



## Here's a chance to express yourself

SECO Corporate Communications, PO Box 301, Sumterville, FL 33585-0301 • webmaster@secoenergy.com

I would like to tell you how much I enjoy your monthly newsletter. It is both informative and interesting.

Also, I was one of the lucky winners of a \$25.00 gift card when my number appeared in the newsletter. My husband and I enjoyed a fine lunch out. So, thank you very much.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth (Betty) Curry*  
Scottish Highlands, Leesburg, FL

After losing power during a lightning storm recently, I placed a call to SECO to report the outage.

Thinking that, due to the intensity of the storm, I would not see anyone until the following day, I was pleasantly surprised when someone was out after just 30 minutes.

As it poured down rain and with lightning striking all around, and very close, the technician repaired the damage at the top of the pole, and had us up and running again within 15 minutes. I need to add that I am the only one that this power pole serves because I do not have any neighbors. When he was

finished, I hollered a "thank you" to him from my front door and he responded with "Sorry it took so long." Thank you to all of the technicians who are brave enough to make these high risk repairs in such horrible weather. And thank you SECO for a job well done.

*Donna Shaffer*  
Ocala, FL

On June 23rd, Lake-Sumter Community College hosted the Region III meeting of the Association of Florida Colleges (AFC). As a service project, we elected to raise money for the SECO Angel Fund, your program designed to improve the human condition of residents in your service area.

We are pleased to present you with this check in the amount of \$100.00 for the Angel Fund. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Patti Weasel*  
Lake-Sumter Community College  
Leesburg, FL

"I'd like to encourage SECO to offer time-of-use electric rates. I would be glad to participate in a test of time-of-use rates and "smart meters."

Check [www.torontohydro.com](http://www.torontohydro.com) for a good example of time-of-use rates."

*David Kelch*  
The Villages, FL

We have been snowbirds since 1992 but the time has come to stay in northern Vermont and all that entails – snow, icy roads and all that good stuff.

SECO is a reliable, low cost power company and have employees second to none. We went to many spring meetings and felt like part of a well-run family.

God Bless you!

*Margaret & Alton Lothian*  
Richford, VT

On Friday, July 1, lightning hit in my backyard blowing out the electrical in my home and in homes of people on my street.

I had a great deal of damage to landscape wiring and my transformer was "fried." Your technician, LINDSEY DOBSON, and others who responded to repair calls were efficient and very comforting. They stated that they would not leave until everything was repaired and power restored. This was most comforting to me as I was quite concerned.

Kudos to all of the workers that responded to my home and street.

Sincerely,

*Nance Hamzel*  
The Villages, FL

6600886514

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# SECO News

September 2011

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## The Truth about Smart Meters






Last month we brought you the lowdown on the compact fluorescent lighting (CFLs) option because the Congress has failed to overturn the ban on incandescent light bulbs. Part of that article documented the miniscule amount of mercury in these bulbs and the ease with which you can handle disposing of one if broken.

You may recall that when CFLs were first being promoted as real energy savers there were a number of alarmists who posted things on YouTube and elsewhere declaring that their research proved beyond any doubt that if you broke a small CFL your home would become a virtual EPA Super Fund Site, requiring people in hazmat suits to come in and do the clean-up at great expense. The facts about CFLs were totally twisted and misrepresented in these stories, but it made sensational reading in the traditional media and on the Internet. The result was widespread hysteria about CFL use until the truth about CFLs and their tiny mercury content finally received decent news coverage many months later.

Now, we are seeing a good deal of whacky misinformation being circulated about the so-called smart meters being deployed by many utilities across the nation. Like the urban legend that surfaced initially about CFLs, the crazy claims about smart meters are causing some people to be worried about these devices.

**Radio Frequency Comparison**

		
<b>Smart Meters</b>	<b>Everyday Activities</b>	<b>Cell Phones</b>
	1.1 – 550 X more than smart meters	3.3–1,100 X more than smart meters

Smart meters do not target your home for alien abduction, they are not capable of transmitting any of your personal information to the feds or others, they can't tell what you are doing in the kitchen, the bedroom or elsewhere, there is absolutely no evidence

that the radio frequencies they emit pose any kind of health hazard, etc.

**So what is the truth about smart meters and what types of benefits they provide for consumers? You may be surprised to know the following:**

- Like regular meters, smart meters are located outside of the home and if you were standing two feet away from the meter your exposure to radio frequency (RF) waves would only be about one-one-thousandth of the exposure you get when using your cell phone.
- Speaking of RF waves, these meters do not send out constant RF transmissions (another fallacy). The transmissions are extremely limited. Typically, they only transmit data six times per day for a total of one third of one second each time.

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SECO's Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, September 26 at 2:30 p.m. in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville.

A Trustees' meeting will also be held on October 24, 2011.

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## Eye Spy A WINNER!

If you find your own personal account number hidden in this *SECO News*, give us a call and let us know who you are and where you found it. We will send you a \$25 gift card upon verification. You may become one of six winners in this issue. Just call Corporate Communications at (352) 793-3801 to claim your prize.



tips & quips  
about our  
environment  
and its  
inhabitants

## NATURE'S reflections

### FLORIDA'S WOOD DUCK

*The most colorful wild duck in North America*

Wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*), often called “Summer ducks,” are the most abundant resident wild ducks in the state. Many live here year-round, while others migrate to spend fall and winter here and travel back north to breed.

This beautiful small to medium-sized duck has a long, slicked-back head crest. Males are brightly colored, while females are a more muted brownish-gray. Both have a white patch around the eyes and throat. Both male and female have a striking mixture of iridescent blues, greens, and purples contrasted by white stripes and patches.

The wood duck is one of the “dabbling” ducks which means they obtain most of their food by bending forward until their tail sticks straight upward while feeding in shallow water. Wood ducks also forage on the ground in woody swamps and bottomland hardwood forests. Laying hens and ducklings satisfy their high protein needs by eating foods like spiders, insects, snails, and crawfish.

Wood ducks nest in tree cavities near or directly over water. If natural sites for nesting are scarce, the Wood duck will readily use nesting boxes. Egg-laying starts in late January, with one ivory-colored egg laid every day until there is a clutch of ten to fifteen eggs. The hen covers the eggs with her down feathers. Incubation takes about thirty days.

Ducklings usually leave the nest the day after they are hatched. The hen calls to them and they use their sharp claws to climb to the entrance of the tree cavity or nest box where they pause momentarily before jumping sometimes from precarious heights. Amazingly they hit the ground or water uninjured. Once the entire brood is out, the hen leads them to water. The hen usually remains with her brood until the young are able to fly at eight to nine weeks. Normally, only three to four ducklings from a brood survive to the flying stage. The lifespan for wood ducks is three to four years, although they have been known to live fifteen years.

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 helped bring this beautiful species back from near extinction with the introduction of a management program for captive breeding, installation of nest boxes plus better monitoring and hunting regulations. Today, the Wood duck's comeback is one of wildlife management's greatest success stories. 🌿

Column & photo by Sandi Staton – [sandi.staton@secoenergy.com](mailto:sandi.staton@secoenergy.com)