



SECO News

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SECO Rated One of the Best by Customers



SECO members recently got to voice their opinions on their Co-op's performance during 2008. A comprehensive customer satisfaction telephone survey was conducted in late November and December and the results have now been tabulated. The bottom line is that the members gave the Co-op a great report card.

The survey, conducted annually on behalf of SECO by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, lets SECO officials know what is on their member/customers' minds and how well they think their utility is being run.

SECO CEO Jim Duncan said, "A statistically valid sample of members in Marion, Lake, Citrus, and Sumter counties was surveyed. Overall, members continue to think very highly of their cooperative with a mean overall satisfaction rating of 8.93 on a 10-point scale with 7 in 10 members giving ratings of 9 or 10."

Duncan noted that the co-op scored very highly on having courteous and friendly employees, having accurate and understandable bills, supporting the local community, being environmentally sensitive, minimizing longer outages and restoring power quickly after an outage, keeping members informed, and delivering good value for the money to name a few of the categories.

Another measurement which was contained within the survey was a series of questions that compare SECO to other types of companies who seek to rate themselves on the nationally recognized American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).

"Again," said Duncan, "SECO's ACSI score of 85 was one of the highest in the industry and ranked higher than the average for the nation's Touchstone Energy co-ops, the ranked investor-owned electric utilities in Florida and the rest of the nation, and was 12 points above the electric industry average of 73. We also scored higher than Target Corporation; Nike; PepsiCo, Inc.; Verizon; DirecTV and others who are not in the electric industry." *see ACSI on page two...*

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)

Sumter Electric Cooperative	85
Southern Company	81
Public Service Electric and Gas Co.	76
Duke Energy	76
Consumers Energy Company	76
Southern California Edison Co.	75
INDUSTRY AVERAGE	73
Florida Power & Light	72

NRECA Market Research 2008 2nd Quarter and 3rd Quarter Combined



SECO's Board of Trustees will meet Monday, February 23 at 2:00 p.m. in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville. A Trustees' meeting will also be held on March 30, 2009.

ACSI *concluded*

“We appreciate the input of our members. Their thoughts help us stay on top of what is important to them. For our part, we pledge to continue to provide them with the most reliable and lowest cost electricity possible, while not losing sight of the high premium our members place on customer service,” he concluded. ■

Notes from the Members:

We have moved all over the United States and have never seen better service than SECO Electric Co-op has provided us for the last six years.

Thank you very much; keep up the good work.

John Lambert

Leesburg, Florida



I have been meaning to write to you for quite a while now and on the eve of bringing in the new year, it seems the perfect time!

I'm in my office cleaning out 2008 files and as I get to the "SECO" file and take out the paid statements I also gather all the *SECO News* letters that I lovingly save because of your articles on the animals.

Living on this large piece of land I have seen so many of the animals you have featured and I've learned so much from you.

I hope you never stop writing the articles and may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Happy New Year!

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathy Nichols

Oxford, Florida

Plan to attend your Annual Meeting!

Saturday, March 28, 2009

Energy Efficiency Tip

Check your air filter every month, especially during heavy use months (*winter and summer*). At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder — wasting energy. A clean filter also prevents dust and dirt from building up in the system.

tips & quips
about our
environment
and its
inhabitants

NATURE'S *reflections*

RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE *Trees and power lines do not mix well*

Trees add beauty to the landscape, provide shelter for wildlife, create a playground for children and clean the air we breathe. The most direct impact trees have on us as human beings is the conversion of carbon dioxide into oxygen. It has been said that one mature tree, in just one growing season, provides oxygen equivalent to that required by one adult for a year.

Around our homes and work places, trees work as natural barriers for climate control. Strategically planted, trees provide shade in the summer which reduces cooling requirements, and act as barriers from harsh weather in the winter.

Like real estate, it's all about the location. As many have witnessed firsthand during Florida's recent storms, whether a tree becomes a blessing or a curse depends a lot on its location. Storms, trees, and power lines do not mix well and falling limbs and trees can cause severe and costly damage to homes as well.

Many trees grow quickly, making it extremely important to plan before you plant. Some trees are brittle, become hollow, or have invasive root systems that may interfere with underground utilities or clog septic systems.

It's important to do your homework before making your selection. Decide what size, shape, location, and type of tree you want and its characteristics. Such as, does it drop leaves or have little seedlings coming up all over. Most importantly, find out how large the tree will be when mature. Only shorter varieties, like the Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) shown here, should be used around power lines. When mature, these will not reach into the power lines. Once a tree has grown into an energized line, it can conduct electricity and becomes a safety hazard. During storms, limbs may break or the tree could fall, causing extensive damage or outages. Consequently, trees that have grown into the power lines must be trimmed by utilities to maintain a safe clearance and prevent outages. Unfortunately once cut, trees never look as good as those planted well away from the lines.

Contact a local nursery professional, forester, or your county agricultural extension agent for advice on the types and placement of trees suitable for your site. The right tree in the right place adds beauty and can be enjoyed for years to come. ♻️

— photo and column by Sandi Staton — sandi.staton@secoenergy.com