



Electric cooperatives make up America's largest utility grid

The electric industry consists of cooperative, investor-owned, and municipal utilities. There are more than 750 local cooperatives located throughout 46 states and serving 75 percent of land mass in the nation. Power flows over two million miles of line operated by cooperatives and is delivered to 32 million member-owners.

Say "see ya" to paper bills

Looking to cut back on your carbon footprint while simplifying your life? Consider enrolling in paperless billing through www.lcec.net. Enrollment is simple in the "Account Access" section of our website. So what are the benefits behind paperless billing to you and our environment?

Here are just a few of the ways paperless billing benefits you:

- reduction of printing and postage costs
- convenience of managing bills anytime, anywhere
- less mailbox, desk, and kitchen counter clutter
- reduced threat of identity theft

Benefits of paperless billing to our environment:

- less paper every month = trees saved
- minimize greenhouse gases
- reduce wastewater from paper production
- decrease gas used to deliver bills



PLANNING, MAINTENANCE, AND RESPONSE ARE THE KEYS TO RELIABILITY

With the exception of outages resulting from catastrophic tornadoes, LCEC had its best reliability record ever in 2016. The success can be attributed to several factors. A comprehensive reliability plan includes the use of technology, addressing future growth, routine inspections and maintenance, and rapid response.

TECHNOLOGY

Automation, protective devices, and system analysis help to streamline operations and ensure the system is handling current demand effectively.

FUTURE GROWTH

Forecasting and modeling help identify the need for potential expansion to meet impending customer needs.

INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

Thousands of poles and transformers, and hundreds of miles of line are inspected each year. The goal is to identify potential issues before they cause an outage. Routine maintenance helps to avoid a costly emergency repair or replacement and has a positive impact on keeping rates stable.

RAPID RESPONSE

A strong communication network, dedicated workforce, proper training, and convenient self-service options have reduced the time it takes to respond to daily requests for service or emergency situations.

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.



STEM @Work

A group of 47 students and five teachers from North Fort Myers, Cape Coral, and Lehigh Acres High Schools received a behind-the-scenes tour of the LCEC headquarters last month. The group learned about careers in science, technology, engineering, and math related to the electric utility industry. The group also heard about how the cooperative began in 1940 and experienced the thrill of seeing the world from 125 feet in the air.

Common \$ense \$avings

It's a simple equation: high energy usage = high bills. There are steps you can take to change the equation: lower energy usage = lower bills. Start by turning off all the lights you aren't using, especially if you still have incandescent light bulbs. Switch to CFL or LED bulbs and you will also see savings. Then flip the switch off on fans when you aren't in the room. They only cool your skin, so if you aren't in the room, there are no benefits. Your air conditioner cools the air, but do you really need it on when you aren't home? LCEC energy experts say it's a good idea to keep your AC running to keep the humidity in check, but raise the temperature when you aren't there to enjoy the cool air. A programmable thermostat helps to keep temps at 78 degrees when you are home but four or five degrees higher when you are out. Following are a few other tips to help you manage your energy usage!



\$ Make sure you keep your air filters clean to reduce the strain on your AC and clothes dryer.

\$ Check your hot water thermostat. Be sure it isn't higher than 120 degrees, which is fine for washing dishes, clothes, and you.

\$ Use the microwave when you can. The stove generates heat, which triggers more AC usage.

\$ Fix leaks around windows and doors so your cool air isn't getting out and hot air isn't getting in.

\$ Plant trees to create shade. Be sure to plant away from power lines to avoid outages.

Putting a stop to

SCAMMERS

Scammers are getting even more clever in their attempts to defraud utility customers! Please remember the following important tips to protect yourself from these ruthless scam artists:

If your electric account is past due, LCEC may send courtesy letters, automated phone calls, and emails to remind you your payment is due. These reminders are sent days (not minutes) in advance of disconnection.

- LCEC will never ask that you purchase a prepaid debit card to pay your electric bill.
- LCEC will never use pressure tactics.
- Always call LCEC at 239-656-2300 to verify the status of your account.

If you do get approached by a scammer, it is essential to mark down the phone number and email address they provide, and report it to one or more of these agencies:

- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 800-HELP-FLA
- The Lee County Sheriff's Office fraud line, 239-258-3292
- The Collier County Sheriff's Office, 239-252-9300

LCEC asks that you call us too so that we can issue a scam alert via social media. Together, we can put a stop to scamming!



The power of solar

Solar power generation is becoming more common. There are currently more than 300 LCEC customers using photovoltaic (PV) systems to generate power and interconnect with the LCEC power grid. PV modules produce electric current, which is converted for home or business use. When interconnected with LCEC power lines and net metered, electricity can flow into the home or business or onto the grid. When energy usage is low and excess energy is generated and flowing back to the grid, customers can receive a credit from LCEC. At night, or on cloudy days, energy is provided to the customer through the LCEC power grid. There are specific safety and metering requirements for interconnection.

The cost of solar PV systems may range between \$12,000 and \$24,000, and there are online calculators to help you estimate pricing and get bids from reputable installers. The payback period can range from 10- to 20- years based on many factors. Systems typically have a life expectancy of 30 years, and most manufacturers offer 20- to 25-year warranties for panels.

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 Brian Beni of Bokeelia.



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LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 211,000 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