

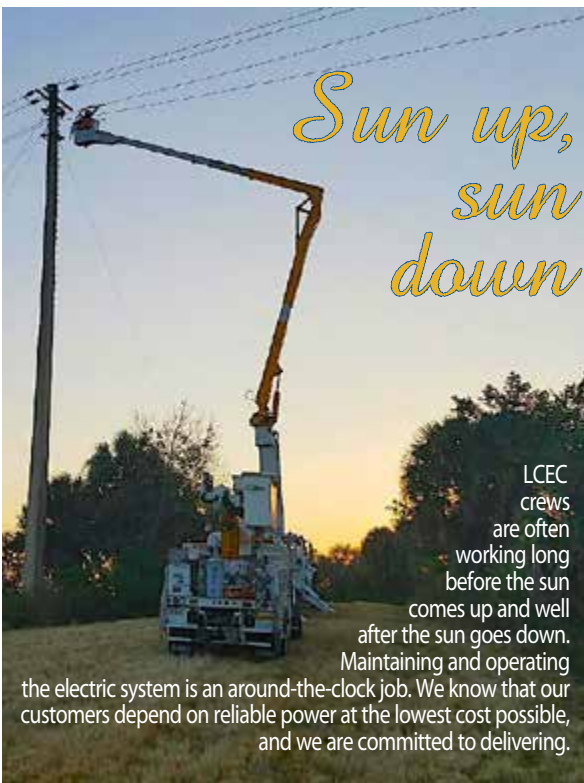


Franchise fees and taxes on your bill

LCEC customers have not seen a rate increase in more than eight years! As an electric cooperative, LCEC is not in business to make money, only to provide the best possible price for reliable service. Reliability continues to improve thanks to new technology and process improvements. LCEC is also focused on the customer experience through convenient payment options, free online energy-saving tools, and strong corporate stewardship.

There are parts of your electric bill that LCEC cannot control. The cost of power is more than 60 percent of your bill. Some customers also see a franchise fee included with their bill. This is a fee that LCEC collects and remits to local governments for the right to locate facilities in the rights-of-way. Franchise fees for LCEC customers range anywhere from 3 percent (Sanibel Island, Everglades City, Cape Coral) to 4.5 percent (Lee County). The City of Marco Island officials set their franchise fee at zero. Cape Coral customers will also notice a 7 percent Public Service Tax included on their electric bill. This is a tax collected by LCEC and remitted to the City of Cape Coral.

The dedicated employees of LCEC work hard to control internal costs, optimize spending, and represent the customers' interests in order to keep rates competitive. We continue to look for ways to hold the line because we know that our customers have come to expect consistency in everything we do...rates, reliability, and responsibility.



*Sun up,
sun
down*

LCEC crews are often working long before the sun comes up and well after the sun goes down.

Maintaining and operating the electric system is an around-the-clock job. We know that our customers depend on reliable power at the lowest cost possible, and we are committed to delivering.



New Customer Care Center OFFICE HOURS

As customers utilize more self-service options through the LCEC website and telecommunications system, the number of calls to the contact centers has decreased. Less than one percent of customer calls are received between 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Consequently, beginning January 9, 2017, the office hours at both the North Fort Myers and Immokalee contact centers were modified in accordance with the call volume trends.

2017 OFFICE HOURS:

- NFM – Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- IMM – Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

VOTE in March!

One of the cooperative principles is democratic member control. As an LCEC member, you will receive a ballot for the annual Trustee election in March. Members are encouraged to exercise their right to vote. LCEC continues 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, 2017.



Members are nominated for inclusion on the ballot by a Nominating Committee. The 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. Their 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.

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

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

You are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 20, 2017, at 8:30 a.m., at the LCEC corporate office. Board President Larry Turbeville and Chief Executive Officer Dennie Hamilton will review 2016 accomplishments, and the Trustee election results will be announced.

BLINKING LIGHTS

good news, bad news

Blinking lights in your home or business can sometimes be annoying. They are an indication of something wonderful or something dangerous.

GOOD NEWS

Brief power interruptions occur when there is a fault on the electric system due to lightning or a tree branch, a bird or animal touching the power lines. Protective devices on the system detect faults and work to open and close until the line is clear. This prevents severe damage to the electric system that would result in a lengthy outage. After a few blinks, most often the power is back to normal.

BAD NEWS

Lights flickering in just one part of your home or business could mean a bad light bulb or a loose wire in your system, your electric panel, or your meter base. It's important to contact an electrician to make sure the electric system inside your home or business is safe. The issue could lead to a fire. Better safe than sorry.



From the *heart*

"Thanks so much to LCEC for thinking of the medical unit again this year. This kind gesture does so much for the guys and makes them feel loved and part of the season. Many of them have no families, burned bridges, or have lived on the streets so long, that Christmas is just another time of year to feel lost. The gifts you bring represent how humanity should be."

Daisy, Director of Health Services, Salvation Army

"The staff of Early Childhood Learning Services for the West School Zones want to give you a huge thank you for adopting four of our neediest children and their families for the holidays. You provided children with warm clothes, new shoes, undies, and a toy. We would not have been able to meet these children's needs without your generosity."

Maria and the Head Start Staff

"Thank you for your support for the 2016 Lee Heart Walk! We are always excited about Team LCEC's participation. Your passion and commitment to saving lives is greatly appreciated."

Kelly, Lee Heart Walk Director, American Heart Association

"I was proud to work alongside the dozens of LCEC employees, friends, and family on Christmas Eve to help pack food and provide meals for 600,000 families. It was astounding to see what 2,000 volunteers could accomplish in two hours, and I was pleased that the LCEC family was partnering in the fight against hunger."

Dennie, LCEC Chief Executive Officer



COOPERATIVES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

STRONG COMMUNITIES SHARE MORE THAN RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY; THEY SHARE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES.



When the temperatures drop here in Southwest Florida, it is tempting to turn on the heat. Before you flip the switch, remember that heating can cost two to three times more than cooling! Luckily, there are some fairly inexpensive gadgets on the market to help keep your toes toasty. These include:

Heating blankets:

Be sure to read and follow the safety instructions that come with your blanket. This includes keeping these blankets away from pets, infants, and people who are immobile or unable to correctly operate the controls.



Small portable space heaters:

Keep in mind that these will only warm the room they are in. It is also very important to follow the safety instructions for this product, as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates a whopping 25,000 residential fires and more than 300 deaths attributed to space heaters each year. It is wise to research these heaters online before purchasing to ensure you get the one that is best suited to your needs.



If an electric blanket and/or space heater doesn't do the trick and you opt to turn on the heat in your home, LCEC recommends setting the thermostat between 65 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit. For more information on how heating and cooling affect your electric bill, visit the energy-efficiency section of www.lcec.net.

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 Cristina Diaz of Immokalee.



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LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 210,000 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