

ARE UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC FACILITIES THE SOLUTION?

On the heels of the worst hurricane to hit Southwest Florida, many are asking if all electric lines should be buried underground in the future? At the time this article was written, nearly two months after Hurricane Ian hit, customers with underground utilities ravaged by storm surge remain without power. The destruction from salt-water intrusion and fierce waters resulted in complete replacement of the underground utility infrastructure on barrier islands.



As the idea of converting overhead lines to underground lines resurfaces, the debate also continues. The estimated cost of \$1 million per mile is pricey and the time and effort that it takes to detect and repair outages isn't cost-effective. In coastal communities, saltwater can corrode the insulation covering lines, cause tiny cracks, and eat away at facilities over time. It is difficult to see what is happening when the lines are out of sight. When outages occur, specialized equipment and crews are often required to repair faults. As underground lines approach their end of life, failure rates increase significantly according to an Edison Electric Institute study. After a hurricane and flooding, moisture, and infiltration can also increase the risk of failure.

Approximately 25 percent of LCEC lines are underground. Considering the best option for a strong electric grid in terms of reliability and cost are always part of serving the best interest of members.

Cooperative members helping the cause

LCEC is fortunate to have many customers who consistently help in efforts to strengthen our communities. Companies such as Times of the Islands, Tween Waters, Island Inn, D & D Marina, and many more participate in LCEC fundraising activities and are always there to support workers and electric operations when possible. In addition to our thanks, we encourage residents and visitors to support these and all local businesses when they have an opportunity!

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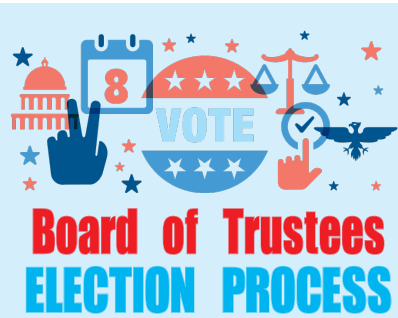


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Appreciate LCEC utility workers? Want to show support? Follow LCEC on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn for behind the scenes action, latest updates, and energy tips!



LCEC is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also members/customers of the electric distribution cooperative. Anyone with an LCEC account is also a member of the cooperative and has a voice in who serves on the Board of Trustees. To ensure strong leadership, members elect Trustees on a rotating basis from each of the six LCEC districts. Three district seats are up for election in 2023 including two in North Fort Myers and one in Lehigh Acres. This month, a nominating committee comprised of LCEC members will interview applicants and make recommendations for candidates to include on the ballot. Members will receive a ballot in their mailbox in March and can vote online, by phone, or by mail.



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

Last month's winners were Lonnie Simpson of North Fort Myers, Philip Bonvegna of North Fort Myers, and Adam Gardner of Cape Coral.

LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 237,925 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

Energizing Sanibel and Captiva

Hurricane Ian ravaged Sanibel and Captiva Islands bringing winds that exceeded one hundred and fifty miles per hour and storm surge of more than 10 feet, leaving much of the island in ruins. The community is cleaning up and rebuilding with a spirit that helped make the island unique before the storm blew through.

LCEC and the City of Sanibel are working in unison to safely energize Sanibel Island alongside contracted crews.

Before energizing the system, assessment, testing, and scrubbing of critical equipment was required. Nearly six hundred resources were on the barrier island at the beginning of the restoration with contractors from Haugland, SPE, Heart, Pike, O'Connell, and Danella.

Main primary circuits were rebuilt to be able to restore the backbone/feeders. Once this was completed, overhead and underground lines throughout Sanibel and Captiva were able

to be repaired to help residents and business owners begin to pick up the pieces **ahead of the estimated timeline.**

During the month of November and into December, up to one hundred and twenty-five crews remained on Sanibel to continue restoration. This included replacing temporary wooden poles with permanent concrete poles, performing reconnect affidavits after repair received from the city of Sanibel, reconnecting services on Captiva as requested, and covering trouble that arose from damaged equipment.



CALCULATING ENERGY COSTS

Most of us experienced a life without power for a day or two or longer after Hurricane Ian. When the lights are off and the air conditioner isn't running, the meter isn't turning and there is no cost for customers. While that sounds inviting, we don't want to be without the conveniences that electricity provides. Understanding how the cost is calculated may help manage usage and help save.

