BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:
DOCKET NO. UNDOCKETED

2023 HURRICANE SEASON
PREPARATION BRIEFING BY
FLORIDA ELECTRIC UTILITIES.
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PROCEEDINGS: COMMISSION WORKSHOP

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

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Tallahassee, Florida

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Excellent. Welcome back, a few minutes later, obviously. Today is still May 21st. This is our Hurricane CEO roundtable, so we are pleased to have Mr. Armando Pimentel from Florida Power & Light. So, sir, the floor is yours to chat with us.

MR. PIMENTEL: Thank you, Chairman. I will go through this brief presentation. Any questions that you have during the presentation, obviously, just stop me. If you want to wait until the end, that's -- that's fine also.

I am very happy to be here today and to share with you what our plans are going into storm season, and also some of the things that we have learned from -- from the last storm season. We a company of continuous improvement, so we are always learning.

Brief update. We cover a lot of the state, which is, you know, both good and challenging. We've got 1.4 million poles, 1.1 million transformers, and 883 substations. That is our area both in Northwest Florida, and our traditional area mostly along the east coast of Florida, all highlighted by the blue that you see up there.

These are the things that I am going to discuss briefly today, and I am going to get right -- right into it.

So we prepare year-round for storms. It's something that has been built into us over a number of years. And over the last couple of decades, it's something that we are really proud of, right? We are not preparing just for storms in May. We are preparing for storms all year through.

And the programs that we put in place, whether it's programs for hardening our lines, undergrounding our lines, vegetation management, and so on, are programs that we've developed with our view that every year is going to be a strong storm season, and it only takes one storm. It doesn't take a series of storms. It takes only one storm.

And that's really how we live our life at Florida Power & Light. Prepare all year for a significant storm season, but remember, even if you have two or three good month at the beginning, it only takes one bad storm at the end really to make sure that your plans are in place.

We couldn't do it alone. We get a lot of assistance from both folks inside of Florida, and

folks outside of Florida. That's becomes certainly a bit more challenging today than it has in the past, particularly outside of Florida, trying to get folks to come into the state. A couple of reasons for that. One is -- and I will talk more about this in a few minutes -- that the storms certainly appear to be bigger and stronger now than they have been in the past, and we and others have been surprised by the increase of intensity of those storms in a very, very short period of time. And that is causing folks, as you might imagine, utilities outside the state, to try to hold their resources for a longer period of time because they are really not sure how long, or how hard the storm is going to be once it passes their territory. And so that's been difficult.

But the assistance that we do get, both internally in the state of Florida, and externally from outside of Florida, is important to us. We try to get -- give as good as we get. We certainly try to help others, whether they are outside the state or inside the state, whether it's manpower or materials. But this is -- it's important for all of us to understand that this is a mutual effort. When a storm comes in, it would be very, very

difficult for one company on its own to address all of the significant consequences, especially when it's a large storm.

Messaging is really important to our customers. Before -- you know, as soon as the -- as the cone of uncertainty gets -- gets on the news, we start fielding calls from customers. If the storm hits us, how significant is it going to be? How long are we going to be without power? And as the storm draws closer, and the media reaction intensifies, those conversations with our customers also intensify.

So we have a plan that we've developed over two decades, we think it's a great plan, of communicating with our customers before the storm, during the storm and after the storm. We try to communicate safety is number one, not only for our own employees, but also for our customers. And we go through several -- several key messages to make sure that our customers understand how important it is to be safe, and what conditions they should look out for before a storm, during a storm and after a storm.

After even -- even before the storm passes, the number one question is always estimated times

of restoration. Obviously, you here in Tallahassee have dealt with a few storms over the last two to three weeks. And I am sure estimated time of restoration was always towards the top of the mind of folks that were calling you, maybe from your own family members, you know, how quickly will power be back up to our neighborhood?

We spend a lot of time on that, right? We want to make sure that once we communicate an estimated time of response right after the storm passes, and we've had a chance to actually go out in the area and survey the damage, we want to make sure the number of days that we give is an accurate reflection of what we believe the work -- the work will take.

We've got, as I -- when I say that it's a year-round storm preparation for us, the communication plan is also a year-round communication plan. We do a thousand or more presentations throughout the state regarding what -- what should people expect during a storm. What should people expect after a storm. How can they contact us. How can they go into our portal, and so on.

During a storm -- before a storm and during a

storm itself, there is a lot of communication that happens between ourselves and what I would call other governmental bodies in the state of Florida, right? The fire, the rescue, the emergency response centers, and so on. All of those are key messages. We want to make sure, including the cities and counties, we want to make sure what we are giving a consistent message to everybody. We don't want a message from us to be different than a message that may be coming from one of the emergency response centers.

