

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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The power of human connections

May 27, 2010

SECO SAYS BE PREPARED FOR 2010 STORMS

Sumterville – The 2010 hurricane season is upon us and Sumter Electric Cooperative (SECO) customers can rest assured that their Co-op will be ready. Officials at SECO say it is a good time to consider what you and your family would do in the event of a major storm in our area.

“We want to remind everyone in Central Florida,” said SECO Director of Corporate Communications & Energy Services Barry Bowman, “that there are many dangers associated with severe weather and the key to being safe is to be prepared.”

Here are some practical suggestions for inclusion in any home emergency preparations:

- Cordless telephones will not work if the power is off. Make sure you have a regular phone and/or cell phone as a backup for emergencies.
- Have a battery-powered radio on hand and a supply of fresh batteries.
- Keep a flashlight and extra batteries handy.
- Have a first aid kit on hand, including prescription medicines which may need to be refilled.
- Make sure you have at least a three-day supply of bottled water.
- Obtain food that won't spoil – canned, packaged or sealed up in plastic bags or containers. Remember, your electric can opener will be useless if the power goes out.
- If someone in your home depends on medical equipment that operates on electricity, make arrangements in advance for an emergency alternative power source.

Please keep in mind that if you plan to operate a portable generator, keep it outside in a well ventilated area. Carbon monoxide emissions can be harmful. Equally important is that you do not connect the generator directly to your main electrical panel in the home. If installed incorrectly, power from the generator could flow into outside lines and severely injure neighbors or SECO repair crews that believe those power lines are dead.

If power is lost, turn off your appliances. This will protect them when power is restored, prevent electrical fires and lessen the chances of a circuit overload when the service comes back on. Leave one light on (preferably the porch light so that you and the repair crews patrolling the area know when your power is back on).

If it appears that everyone around you has had their power restored, but you still do not, check your electric panel to see if any of your circuit breakers have tripped. A breaker being tripped during a storm is not an uncommon event. Check this before calling again to report your outage.

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NEWS RELEASE: SECO Says Be Prepared for 2010 Storms – continued

SECO will be bringing every resource at its disposal to bear to assure power gets restored as quickly and safely as possible to our customers. Our detailed restoration plan details exactly the priority in which power will be brought back on. Essential services such as hospitals, shelters, etc., are the highest priority. Repairs that will bring on large groups of customers are next and then individual electric services are addressed.

Bowman noted that SECO is very concerned about the welfare of its customers and has a colorful, eight-page storm guide that is available free of charge at all SECO offices.

The storm guide has useful information including what to do if your power should fail, safety tips, a glossary of weather terms you should know, wind speed and pressure effects, critical explanations on all types of severe weather phenomena and much more. The guide can be read on-line at secoenergy.com and additional storm related material can also be found there.

The free SECO storm guides can be picked up at Sumter Electric offices in Inverness, Ocala, Sumterville, Eustis and Groveland.

SECO also has a specialty Web site that should prove very useful, particularly during storm events, and it can be located at secostormcenter.com. The status of the electric system can be tracked here and outages can be reported on-line.

To report outages by telephone, please call 1-800-SECO-141 (1-800-732-6141).

SECO, a not-for-profit electric cooperative, serves 170,000 members and their families in Lake, Marion, Citrus, Sumter, Levy, Pasco, and Hernando counties.

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