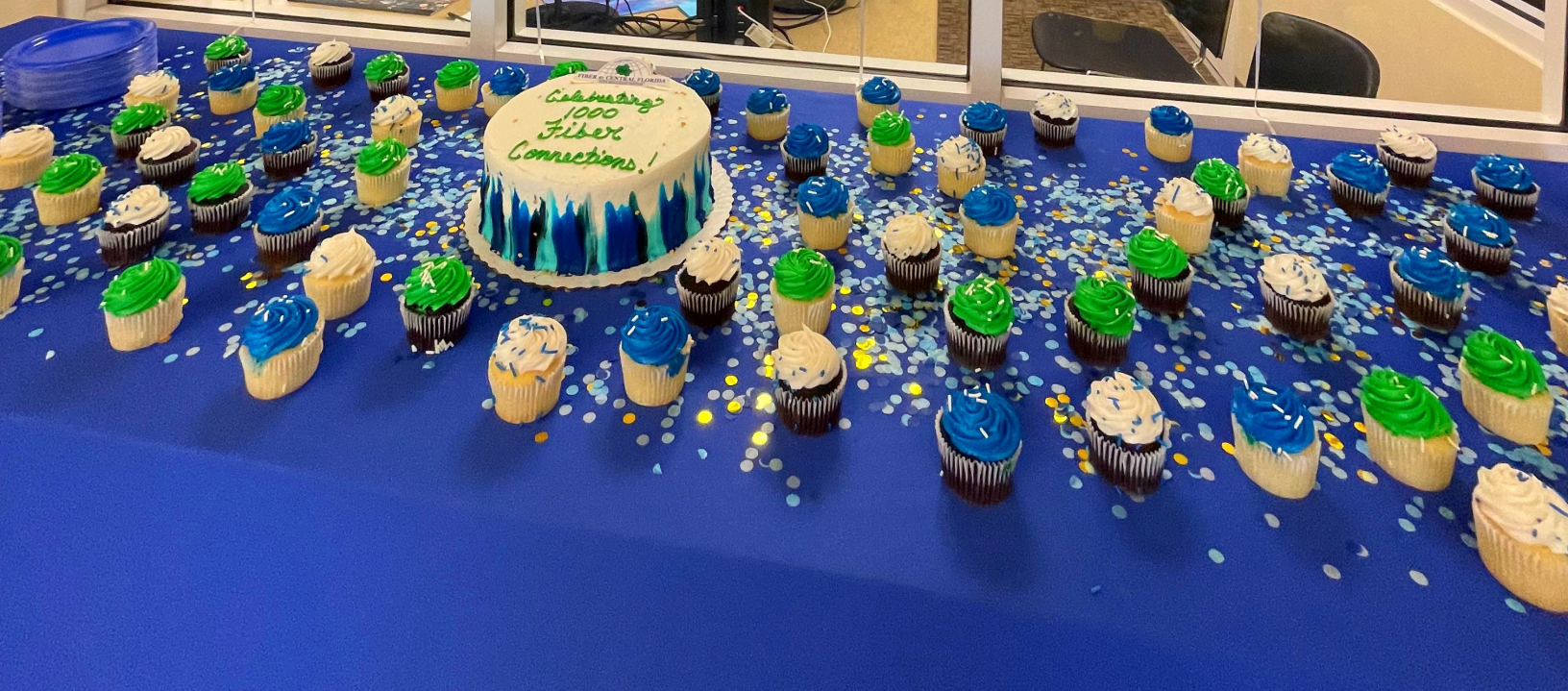


the Co-op Connection

NOVEMBER 2023

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM YOUR POWER PARTNER



The Cooperative Heritage

Ever since I arrived at CFEC, I have worked to first learn and then share the message of our heritage internally and externally. Part of this effort was to ensure that I understood our past but also that current employees “remembered” it as well. We have many new employees, and we did not want them to work here without truly understanding who we are, how we got started and what it means to members.

