



# Here's a chance to express yourself

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

Love your *Nature's Reflections* and your fine service. Attended your annual meeting and thanks for all the information and food. Keep up the good work.

*Ray & Del Tafilowski*  
Ocala, FL

We have excellent rates. I have had three houses in Co-op areas here and Texas. I always check out Co-ops before buying.

Thank you,  
*Alfred Bolla*  
Ocala, FL

Thanks so much for the enjoyable meeting in March - Everything you do is first class.

The employees all seem so ready to please us in the Co-op. They seem to really enjoy working at SECO. The meeting is always interesting and informative - Mr. Duncan has a fine sense of humor and is great at getting information to all of us. The music was so enjoyable and the possibility of winning prizes is so fun. Thanks again, you run a class act.

*Beatrice Boyce*  
Tavares, FL

We only wintered in FL the last 28 years - the last 10 or so years owning a place in Camper's World, now in Palms Resort and being responsible for our electric bill.

We will miss the *SECO News*, the low bills, quick fixes (only needed once), the animal column in the news - donated to a Kindergarten teacher, and most of all the great members' meeting. We won a couple of great door prizes. Now we are permanently back home in Central New York. We wish you were here!

*Fanny & Charles Knapp*  
Fulton, NY

Would you please convey our thanks and gratitude to Mr. Vick, Mr. Duncan and the entire staff and employees of SECO, for providing us the opportunity to

participate at the Annual Meeting and in particular, enabling us to win the grand prize, i.e. We won the truck!

It is a rewarding pleasure to be able to communicate with the fine people at SECO who take the time to *put the members first*.

Thanks again, as we look forward to many years of continued service.

*Janie & Don Kern*  
Bushnell, FL

This note is long overdue. Thank you all for helping us senior citizens with our electric service. I am happy to be a member. If you can please send me 1 or 2 angel stickers.

*Shirley Keeshen*  
Lady Lake, FL

## Arbor Day Festival

Many individuals enjoyed a beautiful April day outdoors at the Ocala Arbor Day Festival in Tuscahill Park. SECO's vegetation management experts were on hand to share their knowledge with the public, promoting proper tree selection and planting practices. They handed out trees supplied by Salmon's Nursery for planting and provided educational pamphlets and coloring books. Children at the event flocked to SECO's booth taking advantage of the free hard hats, temporary tattoos, and face painting.



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## Eye Spy A WINNER!

Can you find your account number?

You may be the next winner of a \$25 gift card! Just find your hidden account number in this *SECO News* and let us know that you are a winner. Give us a call to let us know who you are, where you found it, and what your account number is. Upon verification your gift card will be in the mail.

Contact the Corporate Communications office at (352) 793-3801 to claim your prize.



HORSE FEVER "OLD GLORY"  
KIMBERLY A. SAMSON

### SECO TRUSTEES

Ray F. Vick  
*President • District 5*

Jerry D. Hatfield  
*Vice President • District 9*

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*District 4*

Earl Muffett  
*District 6*

Rob Henion  
*District 7*

Bill James  
*District 8*

Jim Duncan  
*CEO & General Manager*



SECO's Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, June 27 at 2:30 pm in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville.

A Trustees' meeting will also be held on July 25, 2011.

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# SECO News

June 2011

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## The BIG CON - Don't Fall For It!

*There are literally thousands of unscrupulous people out there who are intent upon separating you from your hard earned money. Every day it seems like we hear about a new scam or a new twist on an old scam.*

We've exposed numerous types of scams in this publication because we don't want some snake oil salesman taking advantage of our members. We get angry when that happens. As a consumer you need to be very cautious when someone calls you up offering you a free energy audit of your home. Often these nefarious individuals give the impression or flatly state that they are from the "electric company." That is simply not true.

If you fall for the con they will come to your house and wander around for a few minutes (that is the so-called audit part) and then try to sell you some alleged power saving product that in actuality does little more than empty your wallet or purse. They may tell you there are grants available for your purchase of their product or that pay for the audit. Be very wary.

If you'd like to have a free energy audit of your home you can simply call SECO and we'll get that scheduled for you. We do not endorse or have any affiliation with any outside company that offers "free audits." Check with us before you let any stranger into your home.

Perhaps you have already run across some of these scammers. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs has already logged well over 1,000 complaints about home energy audit fraud. You can report the deceptive marketing of these companies and any other suspected scams by calling the department at 1-800-HELP-FLA.

The problem has gotten so bad that now the State of Florida is suing to try and stop energy audit telemarketers. The state has filed a lawsuit against United Energy Solutions, Inc. and nine individuals for violation of the Florida Telephone Solicitation Statute.

*continued inside*

## SECO Welcomes Back Former Member of the Board of Trustees





After three years, JAMES D. HOLTZ returns to the Board of Trustees to represent SECO's District 4. Originally from Michigan, he took a position with the Detroit Edison Company (DTE) where he worked for that major utility for 38 years until 1988 when he retired and moved to Florida. He held a number of supervisory positions with DTE and was heavily involved in developing construction schedules for building and modifying substations, offices, warehouses, power plants and more. His insight into the utility business is advantageous. James Holtz resides in Marion Oaks.


# Protect Your Home from Damaging Electrical Surges





## SECO's 2-Step Surge Protection Package is available for Lease or Purchase!

 SECO's **meter base surge protector** reduces surges to a safe level before they enter your home.

 Computers, printers and fax machines require additional **point-of-use protectors** that prohibit surges from coming through phone and satellite connections.

 Sensitive electronics require an extra layer of protection to prohibit surges from coming through satellite, antenna and cable connections.


