

## Task Force Kapatid relives Bayanihan Spirit

The Task Force Kapatid, a brainchild of former National Electrification Administration (NEA) Administrator now Presidential Adviser on Rural Electrification (PARE) Secretary Francisco G. Silva, which aims to strengthen the solidarity of the 119 Electric Cooperatives (ECs), is a volunteer service whereby ECs group together and mobilize their personnel and logistics to assist other ECs needing immediate rehabilitation of distribution lines in times of calamities and disasters in order to speedily restore power service to the member-consumers.

However, it is not only intended for the ECs' power restoration after typhoon devastations, but is created as well for ECs to help other ECs in the construction of additional lines in order to meet the total electrification mandate. Truly, the volunteerism displayed by the ECs to readily send their best engineers, linemen and crew on a short notice from the NEA during every Task Force Kapatid deployment reflects the Filipino culture of *Bayanihan* that distinguishes the Filipinos' innate nature to extend help to others in times of need.

Volunteer ECs, other than sending their best people, also send their equipment like boomtrucks and light vehicles to assist in the power restoration activities and, in some instance, lend their available line materials too.



Above: Extent of typhoon's damage to the Electric Cooperatives' distribution lines.  
 Below: Planning activities prior to the deployment of the Task Force Kapatid.

The volunteer EC linemen and crew go to site in full battle gear, so to say, equipped with provisions of food, water, fuel for their vehicles, and other necessities good for ten days or more to ensure the swift and coordinated performance of their assigned tasks.

NEA engineers are assigned to monitor and supervise the Task Force activities from day one until the completion of the target in power restoration activities. Also, they lead the assessment of damage and/or work to be done by the Task Force teams.

For the year 2006, five Task Forces were deployed, three of them to respond to the adverse effects of typhoons Caloy, Milenyo and Reming to Oriental Mindoro, Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Sur and Marinduque. The other two were for the extension of power lines to *sitios* in Pio Duran, and the upgrading of single phase distribution lines into three phase lines in Marawi City known as Task Force *Pagari* (which stands for *kapatid* in the dialect of Lanao Sur). The power restoration activities have successfully met the targeted completion date.

NEA Administrator Edita S. Bueno continued the best practice of her predecessor, Secretary Silva, and endeavors to institutionalize the Task Force Kapatid for the benefit of the ECs and their member-consumers whose businesses or livelihood are affected during power interruptions after every typhoon. Administrator Bueno acknowledges the vital role which electrification, as an infrastructure, plays in the socio-economic development of the rural areas so that NEA sees to it that power service is immediately restored and that ECs continue



to electrify even the least viable areas to alleviate the plight of the rural folks.

The volunteers to the Task Force Kapatid's experience is not an easy ordeal even prior to the rehabilitation proper. Their travel time alone in going to the point of convergence offers a lot of sacrifices. The volunteers coming from far north like Ilocos Norte and Cagayan Valley, for example, traveled more than 24 hours by land, to reach Bicol. The contingent of Region VI ECs also traveled by land and took the Roro from Caticlan to Mindoro.

They crossed Mindoro by land and took another Roro from Calapan City to Batangas City. They hit the road again from Batangas City to Naga City and to their respective assigned areas within Bicolandia. They were practically on the road for two days and upon arrival to their assigned areas, they immediately started their restoration activities. On the other hand, the Region VII ECs took the Superferry from Cebu City to Manila South Harbor and upon arrival, traveled by land going to Bicol with some of them taking a Roro to reach Marinduque, while the Region VIII ECs traveled by land up to Catarman in Northern Samar where they took the Roro going to Matnog in Sorsogon and continued their travel until they reached Albay. Indeed, just the traveling experience was already taxing, but the volunteers did not mind the discomfort because they have one thing in mind: to help their brother ECs.

The Task Force Kapatid power restoration activities received the support of Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Department of Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla. Also, Congressman Joey Sarte Salceda, the House of Representatives' Chairman for Committee on Appropriations, and Department

The volunteers worked despite heavy rains and the scorching heat of the sun. Rain or shine, they were up there on the poles fixing the primary backbone lines of the local ECs. They braved all odds and successfully demonstrated their solidarity and teamwork in getting things done. Once again, Task Force Kapatid proved that there is no task that is too big and hard to accomplish when all those involved will coordinate all efforts and work as one. The Bayanihan still lives on, in the hearts of these heroes and all other implementors of the Rural Electrification Program.



Above: Power restoration activities of the Task Forces.  
 Below: Switch-on and re-energization after lines were restored.



**73 Volunteer ECs to the 5 Task Forces**

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| ABRECO       | COTELCO    |
| AKELCO       | DANECO     |
| ANTECO       | BORELCO    |
| ANANELCO     | ESAMELCO   |
| BATELEC I    | FIBECO     |
| BATELEC II   | FICELCO    |
| BENECO       | FLECO      |
| BILECO       | GUIMELCO   |
| BOHECO I     | ILECO I    |
| BOHECO II    | ILECO II   |
| BUSECO       | ILECO III  |
| CAGELCO I    | INCO       |
| CAGELCO II   | ISECO      |
| CANORECO     | ISELCO I   |
| CAPELCO      | ISELCO II  |
| CASURECO II  | LANECO     |
| CASURECO III | LEYECO I   |
| CEBECO I     | LEYECO II  |
| CEBECO II    | LEYECO III |
| CEBECO III   | LEYECO IV  |
| CELCO        | LEYECO V   |
| CENECO       | MOELCI 1   |
| CENPELCO     | MOELCI 2   |
|              | MORESCO I  |

- |             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| NEECO I     | PELCO I     | SOLECO      |
| NEECO II-A1 | PELCO II    | SORECO I    |
| NEECO II-A2 | PENELCO     | SORECO II   |
| NOCECO      | PRESCO      | TARELCO I   |
| NORECO I    | PROSELCO    | TARELCO II  |
| NORECO II   | QUEZELCO II | VRESCO      |
| NORSAMELCO  | SAMELCO I   | ZAMSURECO I |
| NUVELCO     | SAMELCO II  | ZAMSURECO 2 |
| ORMECO      | SOCOTECO I  | ZANECO      |

of Budget and Management Secretary Rolando Andaya supported the approval of calamity fund for the rehabilitation of the typhoon affected areas.

The volunteers for Reming alone totaled 400 personnel both from NEA and the 58 ECs that participated. This is without counting their counterparts from the local ECs. The cooperation showed by the Task Force volunteers, rendering 12 hours a day work, from 6AM to 6PM taking advantage of the daylight, made electricity supply available just in time for the Christmas holidays.