

# New transmission line to Ave Maria

Construction on a new 138 kV transmission line that runs from the existing Immokalee substation to the new Ave Maria substation is almost complete! The six-mile transmission line will be completed by the end of June 2008. This permanent line will help LCEC stay ahead of the growing electrical demand at Ave Maria. "This project is very exciting for LCEC's transmission crew members who have done an excellent job and are planning to complete the project ahead of schedule," Operations Senior Supervisor Joe Scott said.

Although a project of this magnitude calls for an array of planning, permitting and construction, it also involves a delicate balance between LCEC and the environment. In working with a certified ecologist and the Department of Environmental Protection on this transmission project, it was discovered that the nest of a protected Crested Caracara Bird was in a cabbage palm tree in one area of construction. "This finding halted work on that particular area of the construction. The Caracara recently left the nest, and we were able to move ahead almost a month ahead of the projected schedule," Coordinator II Dennis Davidson said.



The LCEC Caracara family relocated to a new location once the chick was able to fly.



## Test YOUR electrical capacity!

May is National Electrical Safety Month, but electricity is a part of everyday function – so much so that it may not be obvious when a safety hazard exists or repairs are needed. Worse yet, people may procrastinate on repairing or replacing broken or out-of-date fixtures. Years of use can cause electrical systems to deteriorate and become overloaded without customers knowing until it's too late. It's best to hire a licensed electrical inspector or electrician who can identify and correct hidden hazards before they become tragedies.

Now is the time to get plugged in! Take this quick electrical safety test and see how much you already know about taking everyday precautions!

- SCORING:
- 8 correct You are in good shape when it comes to electric safety!
- 5-7 correct You're pretty on top of things; it's always good to review.
- 0-4 correct Now is a perfect time to brush up on electrical safety.

- 1) What does the third prong on a 3-prong plug do?**
  - a) Provides a path to ground for electricity that may stray from an appliance or product; protects your appliances and prevents electric shock.
  - b) Provides extra power for equipment requiring higher voltage
  - c) Helps to hold the plug firmly in the outlet.
- 2) In order not to overload your household circuits, how can you find out the circuit capacity?**
  - a) Look at your electric bill; it should tell you.
  - b) Check the meter outside your house.
  - c) Open your breaker box or fuse box and look for the diagram.
- 3) If you have a lot of electrical devices and appliances at work in one area of your house, the best way to power them is:**
  - a) Connect them all to a power strip with a surge suppressor.
  - b) Add wall outlets where you need them.
  - c) Plug in only the one you intend to use or use the most.
- 4) After using a portable generator during an emergency, the safe and correct way to shut it off is:**
  - a) Shut down the generator, and then turn off the appliances that it was powering.
  - b) Turn off the powered appliances, and then shut the generator down.

ANSWERS: A, C, B, B
- 5) True or False: It's OK to use black electrical tape to repair a frayed power cord, or to splice a power cord, as long as you cover all exposed wire.**

False; the black tape, usually vinyl, is not rated to handle the heat generated by electricity running through the wires and will melt and burn.
- 6) True or False: To keep an extension cord off the floor, it is best to run it along a baseboard or wall and tack it in place to avoid accidents.**

False; never put a tack, staple or nail into an extension cord or power cord. It will expose bare wire and cause a shock or short.
- 7) True or False: It's OK to leave an extension cord permanently in place as long as it is in plain view and out of the way of foot traffic.**

False; extension cords are temporary solutions only and not safe as a substitute for home wiring. They tend to wear out and could overheat and cause a fire.
- 8) True or false: It's OK to store flammable materials near electrical equipment such as wall switches because they don't cause sparks unless near fire.**

False; it is unsafe because a spark could jump unexpectedly.

Visit [www.lcec.net](http://www.lcec.net) to find out about Inside Electric Line Protect service plan and [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org) to learn even more!

## LCEC announces Trustee election results

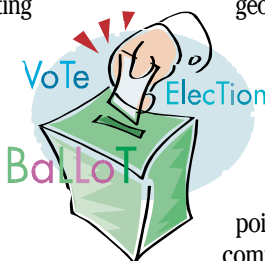
LCEC Board Secretary General James Dozier announced the Board of Trustees election results at LCEC's Annual Meeting in North Fort Myers on April 17.

Members elected General James Dozier to represent District 5, Seat 1, North Fort Myers; William Mathis to represent District 5, Seat 2, North Fort Myers; and Larry Turbeville to represent District 4, Lehigh Acres.

