

the Co-op Connection

March 2024

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM YOUR POWER PARTNER



The Benefits and Challenges of Residential Solar Panel Installation for Your Home

Living in the sunshine state, it's no surprise Florida residents are contacted frequently about purchasing residential solar panels for their homes. Residential solar has certainly grown in popularity, and CFEC wants to ensure that our Members are aware of the pros and cons of having solar panels installed on your home.

Members with residential solar panels often see a decrease on their electric bill, the significance of that decrease relies solely on the weather. Solar companies often claim that a consumer will not have a monthly electric bill after solar panels are installed on their home, but this is simply not the case.

Recently, CFEC was made aware of a Member who purchased a residential solar system and want to share their story and what they learned throughout the process. The member decided to install residential solar panels on their home to reduce their electric consumption and save money on their monthly electric bill. "We were told by the solar sales representative that our bill would be no more than \$60 a month," said the member. While they have certainly seen reductions in their monthly bill, they continue to have electric bills as high as \$149.23 during the hot summer months.

In addition to their monthly electric bill, this member ended up financing their solar panels and back-up battery, leaving them with a monthly payment of \$279 for the next 20 years. Back-up batteries store the energy produced by the solar system, and in turn use that energy to power the home during electric outages or cloudy weather. During Hurricane Idalia, the member said their solar battery powered

their home for a total of 12 hours. Cloud coverage after the hurricane caused the energy production from the solar panels to decline, and their home was again without power until CFEC was able to restore their electric service.

The member contacted the solar company and later learned they purchased a battery that only supports half of their house during an outage rather than the entire house. Solar systems can't operate during rainstorms or cloudy overcast days. Meaning, when your power is out due to a storm, your solar system won't be able to produce new energy to power your home.



"By sharing our story, we hope that others conduct more research on these solar companies and get in touch with CFEC before they sign an agreement," said the member. Members that are considering residential solar can find more information on the "Solar Power" page of the CFEC website and learn how solar energy works as a CFEC Member. CFEC is happy to help guide members in making an educated decision regarding the installation of residential solar panels on their home. Call our office at 352-493-2511, and ask to speak with a Member Service Technician.

Solar Benefits

- Reduced electric energy consumption
- Carbon free energy production
- Helps to sustain electric grid health
- Renewable energy source

Solar Drawbacks

- Weather dependent
- High initial capital costs
- Greater amount of maintenance for panels
- Creates an additional monthly payment
- Generally requires a long term loan
- Can cause issues related to future roofing modifications

Bill Comparison & Cost Analysis

July 2022 Bill- Without Solar

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8 Month Cost Analysis

- The member had their solar system installed and running in May of 2023. By doing a cost analysis of their electric bills of May 2022- December 2022 compared to their May 2023- December 2023 electric bills, we were able to show approximately how much they saved after the panels were installed.
- May 2022- December 2022 Total cost of electric usage **WITHOUT** solar was \$2,630.73
- May 2023- December 2023 Total cost of electric usage **WITH** solar was \$1,092.79.
- Monthly loan payment for residential solar panels and back up battery- (\$279/ month) \$2,232.00 for the 8 months.
- In total, the member paid \$3,324.79 for the solar system and electric bill from May 2023- December 2023 costing them \$694.06 more than the previous 8 months without solar.

July 2023 Bill- With Solar

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July Bill Comparison

- This comparison of the member's July electric bills show their 2023 electric bill was \$203.46 less than their bill in 2022. Their solar system reduced their bill significantly that month and took advantage of the hot, sunny days in July, but even still did not reduce their monthly bill to the \$60/month like the solar company promised.
- Cloud coverage and summer rainstorms reduce the reliability of the solar system and force the home to rely more on CFEC's electric grid, which led to a somewhat higher electric bill even with the solar panels.
- The (11.23) credit shown on the member's July 2023 bill, is excess energy produced from the solar panels on days where the sun was shining and the member was not able to use all of the energy generated from the system. This energy was sold back to CFEC at 0.041 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh).