The Storm Protection Plan, which has now been in existence for about five years. It's been really important. Not only for us, but for the state of Florida. I think the proactive way that that came about, both on the legislative level and the way that the Commission itself has activated and surveyed the program has made real improvements, tangible improvements to our customers.

Obviously, there is a lot of things in the Storm Protection Plan. The one thing that our customers focus on more than any others is the underground program, right? They -- it doesn't take a engineering background to understand that if

you have wires below ground, that those are likely going to be a lot safer than those wires that are above ground during a storm.

And when we talk about a storm, it's not just a hurricane at this point, right? It's the afternoon thunderstorms. It's the one-off storms, similar to the ones that you have received here over the last three weeks; similar to the ones -- I have got a couple of pictures in the last year of these one-off type of storms that have hit our area. So customers are very interested in the underground program.

It is saving real time, and it's saving real costs to our customers. And it means that over time, the expectation should be that we are all doing a better job. That we are all serving our customers better; not just with lower costs, but they should all expect for when the power is out, for the power to be out for a lower period of time.

Terrific program. I couldn't thank the legislative branch, and I couldn't thank you here at the Commission enough for making sure that that program makes sense for our customers. They greatly appreciate it, and so do we.

Vegetation management. Again, it doesn't take

an engineering degree to understand that if you have a bunch of vegetation that's close to lines, that that's probably not ideal during a storm. So the vegetation management program that we have follows the guidelines that we have previously discussed with you at the Commission. It's important for us to make sure that we continue the vegetation program.

Stuff grows here, you know, 12 months a year, 365 days a year. That is different than many other states, right, where vegetation stops growing for a period of time. We have a lot of different vegetation. Some grows faster. Some grows slower. We've developed a lot of technology around vegetation. We fly a lot of drones around our lines and around vegetation to make sure that we can pick up some of these things that maybe we don't catch during the normal cycle that you see up here in the slides.

It's important to note that on the transmission line, we fly those rights-of-way twice a year. Those are important lines for us, right? And we want to make sure that those are well protected during storms.

Pole inspections, 1.4 million distribution

poles. We have an eight-year cycle on those distribution poles. In 2023, you can see 180,000 poles were inspected.

Again, I keep going back to it doesn't take an engineering degree to understand that if you have good poles, as opposed to poles that are bit weak, that those withstand wind a lot better in just regular storm conditions. This is an important program to us.

If you look at the last bullet there on our transmission infrastructure, 96 percent of our transmission infrastructure in the state of Florida has been hardened. And by I mean by hardened, virtually all of our transmission structures are now concrete transmission structures.

The last four percent of those that you see up there are largely in the northwest, as part of our Gulf acquisition in 2019. It is a program, we continue the program, and we expect that to be done, I think it's by the end of this decade.

Mutual aid. I spoke about mutual aid. It's also important for me to let you know that while we ask for a lot of mutual aid, and we get a lot of mutual aid, the events you see there in March, July, August and September were significant events

that happened outside of our territory. And that's when we actually provided manpower and equipment and materials to others.

That's really important to me. What I said before, that nobody can do it on their own, is absolutely true. It's really, really important to me to treat others the way that I would expect to be treated. And so in every situation, we want to make sure that we are taking care of others when they need our help.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Armando in years past, there was problems with -- with the munies and the co-ops and the IOUs. You guys tried to do mutual aid in between. Have you fixed most of that, like, insurance issues and all of that kind of problems?

MR. PIMENTEL: No, Commissioner, we have not. So those issues don't exist IOU to IOU, right? There is an agreement that's worked out. And the biggest issue associated with that is indemnity, right? If you are going into somebody else's back yard, you want to make sure there is some sort of indemnification. And while not as well understood throughout most, if not all, the IOU community, it's been a little slower outside of the IOU community.

That is not to say that we have not made some progress. We absolutely have made progress, as you can tell by all the folks that we helped here. But it would be inaccurate for me to say that all of those issues have been worked out, right? We are still working on it, and we still hope that, over time, we get more folks to agree than disagree, because I think it's for the benefit of everyone, but it's not fully worked out.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Is there anything that we need to be doing, or can be doing?

MR. PIMENTEL: I don't know that there is anything that the Commission itself could be doing. I think over time, as we get more comfortable with each other understanding our operating procedures and the way we work, it will -- it will get to the point where we understand the mutual benefits are much greater than the potential risks associated with the work. If we could get one or two to agree every year, that would be beneficial.

But I also want to look at it from the other side of the coin, right? Because if I am not an IOU, if I am a muni or co-op, and I have these concerns, I don't -- I don't want to say that they are not well placed concerns, right? These are

significant legal issues that people have to deal with, and they have to get comfortable on their own, again, the benefits are worth the risks.