 Unprotected phone lines can allow damaging surges to enter your home and destroy your equipment.


 Small appliances, such as microwave ovens, have micro-processor parts and require a point-of-use protector to prevent damage.


*Available exclusively for SECO customers!*

*For more information call Diane (352) 793-3801 x1368*

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 SECO's meter base surge protector provides protection to major appliances like electric stoves, washers, dryers and other appliances.

 Garage door openers are especially sensitive to power surges and can be protected by simply plugging into one of SECO's point-of-use products.

 Protection of your air conditioning/heating system compressor motor is provided through SECO's meter base surge installation.

## Scam *concluded*

Some scammers claim to represent the United States Government and offer you a government grant or grant information for a fee. Beware of any caller who says they are from the Department of Energy. This federal agency does not endorse any provider of goods or services. 7011333409

To report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse, including scams involving home energy efficiency services, contact the DOE's inspector general hotline at 1-800-541-1625 or e-mail them at [ighotline@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ighotline@hq.doe.gov).

Seriously folks, if you think you'd like an energy audit just call us here at SECO. You'll get a very thorough audit that will actually save you money on your electric bill. Times are tough all over and there are plenty of charlatans out there ready to take advantage of you if you are not cautious.

*We don't want to see any of our valued members fleeced.* ☹

## WAYS to SECO offers a variety of payment options

**Bank Draft** - worry free, automatic, monthly, transfer from the bank account of your choice.

**ebillxpress** - this payment plan allows you to manage your account online. **System upgrade occurred at the end of May.**

**US Mail** - mail a check using the complementary envelope that comes with your statement.

**Drop Off** - hand deliver payment to any SECO personnel at your local Customer Service Center.

## SECO Wizard says "The key to being safe is to stay informed"

### *Never underestimate the weather!*

Hurricanes and storms are unpredictable, so staying informed is important. Watch and listen to the weather forecast from your local radio and television stations to help you know what to expect and how to prepare.

If the authorities ask you to evacuate your home due to a possible storm emergency, don't panic, just be prepared to move to a place where you can better weather the storm. Your county officials will open hurricane shelters for people who have no other place to go.

If you are an individual that requires electricity and water for life-sustaining equipment, make sure that you are well prepared. High winds, hurricanes and flooding can be problematic and it is not uncommon for the power to go out during these severe storms. No utility can guarantee that the power will not go out.

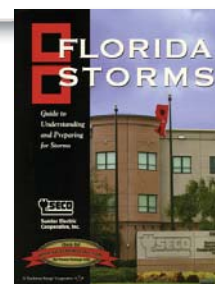
If the power does go out, SECO has a comprehensive restoration plan in place. Our main goal is to safely restore power to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. And, it is one of many concerns for SECO to alert members on how to prepare and what to expect after the storm passes. 1725985013

In fact, the Wizard's *SECO eNews* is just one of several venues that your co-op uses to report timely, brief and accurate news reports on storm alerts among other topics. The Wiz-

ard's news flashes will help prepare you for what may come and they will inform you of what has passed. If you haven't yet signed up for the *SECO eNews*, check it out at [www.secoenergy.com](http://www.secoenergy.com).

Our website also has a link to [www.secostormcenter.com](http://www.secostormcenter.com) which is a specialized site proven useful during storm related events. Here, the status of the electric system can be tracked by account and outages can be reported online as well. To report outages by phone, call 1-800-SECO-141.

Your understanding and preparing for Florida Storms and our restoration progress is important to us. Be sure to pick-up your free *SECO Storm Guide* at a Customer Service Center near you. ☹



tips & quips  
about our  
environment  
and its  
inhabitants

## NATURE'S reflections

### FLORIDA PANTHER

*Official state mammal trying to make a comeback*

The Florida panther (*Felis concolor corti*) is a subspecies of the western cougar. First listed as an endangered species in 1973, Florida panthers are now protected by both state and federal laws. These large, tawny-colored, long-tailed, elusive cats average 80 to 130 pounds and live about 12 years in the wild.

Habitat loss, collisions with vehicles, and hunting over the past two centuries are the principle reasons for population decline. In the early 1990s genetic defects from inbreeding and mercury poisoning also threatened their survival.

In 1995, the State imported eight female Texas cougars to breed with the panthers and strengthen their genetic diversity. The kittens produced from the cross-breeding are considered Florida panthers and protected the same as the purebred ones.

Experts say about 120 panthers roam remote swamplands of Florida like the Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve. Others go mostly undetected roaming remote areas in central and north Florida, making it difficult to get an exact count. Twelve have been killed by vehicles this year.

They are nocturnal and rarely seen. Panthers are solitary animals and skilled hunters who live and hunt in large home ranges averaging up to 200 square miles. They maintain boundaries by scent markings and rarely fight over territory.

Once a home range is established, female panthers will begin breeding at about 2½ years of age. After a three month gestation period, a litter of one to three kittens are born between March and June in a simple, secluded den. Spots on their tawny coats help them hide in dense vegetation. Weaned at two months, the kittens follow their mother for up to two years to learn hunting and survival skills. When fully trained, the mother leaves her kittens at a kill and doesn't return leaving them to make their own way.

While deer and feral hogs are their preferred food, panthers also eat raccoons, armadillos, alligators, fowl and rodents. Interestingly, panthers eating a diet of small animals are not as healthy as those that hunt larger game.

Work to help save this symbol of Florida's wilderness continues. Plans focus on securing and enhancing available habitat and breeding them in captivity then reintroducing them into the wild. Let's hope these endeavors are successful. ☹

*Column & photo by Sandi Staton - sandi.staton@secoenergy.com*