LCEC trustees serve a three-year term, and terms are staggered in order to provide continuity of the Board.

Trustees are elected by the entire membership to represent the geographical area in which they reside.

Board President Larry Turbeville and Chief Executive Officer Dennie Hamilton also shared highlights of 2007 and the State of LCEC as well as future plans for the organization. The overarching theme of the meeting was that although LCEC faces new and evolving challenges in the future, the current state of LCEC is very positive and employees are poised to continue providing customers with efficient, reliable, competitive electric service and excellent customer service.



# Save money on summer electric bills

When the heat of summer causes Southwest Florida residents to turn their air conditioners to cooler settings, electric bills begin to rise. LCEC suggests the following tips to help reduce those summer bills.



- Keep your air conditioner set at 78 degrees Fahrenheit. Every degree cooler costs eight percent more.
- Replace filters in your air conditioner once a month, and have your unit cleaned every year.
- Use ceiling fans to assist in the cooling process. But use them wisely ... don't leave ceiling fans running in rooms where people are not present.
- Your water heater is the second

largest expense on your electric bill. Set yours between 120 and 140 degrees. Always unplug the water heater before adjusting the temperature.

- Turn the lights off when you leave a room, and turn the TV off when you're not watching it.
- Properly weather-strip your home to keep the heat out and the cool air in.
- Consider tinting your windows. Windows account for half of air conditioning bills. Keep the drapes closed during hot, sunny days, and open them at night. Consider planting trees in your yard to shade the windows that receive the most heat.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs; they cost more, but last 10 times longer. Also, consider installing sensors on outdoor lights that will tell them to turn on when they are needed.

Visit [www.lcec.net](http://www.lcec.net) for more energy saving tips and online Calc-U-Savers!

## A declining economy, high usage demands and fuel prices lead to a mid-year rate increase

The LCEC Board of Directors recently approved a rate increase that will be implemented this July. LCEC has not increased rates since 2006. Prior to that, there had not been a base rate increase in 23 years. The change incorporates a rise in the fixed customer charge, a three-tiered inverted block rate for residential customers and increases to demand and energy charges for rate classes that were determined to have below-acceptable rates of return.

LCEC has invested more than \$250 million dollars in infrastructure over the past three years to sustain growth within our service territory. Growth has been steady until recently and even with the construction decline, the need for additional infrastructure continues. Due to the economy and a decline in customer growth, revenues have been below projections and idle services continue to increase. These events, along with the impact on purchased power costs due to rising fuel costs, left the board with little choice but to implement an increase this year. Delaying an increase at this time would put the LCEC financial standing in jeopardy, and it would place a strain on the overall electric system.

The proposal for an increase came after an independent cost of service study indicated current rate levels would not sufficiently maintain LCEC key financial ratios. Results from the study were analyzed and multiple options were considered. The approved tiered rate structure allows rates to be competitive with neighboring utilities while promoting conservation. A lower energy charge for usage below 500 KWH, and an incremental increase for usage over 500 KWH and another increase for usage above 1,000 KWH are advantageous to customers who conserve energy.

In addition, the independent rate consultants determined the current residential customer charge of \$8 did not cover the true cost of providing service to the customer. The residential single phase customer charge will be increased to \$15 in July.

Currently a residential customer pays the \$8 customer charge, the energy charge of \$87.10 and a power cost adjustment of \$10.10 per 1,000 kilowatt hours totaling \$105.20. With the rate increase, a customer with 1,000 KWH usage will see an increase of only \$1.10.

A list of frequently asked questions will be provided on [www.lcec.net](http://www.lcec.net) for your reference.



## 2007 Annual Report available

If you would like to receive a copy of the 2007 LCEC Annual Report and Financial Summary, please contact us at (239) 656-2202. You can also view it online at [www.lcec.net](http://www.lcec.net).



## Important notice regarding disconnection for non-payment

Be sure to make your monthly payment on time. Accounts disconnected for non-payment may not be re-connected on the same day due to efforts to improve scheduling and cost efficiency.

Also to improve efficiency...If you plan to visit the Cape Coral office, and require services beyond payments or stops/starts, please schedule an appointment at the North Fort Myers office by calling 656-2300.

### CUSTOMER SURVEY WINNER

If you receive an LCEC customer survey in the mail, return it for a chance to win \$50. February's winner was Richard Hadee of Cape Coral.

### BOARD MEETING

LCEC Board meetings are typically held the third Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the North Fort Myers office (4980 Bayline Drive). Monthly meeting agendas are available online two days prior to the meeting.

