

Community conversations

In May, LCEC participated in a community conversation co-hosted by the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation and Chamber of Commerce. Speakers provided insight into how energy efficiency and renewable energy options can help mitigate future harmful impact of climate change. A local workgroup provided ideas and recommendations for future steps, and ideas were shared by attendees about what is important to them. LCEC employees provided information about free energy surveys, the LCEC net-metering program, and renewable energy delivered by our power supplier.



COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE #5 – education, training, and information

LCEC is proud to support education in the region to ensure a sustainable workforce. Participation in the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, various scholarship opportunities, mentoring and internship programs, Junior Leadership, and other educational initiatives not only keeps the workforce pipeline strong but helps local students and educators succeed.



In May, LCEC Chief Executive Officer and Foundation for Lee County Public Schools Board member Denise Vidal, and other employees attended the State of Our Schools Breakfast to honor business community supporters and reinforce the importance of community engagement.

CUSTOMER SURVEY WINNERS

If you receive an LCEC customer survey, return it for a chance to win \$100.

Last month's winners were Patricia Maher of North Fort Myers, Beatrice Ortiz of Lehigh Acres, and Mary Cumare Deleones of Cape Coral.



LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 235,589 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

Now accepting applications for LCEC Environmental Funding Awards

LCEC awards environmental funding to non-profit agencies working to help build a sustainable future across Southwest Florida. September 1 is the deadline to apply for an LCEC Environmental Funding Award. Visit www.lcec.net/about-lcec/community-and-education/environment for program details and to download the application. Funding is awarded twice a year.

The March 2022 LCEC Environmental Funding Award recipients included the Sanibel Sea School, Friends of the Cape Coral Environment, Inc., Friends of Fakahatchee, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, and Calusa Land Trust and Preserve. Nearly \$205,000 has been awarded since the program's inception in 2013.



Subscribe to the LCEC YouTube Channel! Visit www.youtube.com/c/LeeCountyElectricCooperativeLCECSwfl/featured

LCEC NEWS

JULY 2022

LCEC is ready, willing, and able

Storm season is something LCEC knows about all too well. LCEC works year-round to strengthen the electric system through preventative maintenance, facilities and equipment inspections, vegetation management, and 24/7 monitoring. Along with strengthening the system, the LCEC Restoration Plan is reviewed, improved, and practiced by employees who each serve a vital role in the plan. Lastly, LCEC maintains relationships with vendors who provide additional resources, food, lodging, fuel, equipment, and supplies during storm situations so LCEC can stay focused and ready to help the community. Although supply chain issues are presenting challenges, LCEC is actively working to mitigate the situation and be as prepared as possible for anything Mother Nature brings our way.



After the STORM



Hopefully, SWFL stays off the hurricane radar this year. If a storm comes our way, we will be ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. Customers are encouraged to follow these tips until LCEC can respond.

- ▼ When outside, avoid downed power lines, and be alert that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Assume all wires are energized and dangerous. Warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility.
- ▼ If you are driving and encounter a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, and warn others to stay away. Contact LCEC.
- ▼ Before returning to storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure electricity is off until damage is inspected.
- ▼ Do not use appliances that have sustained water damage.
- ▼ When using a portable generator, follow all manufacturers' recommendations. Never plug it into a wall outlet or directly into the home's wiring. This could inadvertently energize the utility lines and injure yourself or others working to restore power.
- ▼ A permanent standby generator should be professionally installed and include a transfer switch to prevent electricity from leaving your generator and going into power lines where it can kill line workers.



Last month, LCEC returned millions in equity to members. Over the years, LCEC has retired more than \$315 million in member equity. LCEC is an electric distribution cooperative and members are responsible for providing a portion of the capital necessary to operate the company through electric rates. The good news is that members receive equity for their investment in the electric system. Although equity is not in cash form until it is retired, it is a benefit for cooperative members.

LCEC member equity is used for things such as principal and interest on debt, equipment and materials, wages, substations, poles and wires. Without member equity, LCEC would borrow funds from outside sources in order to continue providing service. The result of additional borrowing has increased interest expense and debt principal payments, which both eventually lead to higher electric rates for members.

Don't be a METER CHEATER

Meter tampering is not only a crime, it can be life threatening. LCEC uses automated meter reading technology, business intelligence reporting, and field investigations to detect meter tampering and prevent the theft of electricity.

Dangers of tampering:

- It can result in injury or death by electrocution.
- Altering equipment can be a fire hazard and back-feed into the lines where crews are working, putting them in danger.

Power theft is a crime subject to legal prosecution. When LCEC discovers meter tampering, the power will be disconnected and the meter will be removed immediately. A \$200 fee, equipment replacement charge, security deposit, current bill and restitution must be paid before power is restored.

Contact LCEC through lcec.net or 239-656-2300 if you suspect meter tampering.

CONSERVE this summer!

The least expensive energy is the energy you don't use



1. Use natural light during the day instead of turning on the lights.
2. Turn off ceiling fans when you aren't in the room.
3. Grill out and avoid using the oven or stove.
4. Dry clothes outside, not in the dryer.

LCEC Auto Pay can Save the Day



Enroll in Auto Pay! More time, less worry!

Days are busy and customers have a lot on their mind. Luckily there are many easy and convenient ways to pay the LCEC electric bill. One of the simplest forms to pay is Auto Pay! This time-saving option will automatically deduct the electric payment right from a bank account on the due date.

Auto Pay is open to residential and commercial customers. All funds must be drawn from U.S. banks.

Sign up today through the SmartHub mobile app or on lcec.net.

SmartHub can help you monitor your energy usage

LCEC bills can fluctuate for many reasons including weather, billing cycles, and charges. During the extremely hot summer months, it is good to remember that the more electricity you use, the more you will pay. Monitoring your energy usage is a great way to keep your bill as low as possible. As an LCEC customer, you can utilize SmartHub to monitor energy usage and set usage alerts. Enroll in SmartHub through lcec.net, or download the SmartHub mobile app in the Apple Store® or in the Android® Market. Visit the My Home tab on lcec.net to learn about SmartHub and how to manage energy usage, pay your bill and much more!

lcec.net

Maintaining Vegetation- BE TREE WISE!

LCEC performs year-round vegetation management for electric safety and reliability. The vegetation management program helps prevent contact between tree limbs and electric facilities that can cause power outages, safety hazards, and unsafe conditions such as fires.



Customers are responsible for caring for vegetation around lighting equipment as needed. Customers should never attempt to prune vegetation near electrical wires. Tree care near power lines is dangerous and may cause serious injury or death.

Contact a qualified tree care professional or set up an appointment with LCEC to deenergize the electrical line for safety purposes. To complete an online request, LCEC customers can visit lcec.net.



It is essential to update customer contact information through SmartHub. Having an updated phone number allows LCEC to provide you with important information like system updates and equity returns. It is also simple to report an outage using an accurate phone number so LCEC can respond quickly to restore power when needed.

Water and electricity do not mix



There are a lot of dangerous duos, but water and electricity tip the scale when it comes to things that absolutely do not mix. Keep the following in mind to protect you and your loved ones:

- Never handle electrical wires and plugs with wet hands. Even damp hands can mean serious danger when touching something with electricity pulsing through it.
- Always keep electrical devices and extension cords away from water sources and puddles.
- Hire a professional contractor to install electrical connections in water-prone areas like your kitchen, bathroom, and swimming pool.
- Utilize battery-operated appliances for areas near water sources.

Visit lcec.net for more ways to stay safe around electricity.