So I think over time, as we work with each other, we will get more of the industry to work together, but it's -- it would be inaccurate again to say that all of the issues have been taken care of.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: I mean, it's just a shame if you have got, like, 30 bucket trucks sitting there, and you got a call right down the street that has lines on the ground, that you can't just send them over.

MR. PIMENTEL: Right. Obviously, any slight push from the Commission would be helpful. But, again, I always put myself on the other side of the coin. And on the other side of the coin, if I believe that there are significant risks to me and my customers associated with a vendor agreement, I want to make sure that I don't place myself and my customers in harm's way.

So I think we will eventually get there, but I think the path to getting there is more honey than hammer.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Gotcha. Thank you.

MR. PIMENTEL: Hurricane Idalia last year, this is one of the storms that I briefly spoke about, right? This was a Category 1 storm, I think we all remember it, off the -- off the west coast of Florida.

And while we and others were asking, look, we've seen some indications especially in these waters of storms really intensifying significantly over a short period of time. Can that happen with this storm? Most of the indications that we and others were getting back is, no, right? That there are unique circumstances with some of the events that you saw in the past.

Well, the whole of Idalia, which went from Category 1 to Category 4 very, very quickly, and then when it hit -- when it made landfall, it was a Category 3.

And the reason I bring that up is we've now seen this happen several times. And so as, you know, as a utility understanding that it's important for your customers to have power on as quickly as possible after a storm, we and others are going to be a little bit more conservative than we've been in the past, right? Because now we can't -- we can't miss a Category 1 storm turning

into a Category 4 or 5 storm and not being well-prepared. And that wasn't the case 20 years ago.

And maybe it's a bunch of flukes that have happened over the last couple of years, but we need to be well-prepared. And well-prepared, unfortunately, is going to mean a bit more cost in preparing for some of these storms; because on the other side of it, you don't want to then be in a position where you are trying to get resources when there are no resources available.

Idalia was a good reminder of that. It did not affect Florida Power & Light as significantly as it affected other utilities, and some of the munies and co-ops in the middle of the state. But even with Hurricane Idalia, which we only lost 200,000 customers, there was some lessons learned from that, and I will talk about those in just a second.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Quick question on how you just kind of stated that. That was kind of a good explanation, and accurate from what we've seen recently.

What would be some examples that -- of how you would approach a Category 1 versus a Category 3

storm? Give us some tangibleness, kind of, behind it.

MR. PIMENTEL: So depend -- so we have a -- we have a model, and the model is backed up by a lot of data from what we have seen over the last 20 years, right? You can imagine a model that says, you know, location X was hit by a Category 1, and location X took us Y man hours in order to complete the restoration. And with Y man hours, we were able to get everybody -- virtually everybody back onto the system, let's say within three days. And then you just multiple over the number of storms that we've seen, and so we have this model that has all of this -- all of this data.

So when a storm comes through -- or before a -- I am sorry -- a storm comes through, roughly three days out, we have put that model together for this storm. That model will spit out X million man hours, for example. X million man hours means we understand what crews we have internally.

We then start looking for crews within the state of Florida or outside the state of Florida, obviously dependent on where the expectation is for the storm. If the storm is expected to hit Florida and go up the Gulf Coast, it is not likely that

those Gulf Coast states are going to release my resources. We start looking for resources on the east coast, the northeast coast of the United States.

If it's a Category 1 versus an expectation of a Category 3, the number of man hours that we would expect to put in in order to restore our customer base would be a lot lower than a Category 3. And that's traditionally how we have run our model.

What I am trying to point out with my comments the last couple of minutes is we no longer feel comfortable that a Category 1 is going to stay a Category 1. So it is very likely that what we are going to do, if the expectation is for a Category 1, that we are more well-prepared for a Category 2 or a Category 3 storm, which means additional resources that we would have to get inside of the state quicker than what we would have otherwise had to get done.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I appreciate that. That's why I asked the question is that, you know, what different steps you take. That makes sense. There is certainly a science to it.

MR. PIMENTEL: Yeah. There is a science and there is an art, like everything, like, an art,

like everything else. We have been doing this, we and the others in this room have been doing this for a long -- for a long period of time. And you can put the models together. You can do everything that you, you know, you believe is the right thing to do.

It's really difficult to replace experience, right? Those folks in the room that have been there for 40 storms, and understand exactly, you know, what happened, and can call Susan or Jack in the northeast and get those resources, right? Or can say, you know, I understand what the model is saying, but the last time a storm came in this area, what I recall was that the folks we had in that location didn't work out very well, right? It was difficult to get the hotel rooms. It was difficult to get them fed, or it was difficult to do A, B or C. So things that really go outside what a model is telling you, you need in the area. It's very difficult to replace that experience. A lot of that experience, I think, is behind me from all of these companies, and we are very, very grateful forever them.

What went well last year? All of the things that, certainly, you see in this -- in this slide.