If you go back to the mid-1930s, nine out of 10 rural homes were without electricity. This meant that milking, reading and common chores in the early or late hours were done by kerosene lanterns. It also meant most cooking was done by wood stoves – quite a chore.

On May 11, 1935, President Roosevelt signed Executive order No. 7037, establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and this established the mechanism for Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU’s) to borrow low-cost federal loans to serve rural America. However, while these low-cost loans were attractive, they were not enough to overcome the high cost of serving rural, low-density areas of our nation day to day.

In 1937, REA drafted the Electric Cooperative Corporation Act that enabled the creation of not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives that have existed since then and remain to this day. By 1953, more than 90% of U.S. farms had electricity. This is the greatest example – in my opinion – of a successful public/

private partnership in the history of our nation. While incredibly important in the early days of getting our rural communities served, it remains just as important and critical today – an asset that we all need to protect.

Our leadership team has taken this same message – in nearly the same format that our employees have seen – to the community at chamber and rotary meetings and other special forums. And we will continue to spread this message so that our heritage is protected. Remember, as a member, you own your cooperative -- said differently, you are equity owners with all benefits and decisions staying locally. This is why the way we have structured Fiber by Central Florida is so important because you own that business as well. When it does well, so will you.

Not every day, not often, not even occasionally, you get to participate in something that makes a difference. Perhaps the age-old structure of your cooperative and your new fiber business are two of those examples. So, we will continue to be faithful to spread this message of the heritage of your cooperative.



Denny George
GENERAL MANAGER



**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: 1000th Fiber Customer Celebration
by Madison Redd, CFEC Communications Specialist

The Hazards of Electrical Backfeeding

During the aftermath of Hurricane Idalia, nearly two-thirds of Central Florida Electric Cooperative's members were without power. Being without power at least sometimes is a fact of life with hurricanes or strong thunderstorms. When that happens, the answer to restore at least a few of the conveniences of life is a generator.

5 Cases Of Dangerous Backfeeding

As linemen from CFEC and the cooperatives who came to our aid were working to restore power after the hurricane, they found five instances where generators were being used without the use of a transfer switch and were backfeeding electric lines. This creates a very dangerous situation that can lead to the electrocution of linemen, neighbors or the homeowner themselves. It can start a fire in the home or lead to appliances being blown. Thankfully, no one was hurt in these instances.

During a power outage, electricity stops flowing from the grid and there is a void on the lines. Lines may be down from the pole but are likely still attached to your home.

Be Safe With Generator Use

When a generator is connected to the home circuit and started up to supply power, and the home is still connected by lines to the grid, power will flow through the main breaker, back to the meter base panel, to the transformer and then energize power lines in your neighborhood. This reversal of flow is called "backfeeding."

The safest way to use a generator is always to plug appliances directly in to the generator. However, you can also safely use a generator if you have a licensed electrician install a transfer switch to isolate generator power

to the home so that it does not backfeed powerlines and cause harm to line workers or neighbors. Transfer switches also protect the home from electrical fires caused by short circuits and improper connections. The safest way to use a generator is with the installation of a transfer switch.

The other primary danger is from carbon monoxide poisoning. Because of the dangers of using a generator, always read and follow all safety features in the generator Owner's Manual.

DON'T SHOCK THE NEIGHBORHOOD
DON'T OPERATE YOUR GENERATOR WITHOUT A TRANSFER SWITCH

Transfer switches isolate utility power and generator power to prevent backfeeding, which can be deadly. Backfeed can follow wires and harm those nearby, including utility workers making repairs. Transfer switches also protect the home from electrical fires caused by short circuits and improper connections. Transfer switches should only be installed by a qualified electrician.

ESFI For more information about how to use a portable generator safely, visit www.esfi.org

www.facebook.com/ESFI.org www.twitter.com/ESFI.dotorg www.youtube.com/ESFI.dotorg



Thank You, CENTRAL FLORIDA!