From Small Town to State Capital

Six students from the CFEC service area were selected to embark on the 2024 Tallahassee Youth Tour! The Cooperative Youth Tour provides students with the opportunity to learn more about their government and their local electric cooperative.

The students traveled to Tallahassee in February to visit the Florida State Capitol and participate in mock legislative sessions in the House and Senate Chambers. They also toured the Florida State University campus and were able to learn more about preparing for college and the application process.

Three students will be chosen from this group to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington D.C. in June.



Meet the 2024 Youth Tour Participants!



Elizabeth Gijon
Dixie County High School



Ryleigh Locke
Chiefland Middle High School



Fisher Langford
Bell High School



C FEC Youth Tour Participants pose for a photo outside the House of Representatives and inside the Senate Chamber.



Jolene Watkins
Chiefland Middle High School



Everett Tribble
Chiefland Middle High School



Karoline Mullis
Chiefland Middle High School

Residential Phone Service

provided by  **conexon**
connect

Cellular dead-spots are a thing of the past with Fiber by Central Florida's residential phone services! We are partnering with rural broadband and voice services provider, Conexon Connect to deliver affordable, reliable home phone services. Our phone service uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Technology delivered through the fiber network. The result is a superior phone connection that sets the standard when it comes to quality, reliability, and clarity.

Packages start: **\$29.95/month**

- ✔ **Unlimited local and long distance to U.S. and Canada**
- ✔ **The latest features, including Call Forwarding, 3-Way Calling, and Voice Mail Services**
- ✔ **Affordable Rates**

Battery Backup

Back-up batteries are available for VoIP services to ensure calls can be made in the case of power outages. VoIP customers can purchase back-up battery solutions directly from Fiber by Central Florida at the time of initial customer sign-up, or later by calling **(844)-533-4237**.

Estimated Stand-by-Time	Cost at install (one time fee)	Cost after install (one time fee)
8-hr Battery Back-up	\$100	\$275
24-hr Battery Back-up	\$220	\$400

CONNECT TO THE WORLD

WITH A PROVIDER FROM HOME

Being a part of this community means you're a neighbor, not a number. So when we promise to deliver the best broadband services and experiences possible, we mean it. Feel confident knowing that with Fiber by Central Florida, you can enjoy exceptional video chats, conference calls, gaming, and streaming experiences.



FIBER BY CENTRAL FLORIDA
~YOUR BROADBAND PARTNER~

FIBER BUILD PROGRESS

Looking for a quick snapshot of where we are in our community-changing fiber construction effort? Check out the chart below to see just how fast we are moving through the CFEC service area with lightning-fast fiber!



CFEC Substation	Make-Ready Construction	Fiber Construction
Chiefland 1	✓	✓
Trenton	✓	✓
Bell	✓	✓
Country Club	✓	✓
Dempsey	✓	✓
Old Town	✓	✓
Bronson	✓	✓
Cross City	✓	✓
Williston	✓	✓
Newberry	✓	✓
Neals	✓	✓
Usher	✓	✓
Renfroe	✓	✓
Inglis	✓	✓
Cedar Key	✓	✓
Suwannee	✓	✓

Service Now Available!

Constructing Over
50 MILES
of Mainline Fiber
PER WEEK

Now Installing
150+ HOMES
PER WEEK

CONTACT US



Customer Service

1-844-53-FIBER
(1-844-533-4237)



Technical Support

1-844-533-4237



Email

info@fiberbycentralflorida.com

WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Fiber by Central Florida offers a variety of ways to pay your bill, including:



My Fiber Account Customer Portal
- www.fiberbycentralflorida.com



Fiber by Central Florida App
- MyFiberIQ



By Phone
- 1 (844) 533-4237

Enroll in Autopay

To enroll in Autopay and set up monthly credit card or bank draft payments, visit fiberbycentralflorida.com and access the Customer Portal. Once inside the Customer Portal, follow the prompts to set up a bank draft or assign a credit card to your Fiber by Central Florida account.