I can't say enough about our drone deployment. Drones are saving us a significant amount of time, especially right after a storm, right?

You can imagine -- most of the pictures that you see of transmission lines after a storm are not necessarily -- and you have seen some in what I will call the swampy areas. Trying to get crews into some of those areas is really difficult after storms, especially if there has been flooding. Flying a drone over that transmission line, or those distribution lines, really gives you a really good indication as to what's going on.

And so it helps with the assessment period after a storm, it helps bring that assessment period in. And it's safer, right? It's safer. It's safer to fly a drone than it is to send, you know, some of these men and women into some of these circumstances, where you really don't understand what the expectation is.

So drones have been a huge benefit for us. There is a bunch of other things that we have learned during -- during the storm that you can see up there, but let me just talk about what we learned.

I have spent a lot of time talking about the

left. That's Hurricane Idalia, 55-mile-an-hour intensification in 24 hours, right? So that's taking a Category 1 storm to Category 3, almost to a Category 4. That's significant. That's what I am talking about. The waters are warm again this year. We are all cognizant of that. That's what we are going to prepare for this year.

External crew processing efficiency. I can tell you that -- I know we come here every year with different speakers. I would expect that external crew processing efficiency, that's a nice way to say, you know, how did -- how did it work out when all these 17,000 men and women came into your state? It works out okay is the best I can -- I can say.

It's a difficult, difficult thing for us, even though we get repeat folks coming into the area, either from help that we get inside the state, or external to the state. You might imagine, they don't always go back to the same processing facility. They don't always go back to the same area. The storm doesn't hit in exactly the same place. Some of the vendors that you were relying on, food, you know, three years ago the last time a storm hit here are no longer in existence. Some

the hotels are no longer in existence.

So there is a lot that goes into processing these crews and sending them on your way, right? Because you can't send all of the crews to where all of the hotel rooms are, for example, right? You would like the Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami, right? These crews have to be very, very close to where the action is, and oftentimes, this action is not by a major city. And so you spend a lot of time understanding the logistics of the situation, right? Do you want your crews driving an hour-and-a-half one way to get to where they need to be, right? What we call windshield time.

And so what I expect that every year we would have stories on efficiency, and every year we learn. We certainly get better. But that doesn't mean there is not frustrations along the way.

I have talked about this, and I have talked about resiliency being year-round, and being prepared year-round. Here are some pictures of some storms and other events that happened during the last year.

I think you are all familiar with maybe these -- these pictures. These storms are happening. They don't have to be a hurricane. They are

happening more frequently, at least for us, than they have in the past, and it's making an effect. All -- all of the -- all of the things that we do for hurricanes help us for these events, and so that's really important to know. Not only do they help with just day-to-day resiliency for our customers, but they help with all of these one-off events.

That's all I had.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Fay.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Beat you to it, Commissioner Clark.

So I have request a question about -- you talked a lot about this, you know, the relationships and cooperation with mutual aid, and working with other states. I know our Governor has been quick to send resources where needed, wherever that may be.

How do you -- how do you make an analysis of when and how to send those resources in a way that doesn't impact access to Floridians to those resources? So you have those relationships, but, you know, depending on the timing of the storm, to your point, it might go straight to the southeast, none of these resources might be viable to us if

that storm goes through that, you know, that path; whereas, if you have a resources in the west coast, it might not seem the most efficient, but they may likely be the most available when a storm hits.

MR. PIMENTEL: Right. So, I would like to say that we have this magic model that we just punch in a lot of the -- a lot of the things you say and tell us exactly what to do, but we don't.

We certainly have the model that I described earlier on construction man hours that it takes us to restore, in some cases, rebuild the system. But we have to be careful, right?

So the storm is heading up the west coast, for example, in the Gulf, and the expectation is that it's going to hit the Texas border. It is very, very unlikely that we would release any resources attributable to the northwest.

We may release some resources to help those Texas utilities that we have in southeast Florida. It's not likely that that storm will revert back and hit southeast Florida, but we will not release all of those resources from South Florida. Why? Because there is still some chance, however small, that the storm is going to effect, in my little example here, the northwest, and we want to make

sure that we have enough resources inside -- internal resources inside the state of Florida to deal with this situation that I just -- that I just dealt with.

So in every situation we are making that calculus. The problem, if it is a problem, is every other utility's CO is also making the same calculus, right? So the storm is going to Texas. Southern Company is also making that calculus, right? What are the chances that the storm, you know, goes into Texas, but then it starts coming east and affects us in Alabama and Georgia? So I can't speak for Southern Company. They are probably also holding back some resources to protect their customers.