Most of the electricity LCEC customers use is produced from natural gas. Currently, natural gas prices are very high resulting in a higher than usual power cost adjustment passed along from the LCEC power supplier. At the same time, investment in solar power has also led to increased power costs.

LCEC offers tools to help manage usage and save. Visit lcec.net and enroll in SmartHub to start!

UNDERSTAND AND PROJECT THE COST OF USAGE.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Watts x Hours = Energy Used (kWh)

ENERGY COST

1. Determine the wattage of your appliance (a refrigerator may use 400 watts)
2. The number of watts divided by 1,000 = kW (400/1,000 = .4 kW)
3. Number of hours the appliance operates per day = number of kWh per day (.4 kW x 24 = 9.6 kWh)
4. Daily energy cost of the appliance = kWh x electric rate (9.6 kWh x \$0.1517 = \$1.45 per day)
5. Monthly energy cost of the appliance = per day cost x 30 (\$1.45 x 30 = \$43.68 per month)

Protect yourself from DISHONEST SCAMS

Know what to look for and trust your instincts!

If someone suspicious is on your property claims to be an LCEC representative:

- Ask to see photo identification badge or work request number
- Contact LCEC at 239-656-2300 to inquire if representatives are in your area or to ask about your account
- Do not allow anyone into your home if you feel uneasy
- Do not provide personal information such as bank account numbers, passwords, social security or credit/debit card numbers over the phone unless you initiated the call
- Ignore suspicious emails that urge immediate action or request personal information

YOU HAVE THE POWER to outsmart scammers

If you think you may have been a victim of a scam, contact LCEC and your local law enforcement immediately.

Visit LCEC.net for more info on how to spot and report a potential scam.



Staying warm in CHILLY TEMPS

Cooler weather is finally here. Time to bundle up in warm blankets, layers, and whatever else keeps your Florida blood warm. Below are some tips for keeping toasty without increasing energy consumption:

Take advantage of the sun. Open curtains or blinds during the day to let the sun warm your home. Just be sure to close them at night to keep the warmth in.

Consider using a portable space heater or electric blanket, but make sure to thoroughly read through and abide by all safety precautions.

If and only if you need to put on your heat, set the thermostat at 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep in mind that heating costs three times more than cooling so only use the heat when necessary.

Remember, warmer days are on the way so embrace the chill before it's gone!

Do you know the seven cooperative principles?

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance. These principles are a key reason that America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of their members first.



Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.



Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs, and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, help boost cooperative understanding.



Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.



Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (directors/trustees) are elected among the membership and are accountable to them. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.



By working together through local, national, regional and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs.

New Year, New and Safer You!

Replace Smoke Alarm Batteries Once a Year

Detectors also need to be replaced every 10 years. If you think any of your hardwired systems aren't working, call an electrician to fix it.



Repair or Replace Faulty Appliances

Appliances that do not work well can be fire hazards. Fix or replace! The money you spend will be well worth the protection you receive.



Inspect Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) Outlets

New Year's is a great time to get into the groove of monthly inspections. Simply press the test/reset button and make sure the outlets trip and reset correctly. If they are malfunctioning, call an electrician to reduce electrocution risk.



Enrolling in SmartHub is easy

You are only a few clicks away from enrolling in SmartHub to view payment history, pay a bill, receive bill reminders, set up usage alerts, monitor energy usage, and more! You can enroll in a few simple steps on lcec.net with your account information and an email address. Or download the SmartHub app on your mobile device to enroll! Simply register as a *New User* and you are ready to join more than half of LCEC members who rely on SmartHub to conduct all their LCEC business! Visit lcec.net for tutorials on downloading the app, setting up outage texting and FAQs on the perks of SmartHub!



SmartHub
lcec.net

Protecting our environment

LCEC is proud to support the Friends of the Cape Coral Environment, Inc. through the LCEC Environmental Funding Award program. This organization is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life in Cape Coral through activities such as sustainability of estuaries, wetlands, and aquatic preserves. Through the award program, LCEC has helped fund the Median Beautification Program (formally Adopt-a-Median), specifically on Agualinda Boulevard. Since the inception of the Environmental Funding Award program in 2013, LCEC has awarded nearly \$240,000 to organizations whose sole focus is protecting our precious environment.

