

# SECO News

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*CEO & General Manager*



SECO's Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, May 23 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 June 27, 2011.

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## Annual Meeting Keynote Address

*SECO CEO Jim Duncan's speech during Annual Meeting 2011 at the end of March met with much applause. He spoke about three primary subjects: customer service, the abuses of the EPA, and the nation's lack of a real energy policy. The following are his remarks on the need for a real energy policy. If you'd like to read his entire speech to the members go to [www.secoenergy.com](http://www.secoenergy.com).*

Let me just express my concerns about our national energy policy. WE DON'T HAVE ONE! LET ME REPEAT — WE DON'T HAVE ONE! The fact of the matter is that we haven't had a serious national energy policy in this nation for forty years and certainly don't have one now.

I know a few of you in the audience are old enough to remember the Arab Oil Embargo in the 70's during the Presidencies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. During those trying times of long gas lines, rationing of quantities, etc., both Presidents expressed resolve that we as a nation would become independent of foreign oil. Well, that didn't happen then, nor has it happened during the Presidencies of Reagan, Bush 41, Clinton, Bush 43, or Obama. What should have been a wakeup call for each of these Presidents regarding the need for a comprehensive national energy policy has routinely been ignored for various political reasons. Nothing much has changed as of today.

The lack of energy policy allows us to be threatened with shortages of oil or extremely high prices by countries that aren't very stable and really don't like us very much. Unfortunately, for political and special interest reasons we too often throw out the phrase "independence from foreign oil" to justify actions that really have no impact on our usage of oil. For example, our leaders attack the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity in the name of

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*Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kern of Bushnell won the grand prize of a 4x4 pickup truck at SECO's annual meeting on Saturday, March 26. Shown with their prize*

*are (left to right) Ray Vick, president of the SECO Board of Trustees; Mr. and Mrs. Kern; and SECO CEO Jim Duncan.*

# Energy Policy Concluded

reducing our dependence on foreign oil. Frankly, that's absurd and rather disingenuous. In other words, they are lying!

The quantity of oil used in the generation of electricity across the nation is miniscule – .9% of U.S. generation. Unfortunately, however, because of the lack of any formal, comprehensive energy policy from any of our leaders for the past forty years we have to continually deal with Middle East dictators, worry about the oil supply, and pay billions of dollars to other nations who either hate us or would like to kill us or both.

The reality is that we have enormous reserves of both coal and natural gas in this country that are virtually untapped and free of the restrictions of foreign nations. So what is our current political climate for energy independence here at home?

## Let's look at a few examples:

- ⊙ Our Secretary of Energy, Dr. Stephen Chu, has lamented that we need to get our price of gasoline up to the level of European countries – \$7 or \$8 a gallon – to encourage Americans to buy small, fuel efficient vehicles and to conserve.
- ⊙ Our Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Alberto Salazar, has consistently put up huge roadblocks to the domestic exploration of and drilling for our own oil. 4011254401
- ⊙ The EPA Secretary, Ms. Lisa Jackson, has initiated an all-out assault on coal burning power plants without offering any reasonable alternatives in the interest of reducing greenhouse gases, while we are also exporting huge quantities of coal to China to burn in their power plants. Coal accounts for 45% and natural gas 24% of our U.S. electrical generation.
- ⊙ Our own President while on his recent trip to Brazil praised the

Brazilian efforts to drill for oil off of their shores and stressed that we will be a very eager customer for the oil. And, that we will assist with \$3 billion of financial support of their drilling efforts. What is wrong with this picture?

We have vast resources of coal, natural gas, and oil that for political rea-



*CEO Jim Duncan expresses concern about this nation's energy policy.*

sons we are unable to use. We export our U.S. coal and buy foreign oil. With regard to nuclear power, obviously the events in Japan have been tragic but we can't totally abandon the use of nuclear power here in the U.S. as a result. It is 20% of our electrical generation. Instead, we must insure our plant safety and make sure that new plants have the best and safest designs possible, and deal properly with spent fuel disposal. Frankly, if this country can place men and women on the moon and can launch and return space shuttles safely, we can surely find a design for nuclear plants that can withstand the challenges of nature and of terrorists.