We want to make sure that our customers are well protected, but we also want to make sure that we are helping others in their time of need. So we will release those resources that we can release, making sure that if something wacky happens with the storm, that we are still in descent shape.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. And do you think Florida utilities have an abnormal level of request? I mean, it's just -- it's obvious to mean when we talk to other commissioners around the

country, that maybe probably because of experience, we are one of the best, if not the best at restoration. And so I would imagine we are one of the first states that they turn to when they -- they end up being impacted by a storm.

MR. PIMENTEL: I think they -- I think they do, but it's also one of the states, in my view, that probably holds back their resources a little bit more.

We have a -- we have a stat that says that Florida has a 56-percent chance of being hit by a hurricane this year. Just because there is a storm in the Gulf heading towards Texas does not mean that another one cannot pop up very quickly in the Caribbean and start heading to southeast Florida. So you have to be very, very aware of that.

And so while others will certainly want our resources and our experience, we have to be very really, really careful, especially during a hard storm season, where we've seen storms pop up very, very quickly. You don't want to put someone else in a bad situation. You have sent 500 resources to utility X, and now you are calling utility X and saying, I know that you have provided estimated time of restoration to your customers in state Y --

I won't mention the state -- but I need my resources back, right? Now that places them in a very unfortunate situation. They've had no time to plan.

So we are fairly conservative in releasing our resources, and making sure that our customers in the state of Florida are protected. But I would venture to say that at this point, based on the storms that we've seen over the last several years, that many other utilities are also being fairly conservative.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. And I am sure the everyone is going to talk about it being in Tallahassee and seeing what we just saw, it gives awareness of how quickly things can escalate, and that you might have those resources, to your point, somewhere else, because you are -- you are coming up on storm season, and it just seems like the nature of what we are dealing with every year pushes towards holding those resources more because of supply chain and all of those kind of things.

MR. PIMENTEL: Right. I think at 30,000 feet, that is what's happening, right? People are just a little bit more concerned about -- I am not the one that is seeing some of the things that I have

talked to you about, right? Others are seeing, and it's not a secret. So folks are being a bit more conservative as to how they are going to serve their customers.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. It's a tough decision.

MR. PIMENTEL: Thanks.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Clark.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just a couple of observations. I want to just say thank you to, not only FPL, but all the parties for the work that they've done on mutual aid. I think we have come a long way in the last three or four years to enhancing that effort.

And I also want to -- and I would ask the other parties to address this if they are comfortable doing so when they speak. I think if you asked any of the parties sitting in this room, they would all sign on to a mutual aid agreement immediately. That's typically not where our problems go. They go back to insurance and attorneys are where these issues really where they lie. It's not a lack of desire on any part to accept and look for that mutual aid, or to accept that mute aid. It's more of legal issues that keep

these things from happening, and I just -- I think that really needs to be pointed out in a lot of regards.

But also in understanding that in accepting mutual aid, do you find that sometimes you have to limit the amount of resources that you are able to take? Sometimes -- we are talking about trying to get crews, but we often hear on the news that crews were standing available and couldn't report, or would not report, or you did not ask for them or need them.

Are there not circumstances where you have an inability to handle the number of crews? I know -- for instance, I talked with a friend of mine who is a lineman who was working here in Tallahassee during the storm, and they were doing a tremendous effort, but he was placed with an employee who had no idea of how the system operates. Had no idea of their locations. They were making that job more difficult. Having enough resources to handle that, are you finding that a problem a lot of times?

MR. PIMENTEL: Absolutely. So there is a couple of different ways that we have tried to address that internally.

We try to make sure we have an experienced FPL

person with a crew, right? And when I say a crew, we will bring in -- let's think of a crew in terms of a truck. Although, a crew is really a person, just a crew and a truck that maybe has two people in the truck. We try to place an FPL person in an area that manages those external crews, right? To get around the, oh, gosh they don't really know anything about the system, and so on.

But there will be other situations where there are certain utilities whose systems are very similar to ours. We may take an entire crew from them, right, including their supervisors, and so on, and put them in a certain area and just ask them, go ahead and work in this area. And since they've done it for us five, six, seven, 10 times before, we've got really good communication with those folks, and they feel good about working together.

But there absolutely will be situations -- let's say, it's a major storm that hits a major population area, you know, somewhere in the state of Florida. There is a likely scenario where we would not be able to accept as much assistance from the outside as folks try to throw on us. There is only -- there would be only so many people we could

bring in the area and actually technologically manage that, manage the switching orders. Is this on? Is this off?

