



# City of Monticello

February 19, 2018

Wesley Taylor, Office of the General Council  
Public Service Commission  
Capital Circle Office Center  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

RE: Docket No. 201702215-EU - Review of electric utility hurricane preparedness and restoration actions - Request for Comments;  
Response by the City of Monticello, Florida

Public Service Commission:

The City of Monticello respectfully submits its Response to Docket No. 201702215-EU.

In addition the following background information is submitted.

The City of Monticello's downtown business area has endured three power outages during 2016/2017. Duke Energy provides power to the City and Tri-County Electric which in turn serves many outlying areas. The first power outage lasting all day was the result of a downed limb caused by a Duke trimming contractor. After Hurricane Hermine there was a 3/4 day power outage in Monticello and its core business district. After Hurricane Irma there was a 4/5 day power outage in Monticello and its core business district. After Irma most of Jefferson, Madison and a large part of Gadsden Counties were without power 4/6 days. The wind did not exceed 65 knots in the two storms. Complete restoration came some 10-12 days later in each of two storm events.

The frequent and prolonged outages has had a substantial impact on the small businesses in our City and represents an negative impact on economic growth within our community. All the major Supermarkets, many of the gas stations, and all the major chains (Dollar Tree, Dollar General, Tractor Supply, etc.) in Jefferson County are located in Monticello. Also many of the area residents rely

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## City Council

**George Evans**  
Group 1

**Steve Rissman**  
Group 2

**Julie Conley**  
Group 3

**John Jones**  
Group 4 - Mayor

**Troy Avera**  
Group 5

**Emily Anderson**  
City Clerk/Treasurer

**245 South Mulberry**  
**Monticello, Florida 32344-1307**

**Steve Wingate**  
City Manager

electric power to pump water from their wells. In the four days after Irma, Monticello residents were beginning to face water, gas, fresh milk, and dwindling food supplies. Most merchants could not sell anything because of the power outage need to operate their registers and gas pumps.

To alleviate the enormous effect the past power outages have inflicted on the City and its residents, the Council would see a plan developed for a faster restoration of power especially to the City's core business district (US-90 and US-19 Corridors). The Council would also ask that a plan developed to construct an alternative source/routing for power to feed the main power feed into the City and ensure maintenance to any backup source/routing system. In addition the Council asks for more timely and accurate communications from Duke Energy for power restoration in the aftermath of storm events or other outages.

City of Monticello Response to Docket No. 201702215-EU :

### Vegetation Management

1. What policies or practices can facilitate utility tree trimming and removal problem tree along public rights of way or easements?

Response: No Change is needed in the City of Monticello. It is not believed that downed trees or downed limbs contributed to the complete and total power outages experienced in the City. (1 day in trimming incident, 3 days - Hurricane Hermine and 4/5 days - Hurricane Irma). Neither storm event had winds above 65 knots in this area. Duke Energy's unreliable electric during small wind events has had a negative economic impact on small business in the City of Monticello and the quality of life for our residents. The total and wide spread power outage after Hurricane Irma was believed to be results of a lack of maintenance on the sole main power feed into the City and not having an alternative/backup feed into the central business district. Tree trimming issues are not believed to have been a contributing factor in the outage.

Better staging of repair equipment prior to a storm event may have prevented the prolonged power outages in the City. After Hurricane Irma, though the area was filled with Duke Energy "evaluator" and "assessor" cars, there were no bucket/repair trucks were observed until 4 days after Hurricane Irma passed.

2. What policies or practices can facilitate utility tree trimming and removal problem tree outside public rights of way or easements?

Response: No change is needed.

3. Describe how coordination with local utilities could be improved with regard to tree trimming, planting, relocating or removing trees.

Response: The current state statute does not need changing. Monticello has a Heritage Tree Ordinance and trimming policy and a close working relationship with Duke Energy and its trimming contractors. Balancing the cultural and aesthetic contribution of our canopy roads with the necessity, some trimming by utilities needs to continue. None of the three wide spread power outages were believed to be primarily cause by downed tree nor tree limbs. Our City Manager attempts to maintain a close working relation with Duke Representatives and this works well leading up storm events - but the information flow from Duke dries up and is inadequate, incomplete and untimely after a storm event.

