

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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SECO Honored by Arbor Day Foundation

The Arbor Day Foundation has named Sumter Electric Cooperative as a Tree Line USA Utility for the third consecutive year.

The Tree Line USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of Foresters and recognizes utilities that meet three very strict requirements: a program of quality tree care, annual worker training in quality tree care practices, and a tree planting and public education program.

In making the announcement of SECO's award John Rosenow, CEO of the Arbor Day Foundation, said, "Tree Line USA utilities deserve recognition for their commitment to providing safe, efficient electric service while helping to protect and preserve community trees. One of the greatest objectives of the program is replacing the outdated line-clearance practice of topping trees with natural pruning. Natural pruning trains trees to grow around wires and retain more of their natural form. This results in healthier trees and reduced clearance costs for utility companies, since natural pruning has to be done less frequently than topping."

Ken Lacasse, SECO Manager of Integrated Vegetation Management, said, "We are very proud to have received this award for the third year in a row. We try to be environmentally sensitive in many areas here at SECO and our vegetation management program is a prime example of that. Trees enrich our lives. They help reduce peak demand for electricity by conserving energy. And, as Mr. Rosenow has pointed out trees clean the air and water, increase property values and make our homes more comfortable."

The Arbor Day Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship. SECO is a not-for-profit utility serving 170,000 members in their families in Marion, Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Levy, Hernando and Pasco counties.

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