

SECO News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



BOARD of TRUSTEES

Ray F. Vick

President • District 5

Jerry D. Hatfield

Vice President • District 9

Barry R. Evans

Secretary-Treasurer • District 3

Donald W. Santee

District 1

Dillard B. Boyatt

District 2

Kenneth Jessop

District 4

Earl Muffett

District 6

Rob Henion

District 7

Wilson G. Sheppard

District 8

Jim Duncan

CEO & General Manager



SECO's Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, March 29 at 2:00 p.m. in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville, FL. A Trustees' meeting will also be held on April 26, 2010.

Members voice their opinions

Co-op's customer service performance gets high rating

A comprehensive customer satisfaction telephone survey was conducted in late November and December and the results have been tabulated. The bottom line is that SECO members once again 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/consumers' minds and how well they think their utility is being run.

A statistically valid sample of members in Marion, Lake, Citrus and Sumter counties were surveyed. Barry Bowman, SECO Director of Corporate Communications, said, "Overall, members continue to think very highly of their cooperative with a mean overall satisfaction rating of 8.92 on a 10-point scale with seven in ten members giving ratings of 9 or 10."

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 Bowman, "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 was 11 points above the electric industry average of 72. SECO Energy scored higher than Verizon, PepsiCo, Target Corporation, Nike, DirecTV and others who are not in the electric industry."

"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. ■

Efficient windows save energy

Windows can be one of your home's most attractive features, providing views, day lighting, ventilation, and solar heating in the winter. During the summer, your air conditioner must work harder to cool hot air from sunny windows. Install ENERGY STAR® windows and use curtains and shade to give your air conditioner and energy bill a break. If your home has single-pane windows consider replacing them with new double-pane windows that have high-performance glass and low-e or spectrally selective coatings. This will reduce heat gain which can cut the cooling load by 10% to 15%.

Plan to attend your Annual Meeting!
Saturday, March 27, 2010

Notes from the Members:

Dear Mr. Vick:

I recently received a copy of the SECO utility co-op newsletter [*SECO News*] from Ocala, Florida. As executor for my father's estate, I make monthly payments for the utilities at his home and receive the utility's newsletters. After extensive reading and research on the supposed "global warming" issue I came to the same conclusion that you developed in your recent newsletter.

I have been so frustrated that people who have a platform and know the truth haven't had the courage to go against the "politically correct" environment in which we have lived the last couple of decades.

It was refreshing to receive your newsletter, I couldn't believe my eyes! You not only have a clear understanding of the issue but had the courage to put it in print. My hat's off to SECO for taking a correct position when so few do so. I would love for your comments to be put in our local paper.

Sincerely,

Glenn W. Brownell, Jr. DSM, CPA

Owatonna, Minnesota



Your article "*Climategate, Cap and Trade, EPA, Copenhagen and You*" was wonderful. You should send a copy to Senator Bill Nelson, who without doubt will vote for Cap and Trade.

Roger Rice

Leesburg, Florida



Hi Sandi [Staton],

I am a SECO customer who absolutely enjoys my "*SECO News*" every month. I especially look forward to The *Nature's Reflections* Column. We moved to Florida in February 2006 and I have saved ALL my brochures. I think you have published a book of all your articles. I would love to have two copies if at all possible. I want one for myself and one to donate to Montessori School at Roseborough. My grandson (6 years old) attends the school and they are very "Nature" conscious. Please tell me what the cost is and how I can obtain the books.

Thank you,

Elaine S. Sonne

Eustis, Florida

EDITOR'S NOTE: The *Nature's Reflections*

booklets are available at any local

Customer Service Center for \$5.95 plus tax. All proceeds

benefit our Angel Fund. If you cannot come by, one

can be mailed to you. Contributions or gifts to the Angel

Fund or Pennies from Heaven are not tax deductible as

charitable contributions.



tips & quips
about our
environment
and its
inhabitants

NATURE'S
reflections



EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL

Nature's clowns – clever and entertaining


The Eastern Gray Squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis*, one of three squirrels found in Florida and by far the most common, is found in every city, town, backyard and rural area statewide.

They are salt and pepper, grizzled with tan hairs in body coat, a buff underside with small, rounded ears and a long bushy tail. The tips of the hairs on the tail are white or gray. They are 16 to 20 inches long overall including the eight inch tail.

The word squirrel comes from a Greek word meaning "he who sits in the shadow of his tail." The bushy tail provides balance, enables unbelievable maneuverability and acts like a parachute during a fall. It is used as a blanket on cold nights and flaunted during mating season. It is swished when disturbed as the squirrel chatters or "barks" to announce any perceived disturbance.

Gray squirrels may breed twice a year. A nest of leaves is built in treetops or hollows. Gestation is about 45 days for a litter of 2 to 6 young. If there is a second litter, the female selects a new nest site, leaving the first nest to the juveniles. They enjoy a diet of acorns, nuts, fruits, berries, insects, and bird eggs, foraging during the day, both on the ground and in trees. Their incisor teeth grow constantly, are frequently sharpened, and kept clean.

The entertaining show of acrobatic skills includes high speed chases through the trees which is at its peak during mating season. These acrobats can be quite clever, even humorous with their antics. This display is at its best when seen trying to rob a bird feeder. While they can be fun to watch, their tenacity can turn them into a nuisance. Attempts to keep them out of bird feeders often becomes a battle of wits between human and animal, a battle these tenacious critters usually win. Innovative approaches to prevent the squirrels from getting to the bird feeder, spilling the food, and breaking the feeder in the process are usually to no avail. They just don't give up. If they get discouraged, they may leave the feeder alone for a little while, but will return to try again later.

If you feed them, beware. It could make your home look more inviting than you want. Chewing their way into screened porches, attics, or crawl spaces to find food or to build a nest can be a costly problem. 

– Photo and column by Sandi Staton – sandi.staton@secoenergy.com