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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**East Texas nonprofits receive AEP Foundation grants for pandemic-related services**

LONGVIEW, Texas, June 8, 2020 – The American Electric Power Foundation has awarded a total of $29,500 to five East Texas nonprofits in Southwestern Electric Power Co.’s (SWEPCO) service area providing additional health and human services in response to COVID-19.

Grant dollars will aid organizations in expanding services and accommodating increased caseloads.

The American Electric Power Foundation is funded by American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP) and its utility operating units, including SWEPCO.

Organizations receiving funds include:

1. **CASA of Harrison County**, $4,500, to assist with additional cases and the needs of

sponsored children and their families in special circumstances.

2. **Rusk County Salvation Army**, $5,000, to help with an increase in food pantry requests

from new families applying for assistance.

3. **Martin House Children’s Advocacy Center**, $10,000, to address increased domestic

violence and sexual abuse cases as well as general counseling needs.

4. **Mission Marshall Food Pantry**, $5,000, to help with an increase in food pantry

requests from new families applying for assistance.

5. **Shelby County Child Advocacy Center**, $5,000, to address increased domestic

violence and sexual abuse cases as well as general counseling needs.

“We are excited to hear how these funds are making a positive impact in our communities,” said Mark Robinson, External Affairs manager in Longview. “Our partner agencies are aware of specific needs in our community and are diligently providing relief for those experiencing difficult situations.”

Roxanne Stevenson, Executive Director of The Martin House Children’s Advocacy Center, said for many children, home isn’t safe. It’s where abuse happens.

“Without teachers and other protective adults interacting with kids regularly due to the pandemic, cases of severe abuse are on the rise,” she said. “This generous AEP Foundation grant allows us to provide case coordination, advocacy, therapy, and other intervention services so children can heal.”

In Shelby County, funds will enable remote access to child advocacy services.

“COVID-19 forced our agency to rapidly find and implement new ways of working,” said Denise Merriman, Shelby County Child Advocacy Center. “We are so fortunate that we did not also have to scramble to find funding for these changes. The grant from the AEP Foundation allowed us to pay for many of the expenses that resulted in moving to remote service delivery. We are grateful for their support during this critical time."

Similarly, food pantries have experienced an increased demand for services.

“Thanks to the generous grant from the AEP Foundation, we can walk alongside the worried guests in need to provide food items and help alleviate at least one of their concerns during this difficult time,” said Mission Marshall Food Pantry Manager Darlene Dotson.

The AEP Foundation has provided nearly $3 million in emergency funds to support basic human needs (food, shelter, and housing assistance) and other COVID-19 related emergencies across the AEP system. The fund previously donated $42,000 to Longview's Meals on Wheels Ministry.

“We are truly grateful for the generous gift from the AEP Foundation," said Tiffany Damskov, Marketing and Development director for the Meals on Wheels Ministry. "Their donation helped us to continue providing meals for the East Texas seniors and disabled clients in their service area.”

The AEP Foundation provides a permanent, ongoing resource for charitable initiatives involving higher dollar values and multi-year commitments in the communities served by AEP and initiatives outside of AEP’s 11-state service area.

The Foundation focuses on improving lives through education from early childhood through higher education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and by meeting basic needs for emergency shelter, affordable housing and the elimination of hunger.

The AEP Foundation is based in Columbus, Ohio.