We must also continue to develop alternate energy and renewable fuels because they can contribute to energy independence. However we cannot delude ourselves into thinking that wind and solar power can meet much of our nation's total energy needs. That day is many many years away and, in reality, may never arrive due to the intermittent output of those facilities and the limitations on storage of electricity. Nevertheless, research and development need to continue.

The bottom line is that we can and must significantly reduce our dependence on foreign oil. It can be done, but we have to be honest about how we do it. In other words, someone needs to show some leadership to stepping up and developing a national energy policy that incorporates everything in the toolbox: coal, natural gas, nuclear, solar, wind, bio-fuels and battery technology. As I said last year, "LEAD, FOLLOW OR GET OUT OF THE WAY."

Hopefully that will happen but in the meantime, we will continue advocating for sensible policies and keeping you informed of the results. And as I told you last time, it is also your responsibility to demand answers from our elected officials. After all, they are supposed to work for us.

Well let me stop and say that I know that some of you will interpret my comments as having been unduly partisan but let me stress that my criticisms were leveled at four Republican presidents and three Democratic presidents – so I have tried to be as nonpartisan as possible. And that is because I think both parties have historically been blinded by power and have collectively spent money that we don't have in almost unfathomable amounts that cannot be sustained. The impact will be either a seriously weakened dollar, hyperinflation or both. Any or all of those will have significant impacts on the cost of everything including electrical bills. Likewise, action to restrict the types of fuels that can be used to generate our electricity based upon disputed science or political motives will significantly impact the availability, reliability and cost of electricity.

Climate change discussion can become very emotional, but it has such serious potential impacts on everything we do as a nation, that we must be sure before we act. 🙏



## the EPA

Currently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is trying to implement a rule for numeric nutrient criteria (NNC). Last year, the agency proposed water quality standards in Florida that would set a series of numeric limits on the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen allowed in Florida's lakes, rivers, streams, springs and canals. The proposed standards comply with the terms of the August 2009 consent decree between the EPA and the Florida Wildlife Federation.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) estimate the annual impact to Florida's economy will be in the billions of dollars – for the next 30 years.

This costly, unnecessary, unproductive EPA action would also result in higher electric costs.

In 2010, the EPA adopted a rule for numeric nutrient criteria. Florida filed a lawsuit against the EPA for intrusion into the state's approved water programs and to prevent it from implementing a rule that would provide little environmental benefit at a great cost. When asked, the EPA refused to commission an independent, scientific peer review and economic analysis of the proposed rule.

The rule has also garnered the attention of state and federal legislators. Governor Scott, Attorney-General Bondi, Agriculture Commissioner Putnam, Senators Nelson and Rubio, and 20 U.S. Representatives have signed letters to the EPA stating their concerns over the economic impact and lack of scientific support for this rule. U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (R-Tequesta) sponsored an amendment to a stop-gap budget bill which would prevent the EPA from using budget funds to implement a rule for numeric nutrient criteria.

You can help by contacting these officials and encouraging them to continue the fight against this EPA action. The EPA must not have unrestricted or unchallenged power.

Bills have also been filed in the Florida Legislature which would stop implementation of the rule by the FDEP. Along with all these actions, 67 national and state organizations in other states sent letters to members of Congress expressing their concerns regarding the rule and its impact fearing that one day, the EPA may impose this same costly rule in their states.

Studies by the FDEP and the FDACS and two independent groups show the EPA's mandates will cost each Florida homeowner about \$700 a year. The FDACS estimates that Florida's agricultural community will lose 14,545 full-time and part-time jobs.

The EPA's timing couldn't be worse. Florida's statewide unemployment remains near 12 percent and its businesses and families are struggling to stay afloat during difficult economic times. ●



## NATURE'S reflections

tips & quips about our environment and its inhabitants

### THE LAND OF FLOWERS

*True beauty of Florida showcased by its native plants*

The textbook definition of a true Florida native plant is any species whose natural range included Florida at the time Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León explored the area in 1513, calling it the "Land of Flowers." There are 2,800 species of plants in this group separated into six classifications: trees, shrubs, wildflowers, vines like the American wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*) above, plus ferns and grasses. Of these, 170 species occur naturally only in Florida such as Florida watercress (*Rorippa floridana*). On the endangered list are 418 species and 104 of those are found nowhere else in the world except Florida. 7432394713

Today, our native plant list has been expanded to include 1,300 recognized naturalized species, like the Phlox, (*Phlox drummondii*), an apparent transplant from Texas named for frontier naturalist Thomas Drummond, (1780-1835). The Phlox is now an established part of Florida's spring bloom, bringing our combined native plant total to 4,100 plants.

