

the Co-op Connection

DECEMBER 2023

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM YOUR POWER PARTNER



2023 Recap: Counting Our Blessings

As we wrap up this year, we remain thankful that at the time of this article being written our team still has not had a lost time incident or injury this year. In fact, we recently reached more than 1,750 days without a lost time incident or injury – quite a successful story to tell and really speaks to the safety culture we strive to achieve at Central Florida Electric Cooperative. Great thanks go to our line-side operations leadership, safety team and staff in getting us to this level of performance.

First 30+ Hour Outage In Quite A While

This year, we also experienced Hurricane Idalia with the winds and flooding coming with the Category 3 storm. On CFEC's system, more than 25,000 members experienced a power outage and some members remained without power until Sunday evening. It had been a long time since that many members had experienced a power outage longer than 30 hours, even in the worst of summer or winter frontal systems, and we also knew that many members may not understand just how difficult a restoration like the one we experienced was going to be. In addition, dealing with the extensive damage received by Suwannee and Horseshoe made the restoration more complicated.

For the most part, our members, as usual,

were team players and very patient during the restoration efforts. This positive attitude and cooperation went a long way toward making our jobs easier during this stressful time.



Denny George
GENERAL MANAGER

Tremendous Fiber Progress

As you take time at the close of this year to spend time with family and celebrate the Christmas season, we give thanks for the opportunity to serve you. As we move into this next year, we are looking to improve and enhance our service to you – how to make it easier and quicker. This is all the while also continuing to stand up the Fiber by Central Florida business, which has now passed the 2,000-customer mark.

As we move to close out this year and begin 2024, we look forward to continuing to supply you with the lowest cost, highest reliability electricity as possible. Blessings.



Central Florida Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

~ YOUR POWER PARTNER ~

Our mission is to be the finest example of an electric cooperative where excellent service, competitive rates and concern for the consumer, community and environment guide our every action.

Cover photo: Future CFEC Members pose with a CFEC Christmas Truck by Madison Redd, CFEC Communications Specialist

HURRICANE IDALIA

by the numbers:

The hurricane center came ashore near Keaton Beach, Florida, at 7:45 a.m. Aug. 30, with maximum sustained winds of 125 mph, making it a strong Category 3.

ON CFEC'S POWER SYSTEMS, THERE WERE 25,000 OUTAGES OUT OF 37,000 ACCOUNTS.

ALL
2,200

SQUARE MILES OF SERVICE

AREA RECEIVED STORM EFFECTS.

17 outside crews responded for cooperative mutual aid with more than 550 people working to restore power.

LEVY COUNTY

WAS 95% RESTORED BY SEPT. 2 AT 11 A.M. FOUR DAYS AFTER THE HURRICANE MADE LANDFALL.

GILCHRIST COUNTY

WAS 95% RESTORED BY SEPT. 2 AT 9 P.M.

DIXIE COUNTY

WAS 95% RESTORED BY SUNDAY EVENING SEPT. 3

Energy Savings In The Winter Season!



Take Advantage of Heat from the Sun

- Open curtains on the south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat the home and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- Plant deciduous trees on the south facing side of the home, especially in proximity to windows, to let light and warmth in the windows during the winter and shade the windows in the summer.



Cover Drafty Windows

- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.

Adjust the Temperature

- When you are home and awake, set the thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn the thermostat back to save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A smart or programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature. But make sure the temperature is comfortable for pets!
- If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.



Find and Seal Leaks

- Seal air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes, gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.



Maintain Your Heating Systems

- Schedule routine service for home heating systems and replace filters as needed.

Reduce Heat Loss from the Fireplace

- Keep the fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- Install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.

Lower Water Heating Costs

- Keep the temperature of the water heater to the warm setting (120°F). This will not only save energy, it will also help avoid scalding.

Save On Holiday Lighting Costs

- Use light-emitting diode, or LED, holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating the home for the winter holidays.

Local Holiday Events

Saturday, December 2nd

TOWN OF BELL CHRISTMAS PARADE AND TOWN LIGHTING
10 am to 8 pm; parade starts at 1:30 pm; Invocation and tree lighting
5:30 pm; Santa and Mrs. Claus; vendors and food trucks.

WILLISTON CHRISTMAS "WINTER WONDERLAND"
Parade at 6 pm, followed by the Williston Winter Wonderland and Light Up
Williston in Heritage Park.

SUWANNEE RIVER BOAT PARADE OF LIGHTS & FIREWORKS DISPLAY
ON THE SUWANNEE RIVER
6:30 pm. The best public viewing areas are at Fort Fanning Park, Anderson boat ramp just across
the bridge or the Suwannee Belle restaurant.