Celebrating our Florida Co-ops

By: Eryn Files, Florida YLC 2023

From the 1950s, high school juniors from rural communities across the nation are recognized by their local co-ops to receive a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join their peers in Washington, D.C. for an all-expenses-paid week in June. Central Florida Electric Cooperative was proud to sponsor three youth this year. Cali Knapp, Maddie Rohrer, and Veronica Rigby met Congressmen, toured the Pentagon, hoisted the morning flag at Mt. Vernon, danced on the Potomac, walked through the Holocaust Museum, saw the Marlins beat the Washington Nationals, and much more.

In honor of a national initiative to promote cooperative awareness, Florida Youth Tour delegates want to thank our members and all those serving through cooperatives! The 2023 Florida representative for the



CFEC delegates pose at the National Lincoln Memorial (Photo Credit: FL YT).



Maddie Rohrer, Cali Knapp, and Veronica Rigby represent CFEC on Capitol Hill with the Florida Youth Tour D.C. delegates with a Co-ops Vote initiative (Photo credit: FL YT).

NRECA’s Youth Leadership Council, Eryn Files, sends appreciation on behalf of the Youth Tour ‘23 students this year.

Eryn Files, ‘24

“When I first signed up for YouthTour, I vaguely associated utilities with bills. Yet, the first day, I learned from your director about service to hundreds of families, selfless efforts to manage through the pandemic, and an initiative to meet water and internet needs across our state. I experienced firsthand the danger facing linemen while in a bucket lifted high into the air to make repairs.

My time in Tallahassee and Washington’s capitals revealed the humanity of our small-town-to-Congress representatives and lobbyists, while highlighting the immense possibilities available to me as I prepare for college.

We received a government lesson from Lobbyist Mr. Michael, Cuban shuffled at the White House with the “Truth Conductor,” and proudly shouted “Florida Man, that’s my guy!”

on Conference Night. Thank you to Ms. Sabrina and Mr. Ryan for sharing so many insights about the local and international co-op projects - and bearing with my many photo-op suggestions throughout the tour. I now represent an amazing organization of selfless members across Florida, leaders in its offices, and linemen who serve come rain or shine. I could not be more grateful.”

Thank you, CFEC!



Florida YT delegates meet ex-Senator and NASA director Bill Nelson at the headquarters (Photo Credit: FL YT).

To your linemen, co-op administrators, and Youth Tour team: As the Texas students said, “If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read this in the dark, thank your co-op.”

2024 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

Attention High School Juniors of Central Florida Electric Co-op!

CFEC is now taking applications for the 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour!

This year, CFEC will be taking 6 students on a tour of our State Capital in Tallahassee February 7-8, 2024, before 3 will be chosen to travel to Washington D.C. with the rest of the Florida Youth Tour delegation June 16-21, 2024. Delegates will tour monuments, visit museums, meet with elected officials, learn about the cooperative business model and make new friends from all over Florida and 43 other states!

The best part? It's FREE! Everything is covered by CFEC!



It truly is the trip of a lifetime.

Interested? Check out our website, www.cfec.com, for more information and applications. Applications can also be found with your High School Guidance Counselor or at any CFEC Office Location. Completed applications can be dropped off at CFEC Office Location marked "Att: Member Services" or sent via email to Madison or Alison at mredd@cfec.com and adeloach@cfec.com, respectively.

Space is limited! The final day to submit your application is **December 8th, 2023**.
Don't let this opportunity of a lifetime pass you by!

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. The person responsible for coordination of this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Kimberly Baxley, Vice President of Human Resources. Ms. Baxley can be reached at 352-493-6981.



How It Started And Who Is Behind The Effort



**Denny George,
Executive Vice
President and
General Manager**

As I was sitting down to pen this message, we announced earlier today that we had 1,000 customers on our fiber system. By now, it is likely that we have surpassed 1,300 or more – very exciting.

