



MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS WITHOUT A RATE INCREASE

Beginning January 1, LCEC customers saw the fourth rate decrease in two years. LCEC electric rates are below the national average and among the lowest of 56 utilities in Florida. Employees work hard to provide the best possible price for reliable service.

As an electric cooperative, LCEC is not in business to make money, only to serve its members/customers. LCEC is governed by members serving on the Board of Trustees. At its December meeting, the Board reached a unanimous decision to reduce rates again in 2016. This marks a residential rate reduction of nearly seven percent since 2014, bringing rates from \$114.16 per 1,000 kWh to \$106.55 per 1,000 kWh. Customers are paying less for electricity now than they were in 2008!

According to the Florida Municipal Electric Association, the average investor-owned electric utility rate in Florida is \$128.59 per 1,000 kWh. The average rate for the 33 municipal electric utilities in Florida is \$114.41 per 1,000 kWh. LCEC rates are well below the state average, and the lowest among Florida cooperatives.

LCEC also returned more than \$10 million to active and inactive cooperative members in 2015 in the form of retired equity. Cooperative members invest in the electric system and are allocated equity annually. This reduces the need for costly loans or bonds that would increase electric rates. **Over the years, LCEC has retired and returned more than \$231 million in equity.**



Whirlwind RESTORATION



With very little notice, a tornado with winds up to 135 mph ravaged southwest Cape Coral last month. LCEC crews went to work as soon as it was safe. Nearly 200 homes were devastated, vehicles were tossed around like toys, and debris flew through the air aimlessly. The entire utility infrastructure in the area was impacted. More than 9,000 customers were without power. Within a few hours, the lights went on for all but 2,000 customers. LCEC crews, contractors, and support teams worked through the night, and within 24 hours that number was cut in half. Crews persevered to restore power to the remaining customers as quickly as possible.

LCEC employees are trained to respond to emergencies, and although not often tested, it is times like this that our customers are thankful for our experience and dedication to doing whatever it takes to energize our community. Calls, letters, and social media comments poured in from grateful customers. **We also thank our customers for their patience and support while we worked.**



TORNADO PATH

Cast your vote in March

LCEC members will receive a ballot for the annual Trustee election in March. Members are encouraged to exercise their right to vote. We continue to offer three convenient ways to vote: online, phone and mail. Help keep costs low by voting the green ways—online or by phone. You can review information about each candidate at www.lcec.net/about-lcec/company-information/board-of-trustees beginning March 1, 2016.

Characteristics of a qualified Board of Trustees candidate:

- Ability to represent the total membership on an impartial and equitable basis
- Capability of overseeing policies governing investment of LCEC funds
- Desire to keep LCEC rates competitive, service reliable and budgets reasonable
- Knowledge to protect LCEC assets and ensure compliance with lending institutions and governmental requirements
- Effective analytical, problem-solving and logic skills
- Independent thinking and strong business training
- Capacity to work as a strong, cohesive team member
- Integrity and earned respect from business and community members
- Awareness of key local issues
- Willingness to remain informed by studying data and other pertinent information

The Nominating Committee

A 10-person LCEC Nominating Committee, independent from the Board of Trustees, is made up of LCEC members charged with interviewing and objectively evaluating applicants interested in serving on the Board. Committee members exercise due diligence and great care to ensure the process is carried out with integrity. They are members themselves, and the focus is on evaluating applicants' ability to represent fellow LCEC members' best interests in cooperative business and avoidance of situations that may present a conflict of interest.



Trustee positions up for election in 2016 are:

- District 2, Seat 1 – Cape Coral**
- District 2, Seat 3 – Cape Coral**
- District 6 – Immokalee, Everglades City, Ochopee, Ave Maria**

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE
You are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 21, 2016, at 8:30 a.m., at the LCEC corporate office. Board President Larry Turbeville and Chief Executive Officer Dennie Hamilton will review 2015 accomplishments, and the Trustee election results will be announced.

LCEC SAFETY RECORD exceeded again!

The National Electrical Safety Code outlines provisions to protect utility employees and customers. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) spells out standards and best practices for electrical safety. In line with these requirements, LCEC works hard to educate employees and focus on a culture of safety. In 2015, safety performance was better than it has been since LCEC began tracking OSHA recordable incidents. Only four incidents occurred during the year. This is a remarkable feat, considering LCEC has approximately 375 employees and the business operates around-the-clock every day.



LCEC electric rates just went down but... bad habits can make your bill go up.

The dedicated employees of LCEC continue to work hard to control internal costs, optimize capital spending and represent customers' interests in order to keep rates competitive.

A higher electric bill is caused by more use of electricity. Air conditioners set below the recommended temperature of 78 degrees can increase electric bills by as much as eight percent per degree. Using your heater and setting it above 68 degrees has even more of an impact on your kilowatt-hour usage. LCEC's energy experts have many recommendations for conserving electricity and keeping bills low.

TIPS TO TRY

- ◇ Replace filters in your air conditioner once a month, and have your unit serviced annually.
- ◇ Use ceiling fans to assist in the cooling process. Don't leave ceiling fans on in rooms where people are not present.
- ◇ Always turn the lights off when you leave a room, and turn the TV off when you're not watching it.
- ◇ Your water heater is the second largest expense on your electric bill. Set the temperature between 120 and 140 degrees. Always unplug the water heater before adjusting .

Season of giving

LCEC employees joined forces to do their part to make the season bright for our communities. From holiday lighting contests and parades to providing for the needy in a medical unit or packing food for the hungry, we were there.



The 2015 Heart Walk chaired by LCEC CEO Dennie Hamilton raised nearly \$437,000. Team LCEC was one of the top three companies to raise funds for the cause. The Walk is the premier event that brings communities together to raise funds in the fight against heart disease and stroke.



LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 207,523 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



www.facebook.com/LCEC1

CUSTOMER SURVEY WINNER

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