Friday, December 8th

GILCHRIST OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS
Free event featuring Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, gift drawing for kids, entertainment and choirs, food
vendors, 6pm to 8:30 pm, Trenton Train Depot.

Saturday, December 9th

CHIEFLAND RUDOLPH 5K FUN RUN/WALK
8 am, Trailhead Park, 121 S Main Street, Across from the Train Depot, Chiefland, FL Registration: \$20
(children under 8 Free), \$25 day of the race.

CHIEFLAND CHRISTMAS PARADE & FESTIVAL
10 am – 5 pm, Trailhead Park; parade begins at 6 pm.

GILCHRIST OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS
Trenton Community Park, 9 am to 2 pm, craft and food vendors.

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON
A musical presentation celebrating the Birth of Jesus, the combined voices of local church members
around our communities; Bronson First Baptist Church, 460 South Court Street, Bronson, Fla., 6:30
pm, with a repeat performance on Dec. 10, at 6:30 pm.

CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM MARKET AT ETHERIDGE CATTLE COMPANY
10 am - 2 pm. Local vendors, live music, food trucks and more.

Extended Events

CHRISTMAS IN THE QUARRY
Cedar Lakes Woods and Gardens, 4990 NE 180th Ave, Williston, Fla. December 9, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23;
5:30 to 8:30 pm; admission: adults: \$10, children age 6-13): \$5, children 5 and under: Free!

12TH ANNUAL KIRBY FAMILY FARM CHRISTMAS TRAIN
Plus activities including live Christmas shows, amusement rides, and great food too. Visit
www.kirbyfarm.com for dates and ticket information.

MAYHEM RANCH
17830 SE 40th Street, Morriston, Fla., Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 25 to Dec. 23, 11 am to 6 pm,
last admission at 5 pm. Tickets are limited for this event & should be purchased online. Pre-sale:
\$15 per person, 2 years and under Free! \$20 at the gate, if available.



Preparing for Fiber: the CFEC Way

Last month, we introduced some of the team responsible for executing CFEC’s Fiber-to-the-Home project thus far. The CFEC team had long been laying the groundwork – without knowing that we would later enter the fiber arena – to improve and strengthen our system for a task of this magnitude. To get a better idea of more of the proactive efforts made to enhance the CFEC system over the years, hear from our Vice President of Operations and Vice President of Engineering.



Jim Beauchamp, Vice President of Operations, CFEC

“When we started looking to get into the fiber business, we heard from others that the Make Ready Engineering (MRE) and Make Ready Construction (MRC) that would need to be completed prior to fiber being pulled would be a heavy lift. The timeline of the project is heavily dependent on this Make-Ready work, as it must remain sufficiently ahead of the fiber-installation team to avoid causing any delays. We are happy to say that, for us, this has not been the case. Through a combination of our skilled CFEC line-side operations team and the contractors assisting us, we have been able to keep up with new construction, standard maintenance, and make-ready work with relative ease. By staying consistently ahead of the fiber pulling process, we have been able to complete construction at a faster pace than originally planned.

We gained valuable insight concerning the MRE/MRC process early on from other cooperatives in Florida and Georgia, who had already undertaken their own fiber projects. These cooperatives graciously shared their experiences and extended invitations for us to visit in-person to learn more about the process before we began our own project. To expedite the fiber implementation, we also made use of pre-planned electric system improvement projects, making areas ready for fiber deployment simultaneously. With excellent oversight and communication from our Distribution Coordinator, Colby Bennett, who keeps the MRE/MRC process on track each day, we have been able to successfully leverage our existing workflow processes and systems so that we didn’t have to reinvent the wheel for the fiber project.”



Daniel Powell, Vice President of Engineering, CFEC

“One factor that has contributed to the overall health and readiness of our system for fiber deployment has been CFEC’s Pole Change-Out Program. While we have always replaced aging poles as a part of our maintenance program, in 2020 we really ramped up our efforts. While some cooperatives have been forced to change out over 10% of their poles to prepare for fiber deployment - and some even more - we have managed to keep ours under 5%, even as construction continues to expand. This is a reflection of the steady work we have put in over the years to get our system in prime condition.

While the CFEC team has been invaluable, our ability to successfully collaborate with necessary contracted groups and regulatory and government organizations has also been incredibly important. Our strong collaboration with McLean Engineering, whose expertise lies in inspecting and managing thousands of pole and span measurements on a weekly basis, has been critical. We are also fortunate to have received cooperation from FDOT, counties, and cities during the permit processing stage which has expedited the MRE/MRC process.

With all that said, we will continue to work hard everyday to stay ahead of the fiber pullers, get the work done as safely and quickly as possible, and provide you with this incredibly important service.”