You can't bring 100,000 people into the state and expect it to be a very efficient process. What will actually happen is you will have a bunch of crews that you are paying for that aren't doing much work.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: And just two other observations, quickly, Mr. Chairman, that -- two of the key things that I have seen, especially with FPL's program, that I want to just commend. Your placement of personnel in the EOCs, making that commitment to have someone every time the EOC is activated, to have an FPL person in that EOC, I think, is a very strong commitment. And I know a lot of the other utilities have followed suit in that regard as well, but I want to commend you guys for that, as well as the mobile community action teams. This is one that I saw work probably better than anybody could imagine during Hurricane Michael, having those teams that were positioned, folks within the Walmart parking lots, and the people that were in the parking lots available to meet and talk with those employees who all other

communication channels were down, that they have no other access. But to know that those individuals were there, and at least the concerns were being heard by the company, I think, made a tremendous impact in our area, and I would encourage everyone to look at that option if you have not already employed some sort of device, mobile action team, to take a look at that, because that's something you are to be commended for.

MR. PIMENTEL: Thank you. I couldn't have said it better. I appreciate those comments.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Passidomo.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Pimentel, for being here. I appreciate it. I mean, I -- I think I said this last workshop, but being -- having that opportunity after -- I mean, after you -- what folks in Tallahassee know after this storm, but seeing my hometown of Naples after Hurricane Ian, and the work that -- the restoration effort that FPL did in that territory was truly tremendous, and it was -- it's really devastating to see, so I -- I mean, I commend that effort. It really was like operate -- war operation. I just couldn't believe it.

And I am glad that Commissioner Clark brought up that, because the employee and linemen recruitment seems really important. You are saying you want to have an FPL employee with all of these out-of, you know, out-of-state folk, and just making sure -- I mean, is that something that you are having trouble with? Just having your own -- recruiting your own employees to the state, to get adequate linemen, you know, that are -- have enough information, are part of the company to train those out-of-state employees?

MR. PIMENTEL: We don't -- we are not -- we haven't seen an issue with it. My comment to Commissioner Clark was, I don't know what the extreme would be, so I used the 100,000 folks from the outside. I think at some point, it would be a lot less than 100,000 people, that you got so many people from the outside that you really cannot manage an efficient operation, and now you are just managing an inefficient operation, and likely not a very safe operation. So there is a little bit of give and take as to how many people you can get from the outside and actually have an efficient restoration.

On the internal front, you know, we are lucky.

We are a large company. We not only have Florida Power & Light, but we have a sister company also that does business outside of the state of Florida. Employees from both companies have storm roles. It's not just the employees from Florida Power & Light.

Employees from NextEra Energy Resources also have storm roles, right? And those storm roles could be -- you know, it's not everybody in a hardhat walking the line, or switching -- switching gear, and so on. There is -- these -- these men and women that come from the outside, or even inside the state of Florida that are helping us, have to be fed, right? They have to be housed. We have to make sure we have enough inventory on hand, right, at the staging centers for them to be able to pick it up and put on their trucks. Their trucks have to be fueled. There has to be logistics as to where they are going, what are their orders for the day?

So there is a lot of employees internally in the state of Florida that are not what I call electrical engineers that are actually helping out with these staging areas, and making sure that we can be as efficient as possible. On that front, we

are very lucky, and we have not had any issues with people volunteering or getting called for a storm -- what we call storm duty.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: That's amazing. And I do remember when I did visit one of the station sites after Ian, you know, a lot of the employees that were there, like, yeah, I work a desk job, but I am, like, you know, but there is a real commitment by those employees to, for the entire company, to get rest -- you know, restoration efforts, so and I found that really just amazing, that there was just this -- this global effort from the whole community.

The only thing -- the only -- just a minute, Chairman, I think that the point you are really hitting home is increased the intensification of storms, and that now we -- you know, that to be prepared for that is going to necessarily be more costly, and until, you know, forecasting technology vastly improves, because we didn't even know we were going to have, like, rain a couple of weeks ago, let alone, like, a tornado, that we -- that, you know, there is a balance there. Of course, customers care tremendously about restoration and getting their power back on. But affordability

goes hand-in-hand with that, and so we are just trying to balance.

So on that, the undergrounding program that you have in conjunction with the wooden pole replacements, I kind of -- I am just wondering that if there is -- that -- are you doing some sort of, like, tangible data collection about in certain areas, which one serves better and cost benefit analysis between those two -- those programs, because they obviously work together, but --

MR. PIMENTEL: So absolutely.

So for -- I talked about storm undergrounding, right? Undergrounding what I call our community lines. Most people call them laterals. I just call them community lines.

There is a reason that you are number one on that list, your community is number one on that list, and there is a reason why your community is number -- you know, I will pick it -- number 1,000 on that list, right?

We have a lot of metrics of neighborhoods, and we know whose power is out the most; who has the most significant, for example, trees; what happens when there is a lot of wind. We understand all that.

So if you are towards a higher part of that list, it's likely because you had a number of outages during storms in the past. And so when you work your way through that list, you are actually making the entire system better. Because now, the resources that would have been dedicated in just your neighborhood, right, we don't have to dedicate those resources to your neighborhood. We don't -- we may not need those resources at all, so now you are lowering the overall cost of the system.