Why did we do this? Because our members were asking for it, and many of you felt we were the ones to best deliver it. It did take some soul searching on our part but we – the staff here at CFEC and our Board of Trustees – resolved to jump into the pool.

I thought the most difficult part of the process – according to other cooperatives who had undertaken this similar effort – was going to be getting our poles ready for the fiber. However, due to the great work our Engineering Department has done over the past 10 years or so and the always-solid performance of our Line-Side Operations Team, that part has not been a worry at all. Many cooperatives have had to change 20% of their poles. We are sitting at about 3.5%, so a much better maintained system.

If I was to make a statement about the role that CFEC has played in this effort, now having passed 1,300 customers, I would say, “We feel honored to be able to undertake this effort and bring this so needed service to our members – and others.” There were a few sleepless nights earlier in the process, mostly because this “language” was one that I did not speak as well as the electric business, but because of the team you have here at CFEC, this effort has been much easier.



**George Buckner,
Central Florida
Electric
Cooperative
Chief
Information
Officer**

Not only was I grateful for the opportunity, but I also knew that the employees of our electric cooperative were the right team to

handle a project of this magnitude. To say that it was going to be a big project is an understatement, for sure. Our largest footprint covers Levy, Gilchrist and Dixie counties; however, we also provide services to members of Alachua, Lafayette, and Marion counties. This is well over 4,000 miles of electric infrastructure to cover. Each of these rural areas have waited decades for the promise of high-speed internet, so we knew that we had to move fast!

Our initial plan had the team completing our fiber build in roughly 4+ years, to which Mr. George let the team know that while this was a great goal, we simply needed to go “faster.”

We reached back out to our contractors like Conexon, Bigham, and Benton Technical Services to discuss our options. We brought in our vendors and discussed supply chain constraints. We reached out to various members of our community to get better educated on all things fiber. And we brought in our

community partners like Duke Energy, our County Commissioners, other local elected officials and our elected state representatives to identify areas in the build that could be streamlined or simply executed in a more efficient manner. Bringing everyone together and putting all of our cards on the table has seemed to work. Our 4+ year build may now be closer to a 2.5 year build!

We are building well over 40 miles of fiber plant per week and are installing more than 115 new services per week, which is a good start; however, Mr. George continues to remind us why we are doing this and keeps us motivated by saying things like “team...you are doing a fantastic job, but can we go just a little faster!” So, in December of this year, we will be kicking things up a notch and will be splitting our teams up to work in multiple areas of our service territory in order to increase those home installations to well over 150 per week.

Without others on the team that knew our mission, knew you and the technology, it would not have been possible to move at the speed we have already accomplished.



Tom Franks,
Fiber By Central Florida
Fiber Operation Manager

When George asked me to take what I knew about computer systems, hardware and processes and apply them to the expanding fiber build, needless to say, I was excited. I was not only excited for you – knowing your needs – but also excited for me at my house where I have struggled with the level of service that I have wanted and needed. I have spoken to so many providers that told me what I could live with (and only really needed) versus what I really wanted.

What it comes down to is – an internet connection is no longer just a way to share photos on social media, forward jokes to friends or even look up a recipe to prepare dinner for the evening. An internet connection these days determines if we can keep up with the rest of the world or not...both personally and professionally. Another example we all witnessed was the struggle when COVID struck. Even if we weren't affected healthwise, it affected the way we had to do business and perform everyday tasks. Our students were falling behind, and when the work world decided to create virtual workplaces, most folks in this area simply had to figure out the best way to stay productive and employed.

Behind the scenes, we built the infrastructure with the most advanced technology today in the world of Fiber to the Home. We built this out to future proof our system, but it will also allow for expansion into areas not serviced electrically by CFEC. As we continue to build out our network, we are also creating redundancy in the system so we can easily recover services in the event our backhaul link is affected by events out of our control. All of this is to assure that we serve the area with the best broadband service and reliability for the future to come.