Still Need to Pre-register?

Look for our fiber booth at these upcoming local holiday events! Stop by to get your address on the list and your questions answered directly from our fiber experts.



Follow Fiber by Central Florida on Facebook to see where else our fiber booth may pop up in your area!



FRIDAY 6 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

Old Fashioned Christmas

TRENTON TRAIN DEPOT
CORNER OF NW 4TH AVE AND N MAIN ST,
TRENTON, FL, 32693

Dec
8
2023



SATURDAY 10 A.M. – 5 P.M.

Chiefland Winter Christmas Festival

TRAILHEAD PARK
WEST SIDE OF US 19 AT SE 2ND AVE,
CHIEFLAND, FL, 32626

Dec
9
2023



FRIDAY 5 P.M. – 9 P.M.

Christmas in Dixie

DIXIE COUNTY MIDDLE
HIGH SCHOOL
17924 SE 19 HWY
CROSS CITY, FL 32628

Dec
15
2023

Hear from the people who have now experienced the benefits of Fiber firsthand:

★★★★★
REVIEW US!

"Ours was installed yesterday and the difference is amazing! So happy to finally ditch Viasat."

"We got ours.. you won't be disappointed, thanks to super workers that really know what they're doing."

"If you can get CFEC internet, do so. It's terrific. No buffering and a strong signal."

"I love my FIBER INTERNET from CFEC! It's fast, reliable, and affordable!"



"I love my Fiber by Central Florida. I work from home and the speeds are instant. It used to take me a few minutes to connect to the company server, now it's instant. Everything is so clear. Thank you for providing your customers and Dukes a great service that we can count on for a low price. No other options can be compared to it."

"Got mine today and HOLY LIGHTNING BATMAN!! Can't wait to call Viasat tomorrow and cancel the service"

"It is fantastic! So happily connected 🥰"

"See if Fiber by Central Florida is available where you live. I highly recommend. I'm paying 49.99 and it runs our 2 TVs and 2 smart phones and with no issues. I've had up to 6 phones and 2 TV's running before and no issues. Oh and there's no limits!"



CUSTOMER BILLING

MyFiber Portal




It is important that you register for the **MyFiber Customer Portal** as soon as our installers have your home or business connected to our powerful fiber network. Once registered, you can begin managing your fiber internet service.

New fiber customers can access the Portal by visiting <https://myfiber-fl.camvio.cloud/login> and then clicking "Register Now" to complete the registration process.

The **MyFiber Portal** will allow you to:

- *view and pay your bill*
- *upgrade your service plan*
- *manage add-on services*
- *update contact and payment information*

Enroll in Autopay

Once you are logged into the portal, you can set up Autopay on your account by clicking the  icon next to "\$ Auto-Pay is disabled." Toggle the "Enable AutoPay" button and proceed through the prompts to set up automatic payments using a Debit/Credit Card or a Checking/Savings Account.

More questions? Call our Fiber Customer Service Team at 1-844-533-4237

Tomato and Pimento Grilled Cheese



INGREDIENTS

Pimento Cheese Dip

- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 8 ounces low-fat cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 4 ounces pimento, drained and diced small
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped fine
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Hot sauce, to taste

- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

Tomato and Pimento Grilled Cheese

- 1 large tomato, sliced to preferred thickness and seasoned with salt and pepper
- 1 cup pimento cheese dip (see recipe)
- 4 slices of bread (your favorite)
- Unsalted butter for cooking, softened
- 1 or 2 pinches seasoning blend (your favorite)

PREPARATION

Pimento Cheese Dip

Add all ingredients to a medium-sized mixing bowl and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and hot sauce. Keep pimento dip chilled until ready to serve.

Florida Tomato and Pimento Grilled Cheese

Preheat a large saute pan or grill pan over medium heat. On a separate surface lay out the bread slices and spread an even amount of the pimento dip on them. Add the seasoned tomato slices to 2 of the topped bread slices, close the sandwich with the other 2 slices of bread. Spread a thin layer of butter on the top sides of each sandwich and add a small amount of seasoning on top of the butter. Place the sandwiches butter side down in the preheated pan. Spread another thin layer of butter on the side facing up and add a small amount of seasoning on top of the butter. Cook sandwiches for 2 to 3 minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove sandwiches from pan and serve warm.