Native plants are those that have adapted to our climate, soils and wildlife. There is always some species of native plants in bloom year round. In fact, any butterfly species will pick natives over exotics every time.

Our warm, moist and very humid air makes it possible for Florida to live up to the "Land of Flowers" name.

Weed or wildflower? It all depends on your perspective. Wildflowers can be a beautiful addition to the garden, but they quickly become weeds if they are growing in the wrong place. It makes good sense to incorporate native plants into the landscape whenever possible. Once established in the right places, native plants are more drought tolerant, insect and disease resistant, and require no fertilizers or pesticides, which means less contamination to the aquifer.

With many areas restricting water usage for maintaining landscapes, the use of native plants is a smart solution. Florida is losing greenspace at an alarming rate due to development crowding out the habitats and natural spaces that wildlife and native plant species need for survival. Everything we do to preserve those habitats will help maintain and protect the natural beauty of Florida and its living creatures for us and future generations to enjoy. ♪

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





# Here's a chance to express yourself

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

## Here's what SECO Fans on Facebook are posting:

I would like to say thank you for such great service this morning. My power was out for less than 30 minutes. Within 15 minutes, a service truck came by to look for the problem and power was restored. Thanks again for quick and efficient service.

*Deborah Michelle Page Myles*  
April 5 at 9:45 a.m.

We're thinking about our guys at Sumter Electric Cooperative and Florida Power who are working around the clock. A big THANK YOU from the Sumter Chamber!

*Sumter Chamber of Commerce*  
March 31 at 10:25 a.m.

Thanks for restoring our power so quickly yesterday, met your crew on the street and they were doing a quick and efficient job as usual.

*Pete Shipe*  
March 31 at 7:03 p.m.

Thanks Pete. Good to hear you were pleased. This was almost like a hurricane except for the fact it had more tornados. A major challenge for us, but we're still working hard even at this hour.

*SECO Energy*  
March 31 at 9:56 p.m.

I don't envy the SECO crews working in these storms to get our power back. Thanks for what you do guys and be safe out there.

*Escarlata Cisneros*  
March 31 at 1:10pm

Thanks Escarlata. Most folks don't realize how hard the work is nor how potentially dangerous. Still, we don't stop until everyone is back on.

*SECO Energy*  
March 31 at 6:32 p.m.

Wow! Thanks for the amazing customer service yesterday. Our power was out in Sorrento from that terrible storm but you had it back within two hours. Tens of thousands still don't have power now. That's amazingly quick and efficient – thank you soooo much :-)

*Sarah Little*  
March 31 at 6:21 a.m.

Just wanted to mention that when I recently purchased my home I made sure it was on your grid! I love what you guys do as a company and environmental considerations.

Just an idea, there should be no additional charge for credit card payments online. It's 2011 and I can personally take a person's payment with a credit card without charging them!

Anyway, keep up the good work and the prices down!

*Daniel Armas*  
March 16 at 12:11 p.m.

## In the mailbox:

We want to thank all the people who worked so hard and in dire circumstances to restore power to our little community here in the little town of Hernando! You did a great job!

*Katie Kirkland & Judy Colston*  
Hernando, Florida

Mr. Bowman, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you and any SECO employees involved in returning our credit cards lost during the SECO Annual Meeting. From the person who first found them and turned them in, up to, and including you, we are deeply appreciative. We did hear the announcements about lost credit cards several times but never did hear my husband's name. . .

This was the first time we have had the chance to attend the SECO Annual Meeting and other than the lost cards, we had a great time. We are snowbirds from the north and must say our utilities there are far more expensive so we have been very pleased with the service and care we have received from SECO. Most Sincerely,  
*Eileen Tennant*  
Utica, New York



Find us on Facebook

*Simply Search: Sumter Electric Cooperative*

## 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.