Knowing that I am helping deliver a product that will be far superior to anything that even folks in larger metropolitan areas have – because this system is new and fiber all the way – makes me pretty excited. To know that we no longer have to sacrifice this technology in order to live the rural lifestyle we all love is the definition of having your cake and eating it, too. So, I do the part that is behind the curtain. But there are also people in front of the curtain that are just as important to the build out process.



Aaron Czarnecki, Fiber by Central Florida Installation Manager

My role is to work to get fiber into your home. Usually, with the cooperative stopping on the outside of your home, it makes for an easier amount of coordination. Ultimately, because the member has to be present, that coordination is new to CFEC on a large scale. I have a newfound appreciation for the appliance repair guy who has told me he will show up between 1-4 p.m. – it can be challenging. While we try to call if we have issues, it is a task – to say the least. As our fiber lines follow the path of power, if the fiber needs to be placed underground, crews will first properly locate and avoid hitting any utilities. And as we enter your home, our goal is to place the router in an optimal location of your home, so you have the best service throughout.

Previously as a contractor for CFEC who went into members yards, I find it wonderfully satisfying to be able to bring fiber all the way into homes of our members, providing them with something they need so badly – just as CFEC has done with electricity for the past 85 years.

And so, there you have the initial story of our effort. While we still have much work to do, we are applying what we learn every day, grateful for the patience allowed by our members as we work to construct fiber internet at incredible/unheard of speeds, and deliver to you, our members, exactly what you want and need. When I think of how your co-op and community has responded to this great need, this Bible verse came to mind..

Ephesians 4:16 - From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.



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.

Deviled Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound small gold potatoes
- 1 egg, hard-boiled
- 1 rib celery, finely diced (small amount reserved for garnish)
- 2 mini sweet peppers, finely diced (small amount reserved for garnish)
- 2 to 3 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled, reserve 1 tablespoon bacon grease (small amount reserved for garnish)
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 to 2 tablespoons mustard (start with 1 tablespoon and add more to taste)
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste



PREPARATION

Fill large pot with water and bring to a boil, add 1 tablespoon salt, and boil potatoes until fork-tender, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove, drain and cool enough to handle. Slice a very small amount off one end of the potato, creating a stable surface. Using the small end of a melon baller, scoop out approximately 3/4 of the potato, making sure to leave enough of the potato intact in order to fill back up. In a small bowl combine the scooped-out potato, cooked egg yolk, reserved bacon grease, and mash until you reach a smooth consistency. Stir in mayonnaise, mustard, chopped egg whites, celery and sweet peppers. Season with salt and pepper, taste and adjust if needed. To fill potatoes, use a pastry bag or small spoon. Garnish with remaining peppers, celery and crumbled bacon.

Fresh tip: use other toppings for different flavors, such as chopped olives or pickled vegetables and fresh ground pepper, to taste.

Potato Nachos

INGREDIENTS

- 1-pound small gold potatoes
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 pound lean ground beef
- 1/3 cup scallions, sliced thin
- 1 cup queso, plus extra for garnish (store-bought)
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning
- Salsa or Pico de Gallo for garnish and dipping
- Oil for cooking
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Cut potatoes in half, drizzle with oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast until crisp and golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside.

While potatoes are in the oven, cook the ground beef in a skillet over medium-high heat and season with taco seasoning. Remove and drain grease. Scatter the cooked ground beef over potatoes, add cherry tomatoes, drizzle with queso (the warmth from the ground beef and potatoes will melt the queso), and garnish with scallions. Serve warm with salsa and extra queso for dipping if desired.



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.

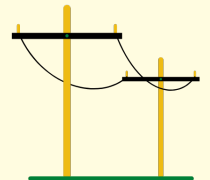


WHEN REPORTING THE PROBLEM, CFEC NEEDS TO KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

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

PRSRST 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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Applications for the

**2024
Electric
Cooperative
Youth Tour**



are due December 8, 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
Cooperative, Inc.

~YOUR POWER PARTNER~