So there is certainly a balance, and the hardening and undergrounding that we are doing is a reduction. You should think about that as the overall reduction in the ultimate cost of serving the customer. But in the meantime, I don't know whether it's the meantime or for a long time, it is very clear that there is more damage, for whatever -- for whatever reason, right? There is clearly more people. There is clearly more buildings. There is clearly an intensification going on, but there is more damage. And so now we have to prepare for storms a little sooner than what we have, and it's going to be a little more costly than what we had.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Any further questions?

Well, Mr. Pimentel, thank you. I appreciate you digging into to the weeds with us and, you know, kind of going over, certainly, some of the lessons learned. Very informative to us. Obviously, this is a major priority in the state of Florida, so thank you.

MR. PIMENTEL: Thank you. Appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Of course.

All right. Next up is Mr. Kevin Walz. He is the Regional Manager of Operations for Florida Public Utilities Company.

We will give you a few seconds -- oh, the slides are up and operating.

MR. WALZ: Does this work?

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: I believe so.

MR. WALZ: Okay. Very good.

Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Kevin Walz. I am with Florida Public Utilities, the Regional Manager for the Operations divisions of both natural gas and electric.

Just a brief overview on Florida Public Utilities. We have a large footprint in the state of Florida, primarily of natural gas, propane and

then our electric divisions, which consist of two areas, one in the panhandle in Marianna, Florida, and then our other service location. If this was an eye chart, it would be a great test, because it's up in the furthest northeast corner in the state there at Amelia Island.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: If I could read that, is that 20-20 vision?

MR. WALZ: I think it would be a little better than 20-20.

Roughly about 30,000 customers. We have about 60 miles of transmission lines, and 908 miles of distribution lines in the two collective areas. So the main focus, obviously, is going to be electric discussion. Just -- I thought it was a great presentation by FPL. They have been a fantastic neighbor to us and helping with mutual assistance when we need it. Fortunately, in 2023, we came through unscathed, so that was a good thing.

What I am going to touch on is just an overview of the preparation and restoration process. A big deal of this is the preparation piece of it. Both, you know, putting efforts and investments into our infrastructure is always the way that we want to attack being prepared for a

storm so that when hurricanes, or tornadoes, or pop-up thunderstorms happen, hopefully the system, can just watch it run, and hopefully have no interruptions. But if we do, we get into activation and we will be in our restoration phase.

So A lot of pre-storm planning. Obviously, safety first for our customers, our employees, mutual assistance, our contractors. And we have things in place for emergency procedures, and what we consider working for -- the working conditions of our employees. And then education to the public is priority one for us. Not having folks go around downed power lines, public safety is, again, priority one.

We do have a yearly drill, but much like -- much like the previous discussion, we are preparing for storms and adverse weather and outages. I mean, it's a 24/7 utility operation that's our bread and butter. We want to keep the lights on.

Our customer outreach programs, again, educating the public is priority for us. We do handouts, brochures, information on our websites. The one that I will point out is the Citizens Advisory Council. That's actually a grassroots type of approach that we've taken on, to where we

have community leaders and community business folks in smaller, what I will call just, again, grassroots meetings at our offices to where we can get a feel for what the customers' pinpoints are, and what their concerns are, whether its vegetation. Vegetation is always a concern. We like to trim back as far as we possibly can, but obviously on Amelia Island, they really enjoy looking at the trees and this beautiful canopy, so it presents -- it presents a unique challenge for us. But again, having that education on the front end we've found has been paying dividends so that we at least are educating our consumers about what we are trying to accomplish and the means for it.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Is there a leader in that? Like, is there -- is there an issue that pops up that's been most important -- important commonly with the Citizens Advisory Council? And I have heard, certainly, my share of stories with trees issues and jurisdictions, and so the forth --

MR. WALZ: Yes.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Is that -- is that it?

MR. WALZ: That's the primary focus, yeah. And we have a lot of canopy roads, and protected old oak trees, and we look for the best means to

provide service around those areas --

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Right.

MR. WALZ: -- but by the same token, when the wind blows, obviously those are going to be the first impacted.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Sure.

MR. WALZ: Like I mentioned before, we do have emergency procedures in place. Storm communication plans.

Staging becomes an issue for us. We are on a somewhat isolated footprint, at least in our northeast division where we are on an island. So the footprint is very limited, and that logistical decision of where do we prestage crews, manpower, material based on access issues, because there are simply just two ways to get on or off that island.

In Marianna, we are much more fortunate. We have a larger footprint. It's more rural. So there is the ability to bring folks in and have plenty of ample space. However, our logistical limitations are hotels, and accommodations, and food, and all that stuff that all of us need to focus and have to move day-to-day and through our work.

