community.

"We appreciate our staff members who are willing to go that extra mile without hesitation," Dr. Bernard said.