

LCEC Environmental Funding Award spotlight

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife

LCEC is proud to support local organizations through an Environmental Funding Award program. This program was created in 2013 as a means to protect the environment while supporting organizations in their missions to sustain, protect and educate about the role we all play in caring for the environment.

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife (CCFW) is one of the worthy recipients of an LCEC Environmental Funding Award. The funding benefits the 22nd Annual Burrowing Owl Festival happening on February 24 at Rotary Park in Cape Coral. This popular festival will feature live animals, wildlife tours, children's crafts and more with all donations benefiting CCFW. The mission of CCFW is to preserve and enhance the habitats of protected wildlife species and to educate the community about Cape Coral's wildlife resources.

For more information on this award program, visit the Environment page at lcec.net.



LCEC governance - Membership Matters

As a member of a not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative, you play a vital role in LCEC governance. Board of Trustees are members elected by members. They demonstrate authenticity and principles in their professional and personal lives and contribute to the LCEC diversity in terms of background and business experience. The Board is responsible for setting policy and procedures and maintaining financial strength while supporting employees who run the day-to-day operations. The 10-member LCEC Board represents all walks of life and resides in communities and neighborhoods throughout the LCEC service territory. They are committed to conducting business with the highest level of integrity and in an ethical and responsible manner.

Since 1940, LCEC employees, guided by the Board of Trustees, have made a focused effort on balancing fiscal responsibility with the goal of improving the lives of the customers they serve.



HARD HATS off to the NEW LINEMEN!

A huge congratulations to Thomas, Jarret, Garrett, and Kole, who have all earned their Journeyman Lineman Certificates after completing the LCEC Apprentice Linemen program!

This feat is especially impressive considering the obstacles they faced over the four years of the program, such as the pandemic and Hurricane Ian. Both on and off the field, these four worked very hard on their training. The LCEC CEO, Business Continuity Director, and IBEW Local 1933 President presented the certificates. LCEC is proud of their dedication and commitment!

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Visit www.youtube.com/c/LeeCountyElectricCooperative/LCECswfl/featured

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



RELIABILITY: Keeping up with member growth

Southwest Florida has become one of the fastest growing communities in the nation! Several large electric grid improvement projects are in progress to meet the increasing demand for electricity in Southwest Florida.

1. A new transmission line and substation in North Cape Coral are in the final stages of construction and are scheduled for completion during the **first quarter of 2024**.
2. Power line improvements are currently underway for a new substation in the Golden Gate area of Collier County, which will go into service by the **end of 2024**.
3. A substation rebuild and expansion project is in the design stage for Lehigh. This project will double the power capacity of the existing substation and ensure that the grid can meet the needs of future growth. Construction is estimated for completion the **end of 2025**.

LCEC CEO – selected as one of Florida’s 500 Most Influential Business Leaders 2023

Florida Trend’s *Florida 500* released their list of most influential business leaders of 2023, which included LCEC Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer, Denise Vidal!



The published list is a year-long research initiative by the editors of Florida Trend

Magazine resulting in a personal, engaging look at the state’s most influential business leaders across major industries.

Denise was appointed EVP and CEO in 2019 and spent the prior 16 years in several positions throughout the company, working her way up from marketing and customer service to chief financial officer. In the 4 years that Denise has led LCEC, the company has experienced some of the most unprecedented times. COVID-19 impacted everyone across the nation and leaders all over the globe were put to the test in an unfamiliar environment. Shortly following, Hurricane Ian devastated the LCEC territory leaving all 240,000 members without power. Denise guided

Rate rebalance ensures a reliable electric system

Beginning January 1, LCEC electric rates were rebalanced to ensure they are as close to the cost of delivering reliable electricity as possible. Electric rates cover power cost, power delivery cost, and operations and maintenance expenses. The base rates (excluding a customer charge) had not increased since 2008, while the price of wholesale power and transmission, labor, materials, and operating and maintenance continued to climb. Electric utilities across the nation are experiencing these challenges along with record inflation, increased interest rates on capital, and supply chain disruptions. LCEC works year-round to keep costs down while the expenses related to maintaining a reliable electric grid continue to increase. The rate rebalance resulted in an increase in base rates and a decrease in the Power Cost Adjustment amounting to a net increase of only 75 cents per 1,000 kWh for the average customer.

LCEC through those turbulent times and praised the employees for all their hard work and dedication to the company, “Hurricane Ian was the most devastating event we’ve ever experienced, personally and professionally,” she said.

The top 500 selection process included months of research and interviews, input from executives of economic development organizations, professional associations, and others who know their communities, industries, and Florida well. This publication serves as a highly selective biographical guide of business leaders who are moving Florida forward.

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.



1. Open and Voluntary Membership

Membership is open to all people who can reasonably use its services, regardless of race, religion, gender, or economic circumstances.



2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.



3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.



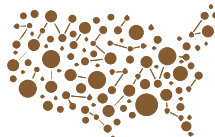
4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. They ensure unique identity when making decisions.



5. Education, Training, and Information

Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs, and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives.



6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

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.



7. Concern for Community

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

LCEC is a nonprofit corporation. Established in 1940, LCEC delivers power to more than 244,475 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

If you receive an LCEC customer survey, return it for a chance to win \$100. Last month's winners were:

- Cathleen Defeo - Marco Island
- Arthur Gerry - Cape Coral
- Be Engler - North Fort Myers

Stay toasty when the temperature drops

50's

Temperatures are dipping in SWFL and you may be tempted to turn on the heat. Resist the urge! Heating costs two to three times more than cooling! To stay toasty, consider using a small space heater or an electric blanket. Be sure to read and abide by safety requirements. Layering clothes is also a great option to stay warm. If you choose to use the heat, LCEC recommends setting the thermostat to between 65-68 degrees Fahrenheit.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM DISHONEST SCAMS

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

- Ask to see a 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 or mailings that urge immediate action, request personal information, or allege business affiliation with LCEC.

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.

Enroll in SmartHub today

SmartHub is the portal to do all your LCEC business! Enrolling is simple through lcec.net or by searching for LCEC in the app store. Once enrolled, you can set up notifications, pay your electric bill, report outages and much more.

Happy clicking!

NEW YEAR, NEW AND SAFER YOU!

Replace smoke alarms batteries once a year

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

Inspect Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) Outlets

January 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.

Repair or replace faulty appliances

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

