

System reliability improves with a good plan

Unprecedented growth within the LCEC service territory over the last five years has resulted in additional loading of the electric facilities. Because increased stress on the system can lead to premature failure of components or limit restoration options during outage events, LCEC developed a System Reliability Improvement Plan to address these concerns and improve the quality of electric service delivered to customers.

One of the goals of the plan was to reduce the average time customers are without power while at the same time reducing the duration of a customer outage when one does occur. So far this year, results have been good and reliability numbers have improved. Following are a few plan tactics.

Aggressive system maintenance

Transmission, Substation, Vegetation Management, and Distribution teams evaluated past efforts and determined areas for improvement. Visual, physical and infrared inspections of equipment identified areas where replacement, cleaning, lube or repair was needed.

Efficient and effective restoration practices

While many reliability events cannot be prevented, controlling the impact on LCEC customers is critical. Whenever possible, system operators and linemen work together to isolate the fault and re-energize a portion of the line to restore service as quickly as possible to as many people as possible.

Employee training

The ability to make timely and accurate decisions under high pressure conditions is vital to maintaining and protecting the electric system as well as restoring power during an outage. In order to prepare employees, training is conducted in several critical areas to support the reliability goals.



Root Cause Analysis

Teams from various areas throughout the organization evaluate each outage event and propose prevention measures for the future. In addition, the restoration process is analyzed to identify areas of improvement in the process, resource, training, or material needs.

Infrastructure Upgrades

In 2007, several critical infrastructure upgrades such as substation expansions, system protection replacements and feeder upgrades were made. These upgrades support restoration by reducing the number of customers per feeder and allowing partial restoration by moving load onto other circuits.

Leadership Cape Coral tours LCEC



Twenty-five business people from Leadership Cape Coral toured LCEC on August 30. The Leadership class is shown here next to one of LCEC's bucket trucks that several lucky classmates got to take a ride in as part of their tour. A few brave participants even took a ride in the transmission bucket truck that extends 125 feet in the air!!



CUSTOMER SURVEY WINNER

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



As a customer of LCEC, you are probably aware of the advantages of being a member of a cooperative. Owned by their members, cooperatives exist to serve member needs.

LCEC is one example of how cooperatives work. In 1940 many residents in rural areas of Southwest Florida did not have access to electricity. A wealthy orange grove owner in North Fort Myers built a power plant on his property and accommodated neighbors by extending lines to nearby homes. When he could no longer handle all of the requests he received for electricity, he sold the plant to its customers and they formed a cooperative.

LCEC is a tremendous success story where customers have been able to help build the business from 15 miles of line serving 158 customers to what it is today, with over 7,000 miles of line and 197,000 customers. LCEC continues to operate as a cooperative today. Customers vote on bylaws and elect the board of trustees, who are customers themselves.

The theme for this year's national celebration remains "Cooperatives: Owned by Our Members, Committed to Our Communities." At LCEC, we have been energizing the community and valuing our members for over 67 years!

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).



surgeSENSE PROTECTION PROGRAM

DUAL-STAGE PROTECTION from LCEC

Did you know that simply turning your lights on and off in your home can cause harmful surges that can possibly damage or destroy your appliances and sensitive electronics? In fact, 60 percent of surges occur inside the home from microwave ovens and air conditioning motors, just to name a few.

The most effective way to safeguard your home from surges lies in a two-stage plan:



1 A heavy-duty surge arrester installed at the electric service entrance either onto the meter base or into the main electrical panel. This helps provide protection for major household appliances such as a washer, dryer, refrigerator, dishwasher, stove, garbage disposal and air conditioner by bringing outside surges down to a manageable level.



2 Plug-in suppressors installed in critical outlets. This helps provide protection for sensitive electronics such as personal computers, TVs, DVD players, VCRs, microwaves and telephones by further reducing the surge to a safe level for digital components and microchips.

LCEC customers can protect their appliances through LCEC's surgeSENSE program. Customers can lease the two-stage plan for \$5.95 plus tax per month, plus a modest one-time set-up fee, or they can purchase it for \$299.95 plus tax. LCEC also offers a Home Pro Series Package for \$349.95 plus tax for those who have multiple computer and entertainment systems.

For more information about surgeSENSE, contact LCEC at 997-SAVE (7283) or 1-800-201-SAVE (7283) or visit www.surgesense.com.



Solar pool heaters are very effective for Southwest Florida homeowners and are the best source for heating your pool because there are no additional operating costs involved. The "free" heat provided by the sun does the work of heating the pool for you. The payback of a solar pool heater is just under three

years. Studies from the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC) have shown these figures to be very accurate. The key to a quick return of your money is to retain the heat in your pool by using a pool cover, especially at night when temperatures drop and heat is drastically lost.

Although advertisements indicate that heat pumps only cost a dollar a day, a 32-amp, 220-volt heat pump pool heater actually costs just under a dollar for one hour of operation. Think of the daily cost on a heat pump running four to eight hours per day. This misconception leaves many customers who have purchased a heat pump unhappy once they have received a high winter electric bill. If you already own a pool heat pump, a solar system can be added to your existing heat pump that can serve as a backup for those cloudy overcast days. Solar companies are offering long warranties on their solar products since solar systems have become very reliable.



HouseCalls rings true for customers

In August, LCEC introduced HouseCalls, a new tool to help customers avoid an interruption in electric service due to nonpayment. The automated system calls customers to remind them that their electric bill is overdue and provide an opportunity to pay the bill over the phone to avoid disconnection.

In the first month, 24,828 reminder calls were placed. About 42 percent of the customers who received calls made a payment on their account within four days, resulting in a reduction in the number of accounts eligible to be disconnected for nonpayment from 25 to 14 percent.

"The HouseCalls system has been a mutually beneficial solution and has allowed LCEC to reduce collections costs as well as provide an additional service to customers," LCEC Customer Information Services Manager Bernard Davis said.



Along with many new businesses and homes, LCEC recently energized the Ave Maria Grammar and Preparatory School which hosts kindergarten through 12th grades. The area continues to grow and bring new electric customers to the LCEC system.

LCEC determines fate of 2007 equity distribution

LCEC will not make a general distribution of equity returns in 2007. In September, the Board of Directors reviewed LCEC's financial position in order to determine if a portion of equity capital could be distributed to members. While the region's growth has leveled off, LCEC is still feeling the impact of the substantial investment in the infrastructure that was made to support several years of explosive growth. In order to make a general equity distribution, LCEC would have to borrow additional funds, and this could add pressure to increase electric rates across the board. "We are held accountable to operate the business in a fiscally responsible manner. This decision is in the best interest for the future of LCEC and its customers," LCEC CFO/Director of Finance and Accounting Donald Schleicher said.

While a distribution will not be made, customers will receive an equity credit allocation to their equity account in 2007. The allocated credit will be part of their equity account balance. Customers are allocated equity capital annually if revenues exceed expenses. The amount of equity is determined by the amount of electricity the customer purchased during the year.

LCEC Contact Center Holiday Hours

THANKSGIVING

Thursday November 22, 2007.....Closed
Friday November 23, 2007.....Closed
Saturday November 24, 2007.....9am - 1pm

CHRISTMAS

Saturday December 22, 2007.....9am - 1pm
Monday December 24, 2007.....Closed
Tuesday December 25, 2007.....Closed

NEW YEARS

Tuesday January 1, 2008.....Closed