#### Undergrounding of Electric Facilities

4. What policies or practices could facilitate the undergrounding of existing overhead electric facilities?

Response: Action by the legislature and/or the PSC, with possibly some monetary incentives from the State of Florida. Any local action would probably be ineffective.

5. What policies or practices could facilitate the undergrounding of electric facilities in construction of new electric facilities?

Response: Action by the legislature and/or the PSC, with possibly some monetary incentives from the State of Florida. Any local action would probably be ineffective.

6. Describe how the process used to interact with utilities on projects to underground electric facilities could be improved.

Response: Continue to develop a dialog with local governments and utilities on prioritizing the new lines to be placed underground. Factor in economic development, anticipated and planned future local/regional business and population growth. Duke Energy and other power companies should be encouraged to put new main feed lines and crucial lines ( those to min city business districts, core business districts, Potable water and Sewage

Treatment Facilities, hospitals and Emergency Management Centers, etc.) underground. Also, an effort should be made to put utilities underground during major downtown renovations.

### Coordination and Communication with Utilities

7. Explain the process to identify and inform electric utilities of local critical facilities and infrastructure, describe options to improve the process:

Response: Continue to improve the close working relationship our City Manager has with local Duke Energy representative. The City has identified our highly critical power users (Nursing Home, Potable Water Pumps, Waste Water Treatment Plant and Lift Stations, etc. ) Duke Energy is aware of these priorities. There is a critical need for improvement in power reliability (4/5 days of power outages), hardening the main power feed and adding an alternative source for the main feed to the City's core business section and our critical/priority power users. The City has 25 wastewater pumping stations and backing every lift station up with emergency electric generators is not feasible. Because of the **complete power** outage in the City (And most of Jefferson, Madison and parts of Gadsden Counties) for 4/5 days after Hurricane Irma the City experienced a 114,000 gallon "loss" of wastewater (Though no spills were actually observed). The "loss" was determined by comparing the potable water pumped and the actual wastewater arriving at the treatment plant. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has proposed a fine of \$6,000.00 and a requirement to purchase a backup generator for a main lift station (Costing \$85,000.00) based on this "loss: estimate. The total of the fine and consent requirement is substantial financial burden for a water system with an annual budget of just over Two Million Dollars. The three power outages (Duke contractor trimming incident, Hurricane Hermine, and Hurricane Irma) in 2016/17 was a substantial negative impact on the small businesses in Monticello.

8. Describe how electric utilities interact with local emergency operation centers during emergencies, and identify opportunities to improve that interaction:

Response: Preceding the Emergencies and storm events, Duke Energy and Tri-County Electric, County and City all have representatives at the Jefferson County EOC. The City Manager remains at the EOC during the actual weather event and coordinates City response to the cleanup. Preceding and during the storm event information is fairly current and reliable.

After the event, during cleanup and power restoration, information from

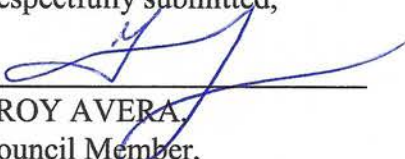
Duke Energy becomes less continuous, less timely and much less reliable. The City Manager must rely on the local Dukes' representative to keep the City Council and residents informed as to power restoration progress. Most, if not all, of the after event information is provided by the Duke Energy central telephone information system. Dukes' telephone (Computer) information on power restoration is not timely, current, or accurate and is almost misleading, eg. Monticello residents, after Hurricane Irma, were ALL being told estimated power restoration was twelve (12) days. This estimate may have been worst case, but it was misinformation and caused near panic that required a lot of intervention by the City Manager and City Council members to keep City Residents updated on real time repair efforts in and around the City. This lack of timely and accurate power restoration information characterized every other after storm events.

Recommend: More accurate post event information. More timely and accurate after event information on repair effort and power restoration estimates provided to City Manager. Work to coordinate information of actual customer location (Telephone number is related to the Duke account), the actual power grid and real time repair effort so that information on power restoration is accurate and not a blanket or area estimate for the last customer to be restored in the effected area.

9. Describe options to address communications with utilities prior to, during and after a storm event:

Response: See the Answer to Question 9, above.

Respectfully submitted,



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TROY AVERA,  
Council Member,  
On Behalf of the Council