

MARCH 2015

LCEC

NEWS



AUTOMATION helps increase system RELIABILITY

Over the years, LCEC has been diligent in adopting automated technology solutions. The use of distribution automation switches has resulted in reliability improvements throughout the five-county LCEC service territory. Automated switches help reduce the total amount of time that customers are without power.



HOW THEY WORK

Switching is accomplished through isolation of segments of the distribution system using sensors, controls, switches and communications systems. The automated switches can be opened or closed remotely from our control center in North Fort Myers. Power can be rerouted to parts of the system that are not experiencing faults.

RESULTS

The duration of outages is reduced because the automated switching eliminates the time required to dispatch a crew to manually operate switches. In addition, isolating the part of the system that is not damaged helps to reduce the number of customers impacted. Restoration time is also enhanced because it is easier to locate and repair the fault.

Utilizing this type of technology has not only improved reliability, but cost reductions are also derived from the reduced number of trips to the field and time saved in locating outages. Productivity is also increased during maintenance activities because much of the de-energization and re-energization of the system can be completed through automation.

LCEC infrared inspections



Each year, LCEC conducts inspections using an infrared camera to scan system infrastructure. These inspections seek out "hot spots," which are areas where a connection on electrical equipment causes heat to be transmitted. When the infrared camera finds an area of concern, an analysis of the problem is completed. Infrared inspections allow LCEC to find and fix problems before they cause an outage. Being proactive results in time and cost savings.

Examples of the potential savings:

- Cost to repair a bushing on a transformer before a failure: \$500.
Cost to repair after failure: \$25,000.
- Cost to repair a switch at the substation before failure: \$3,000.
Cost to repair after failure: \$5,000.

What makes a cooperative special?

As a cooperative, we are a not-for-profit company. We don't focus on generating revenues to meet stockholder expectations like investor-owned utilities do. We don't set our rates to generate revenue to supplement the general fund and be used for other projects like municipal electric utilities do. Because we are a cooperative, our rates are designed to satisfy financial requirements from lenders and cover expenses. Any excess funds are allocated to customer-members.

LCEC hasn't raised rates in seven years and has returned more than \$220 million to members over the years. We operate locally and are governed by local members who have the best interests of our members in mind. Now, that's special.



Happy
**75th anniversary,
LCEC!**

LCEC is proud to celebrate 75 years of energizing Southwest Florida this year!

LCEC has been serving the area's energy needs since 1940, when orange grove owner George Judd sold the North Fort Myers Mariana Grove power plant to residents who lived in North Fort Myers. Homer T. Welch was the company's first member of management, when LCEC began with 15 miles of distribution line and 158 members, which was about one percent of Lee County's population at the time. Today, LCEC is one of the largest cooperatives in the United States with over 200,000 customers and more than 8,000 miles of energized line.

To commemorate this milestone year, an event was held in January where employees were joined by former LCEC CEOs Jim Sherfey and Pam May, Trustees and dignitaries for refreshments and a look back at all that has been accomplished by LCEC throughout the years.



ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

You are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. at the LCEC Corporate office. Board President Larry Turbeville and Chief Executive Officer Dennie Hamilton will review 2014 accomplishments, and the trustee election results will be announced.



Don't fall victim to that pesky mildew, musty smells and rusty spots on your appliances. When leaving your home in Florida for the summer, follow these tips to help protect your home.

- Many unoccupied homes need a small amount of air conditioning to control humidity. If the air conditioner is completely off, mildew damage may occur. Install a timer on the air conditioner to cycle the air for two hours per day. Or install a humidistat on your air conditioner and set it to cycle your air conditioner whenever indoor humidity exceeds 65 percent.
- Save electricity by unplugging the water heater since it will not be used.
- Leave all interior doors open to promote air flow and guard against mildew. Space out clothing, shoes and other stored materials for the same reason.
- A full refrigerator/freezer will use less power than an empty one. Use jugs of tap water to fill the unit. If you unplug the refrigerator, prop the door open and be sure it's clean.
- Just to be safe, have a neighbor, friend or professional house sitter check your home periodically during your absence.

ARBOR DAY AT THE SANIBEL SCHOOL



The LCEC vegetation management team joined volunteers and administrators at the Arbor Day celebration at the Sanibel School last month. LCEC donated a live oak tree for the recess area. LCEC works hard to ensure that trees and the electric system can work harmoniously with each other. Education about planting the right tree in the right place and continual vegetation management ensure a safe, reliable electric system while sustaining our precious environment.

Yearning for Learning



Students from Island Coast High School made a visit to LCEC to learn about STEM-related careers. The utility industry is a prime workplace for using science, technology, engineering, and math skills!



LCEC employees earned their fire extinguisher certifications from the North Fort Myers Fire Department. This knowledge not only helps maintain a safe workplace, but also to keep family, friends and neighbors safe at home!



Be ready before severe weather strikes

The wrath of Mother Nature can be on your doorstep at any time. Get ready now—before severe weather strikes.

Assemble an emergency-preparedness kit, including items such as water, food, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first-aid kit. A full list of suggested items can be found at SafeElectricity.org.

The National Weather Service also recommends that you:

- Know the county you are located in and nearby towns and cities. Warnings are issued by county and reference major cities.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning. A watch means there is the possibility of storms. A warning means a storm has been reported or is imminent and you should take cover.
- Keep an eye on the forecast and watch for signs of a storm.
- Turn on a weather radio for information if a storm is approaching.
- Stay inside if you know a storm is headed your way.

Find more information on electrical and severe weather safety at SafeElectricity.org.

Stay in HOT WATER and save

Water heating can account for 14 to 25 percent of the energy consumed in your home, second to cooling and heating. Understanding your habits and learning how to conserve will help you manage your water-heating costs.

Daily baths and showers are the primary use of hot water. Family size drastically affects the annual energy use of heating water. A 40-gallon water heater consumes approximately 150 to 200 kWh per month for a two-member household when set at 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature is effective for most uses.



Checking or changing the temperature

- Turn off the power breaker to the water heater
- Open the thermostat panel with screwdriver
- Move insulation to access thermostat
- Use screwdriver to adjust



LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 204,800 customers. LCEC News is published monthly for customers by the Public Relations Department, P.O. Box 3455, N. Ft. Myers, FL 33918-3455 (800) 599-2356 or 239-656-2300 • www.lcec.net



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 Paul Beaver of Punta Gorda.