TROUBLESHOOTING AND TECH SUPPORT

No internet connection? Need help?

If you are having trouble, you may need to reboot your GigaSpire. With GigaSpire plugged in and powered on, pull the power plug out of the GigaSpire to turn it off, wait 10 seconds and plug power cable back in to turn it back on. Once the power is returned, give it some time, as it will take about 1 to 2 minutes to fully boot up.

GigaSpire BLAST u6x LED Status

Green (solid)	Connected to the internet
Green (flashing)	Pairing attempt with other Wi-Fi capable devices
Yellow (flashing)	Booting up or service/software is being upgraded
Red (flashing)	No internet

Device Troubleshooting:

1. Verify your device is connected to your network in your Wi-Fi settings.
2. Try to connect to other websites using your device.
3. If you cannot visit any website with your device, try to access the internet with another device. If the other device connects, restart your device and try to connect to your network again.

If you are still unable to connect your device to the network, call Tech Support at 1(844)533-4237.

Blue Crab Stuffed Shrimp

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound shrimp, peeled, deveined, and butterflied
- 1/2 pound blue crab, picked over for shells
- 1/3 cup panko
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons seafood seasoning blend
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped fine
- Oil for cooking
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste



PREPARATION

In a small bowl, combine panko, mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon seafood seasoning, lemon juice, parsley, salt and pepper. Gently fold in crab, making sure not to break up any large pieces. Using a tablespoon or small scoop, roll small balls of crab mixture. Place stuffing on top of shrimp and gently press shrimp tail over to hold in place.

Heat oil in large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season shrimp with salt and pepper. Place flat side down and stand upright in pan (as shown in finished picture) and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Place lid (or tin foil) over pan and finish cooking for 2 to 3 minutes or until shrimp are cooked through. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of seafood seasoning and serve immediately.

Grilled Key Lime Shrimp Skewers

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 4 Key limes, juiced
- 1/2 avocado, mashed
- 2 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons spicy mustard
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (your favorite)
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose seasoning (your favorite)
- 1 lemon, juiced
- Oil for cooking
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste



PREPARATION

Combine and mix avocado, mayonnaise, sour cream, mustard, paprika, horseradish, hot sauce, garlic, lemon juice and all-purpose seasoning in a small bowl. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed with salt and pepper. Store in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Preheat grill to high. Carefully skewer shrimp, leaving at least 1 inch on either side of shrimp. Drizzle lightly with oil and season with salt and pepper. Place over direct heat and cook for 2 minutes per side or until cooked through. Remove from grill and sprinkle with Key lime juice and parsley. Serve with remoulade sauce.

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.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

In today's increasingly digital world, more and more communications are being sent out electronically.

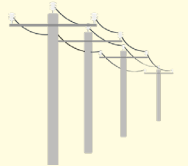


That is why it is important to make sure your Co-op has an up-to-date email address for you!

To make sure that you don't miss out on any important digital communications from your Co-op, call 800-227-1302 to update your email address with a CFEC Member Service Representative.

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

MAIN OFFICE

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

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.*

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

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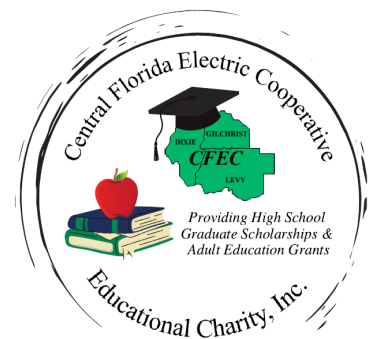
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Attention Seniors: It's Scholarship Time!

The Central Florida Electric Cooperative Educational Charity, Inc. has opened the 2024 scholarship program for applications.

To be eligible, an applicant's parents or legal guardian must be an active member of CFEC. Applications can be found at cfec.com on the documents page.



Application deadline is March 14, 2024