Homemade Tomato Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, roughly chopped
- 1/2 small onion, roughly chopped
- 2 to 4 cups vegetable broth (depending on desired consistency)
- 6 to 8 basil leaves, hand torn
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Several dashes hot sauce (optional)
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Preheat a large pot over medium-high heat and add olive oil. Add carrots, onions, garlic, oregano and crushed red pepper and saute for 5 minutes or until slightly soft. Next add the tomatoes, broth, sugar, salt and pepper. Stir to combine, bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes or until the carrots have softened. Add lemon juice, fresh basil, heavy cream and hot sauce (if using). Stir to combine. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Add lemon juice. Using a stand blender* or immersion blender, puree the soup until desired consistency is reached. Garnish with fresh basil and serve warm. *If using a stand blender, puree soup in small batches. Steam from hot soup can cause severe burns.



7 Ways To Pay Your Bill:



In Office / Drive-Through

Make your payments at any CFEC location during working hours or place your payment in a drop-box after hours.



Mail

Mail your payment to: Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 9, Chiefland, FL 32644. Allow for adequate delivery time or the payment may be late.



Phone

Pay by phone at 1-800-227-1302, or 1-352-619-9988, through a third-party provider. A \$2.50 service fee will be charged by the provider per \$500 transaction and is NOT a charge by CFEC. Payments made by phone are posted to the member's account at the time of payment.



Online

Go to www.cfec.com to pay online. Choose the e-check option to pay with NO FEE. To pay with credit or debit card, a \$2.50 convenience fee will be applied by the third-party payment provider. Members who opt for paperless billing will also receive a 0.50 cent credit on their bill each month.



Power Partner App

Use CFEC's Power Partner App to make a payment. Choose e-check to pay with NO FEE. A convenience fee of \$2.50 will be charged to pay by credit card or debit card.



Bank Draft

Set up automatic recurring bank draft payments and receive a \$1 CREDIT on your bill each month. Members can use their bank routing and account information to complete a Bank Draft Application to ensure timely payment each month. Applications can be found online at www.cfec.com under the Documents tab, then under Member Benefits & Safety Documents, or at any of our office locations.



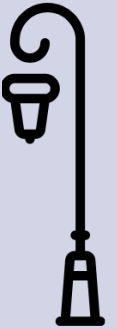
Bank Locations

Payments can be made at Seacoast Banks located in the CFEC service area or at Lafayette State Bank in Bell, Fla., during their normal working hours. Returned checks or payment arrangements cannot be processed by these banks.

Lights out? *We Need To Know.*

Outdoor lighting fixtures help light up dark areas near your home or business. Outdoor lights operate automatically by coming on at dusk and going out at daylight.

At times, the outdoor light can malfunction or become inoperative. If this happens, please contact the cooperative so that we can repair the light in a timely manner.

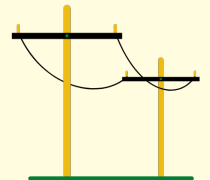


WHEN REPORTING THE PROBLEM, CFEC NEEDS TO KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

1. A specific street address of where the outdoor light is located.
2. A description of where on the property the outdoor light is located.
3. A description of the type problem with the outdoor light.
4. Information, including your name, address, telephone number and account number.

To Report A Power Outage:

- Call: 1-800-227-1302 or 352-493-2511, follow the prompts of the Automated Outage Response system.
- Use the Power Partner App: On the Home page, click "Outage," then select "Report an Outage." Fill out the form as to Outage information and press "Report Outage."
- Online: Click on the "Report Outage" button located at the top of the website. Fill in the "Identify Outage Location," form and click "Submit."



Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc.

~ YOUR POWER PARTNER ~

Meeting Notice: The Board of Trustees for Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc., meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 5 p.m. at the Cooperative's main office in Chiefland. Members are always welcome to attend.



**CENTRAL FLORIDA ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC**



**Central Florida Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

~ YOUR POWER PARTNER ~

MAIN OFFICE

11491 NW 50th Ave.
Chiefland, FL 32626-3247
352-493-2511
or 800-227-1302
www.cfec.com

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ORLANDO, FL
PERMIT NO. 3937

Physical Address/Payment Locations

MAIL ADDRESS

P.O. Box 9
Chiefland, FL 32644-0009

CROSS CITY OFFICE

207 NE 210 Ave.
Cross City, FL 32628
352-498-7322

INGLIS OFFICE

167 Highway 40 West
Inglis, FL 34449
352-447-3553

ADDITIONAL PAYMENT LOCATIONS

Seacoast Banks
Lafayette State Bank (Bell only)
*For a complete listing of payment locations,
go to www.cfec.com.*
*This institution is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.*

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Last call for
2024 Electric
Cooperative

Youth Tour Applications!

**Applications due
December 8th, 2023!**

*Applications can be found online at
www.cfec.com under the Documents
tab or in person at any CFEC office
location or with many local High
School Guidance Counselors.*



**Central Florida Electric
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