We are always, again, just constantly working

with the logistics team to make sure that we have those pre-identified locations for hotel accommodations and food.

Also, we have local contractors that are working part of our storm protection plan that we want to maintain a good relationship with them, because those are the resources that we are going to have to leverage if the chips are down.

More pre-storm planning. We do system facility and inventory inspections. The supply chain, it's starting to come back to whereas we can -- lead times are starting to diminish, but quite frankly, since COVID, the supply chain lead times and the expense of material has just -- it's at least doubled, if not tripled in some instances where, you know, we really, really -- being part of the SEE, the Southeastern Electric Exchange mutual assistance, leveraging those folks and, you know, if we need material, or if we share material, those things -- those pinchpoints are what every utility is facing at this point.

We do participate in the EEI storm drills, along with coordinating with the EOCs. I know that that was mentioned in the previous presentation. We want to partner with -- with the local command

centers and make sure that we are sharing information, and vice-versa, that we are getting that information back.

When move into activation, again, consistently watching the storm and how it's moving through -- towards us, or into our service territories. We consistently review our duties and assignments for each of our employees. So I said we have natural gas and propane. We make every attempt to leverage all the employees and see how we can best utilize our resources, because, again, that local intelligence is vital for us when we have 400 crews in so that we can get them to the places they need to be and also that they can work safely on our system.

One of the lessons learned in Michael was fuel, and we make a concerted effort to make sure that we have secured fuel, and because without fuel, you can't get a truck to an outage, so that's one of the big lessons learned that we've had in the past.

Again, the building facilities, and working with the local EOCs. And obviously, we are a smaller company when it comes to the electric footprint, but our employees lives where they work,

and they put a lot of pride and effort into making sure that they are working safely, and they are helping the customers that are their neighbors, and really focusing on their safety and their family's safety.

For the restoration piece, again, systematic approach. Intelligence is vital. So any intelligence that we can get from damage assessment utilize -- utilizing drones, that's a great technology.

We also team our internal crews with external crews and contractors. And for the majority of our circuits in the northeast, they are relatively short, and they are shorter -- shorter circuit lengths as opposed to out in Marianna, we have much longer circuit lengths, so to the exposure level is enormous, and, you know, you could have a couple of miles to pick up two customers. The logistical approach, and having that -- that, again, local Intelligence to know what are the areas that could be trouble spots is just -- that information is vital to the restoration process. And we do lean very heavily on our local folks to what we -- we have feeder spot teams. So we would assign a circuit to a particular individual, and then they

would run all of -- all of the restoration behind that circuit, so that we keep things consistent, one; and we also have a routine approach to switching evolutions and safe restoration efforts.

The other thing that we've -- we've found during the course of storms is first responders are a tremendous help for us. They get the calls for wire down, arcing, flashing, and they make the scene safe. Our first priority has to be relieving those folks so that if there are other emergencies, that they are -- that they are needed for, personal health issues, we want to free them up. We don't needs them sitting on a down wire.

So we've taken contractor crews along with one of our folks, and we call them make safe crews, and they will basically -- the first responders follow those wire watching situations and so we can relieve those first responders to get out to what they really need to be doing.

Restoration priority for electric system, obviously we want to get our generation back up first. We do have a small generator on the island. But our transmission lines from FPL and JEA, and our substations moving out to our distribution feeders, and I think with any utility, from an

electric standpoint, I think that's your best common means of restoration.

Also our priority customers, we want to make sure we get the hospitals, the police, fire and EOC, the storm shelters, water and sewer plants, and food retailers and restaurants, just those things that we can hopefully give to consumers and our customers back up to living how they want to be living -- how they want to live. You know, we understand that lives is part of the expectation for an electric utility, so we want to maining sure we are restoring folks in a timely manner.

Communication. Again, communication is a huge piece, especially in the preparation, so we focus that 72-, 48- and 12-hour increments to local and national media outlets. As you can see, several different means or mechanisms from social media to brochures, to printed ads, our website.

And again, just touching more on the digital communications, our customers just want education. They want to know how their life is going to be impacted and what they are going to have to do to take steps or strides as the power is out. And just being able to educate our customers, and making sure that they have as up-to-date

information as we can provide, especially with restoration times.

We'll leverage several different media outlets from our social media touch points, but we want to make sure that it's all pointing back to one main page so that we are not giving counter messages. We want to keep the messaging consistent and make sure that we are -- we are putting -- putting the most accurate information out there.

So storm hardening, again, thanks to the Commission, our storm protection plan, we were one of the last utilities to the table in 2023. We completed most of our engineering, and we have moved into the construction phase in '24. And also for our vegetation management, we moved to a new four-year trim cycle.

We just found inefficiencies with trimming our laterals different than our main circuits because of constraints. We wanted to increase efficiencies by having our vegetation crews trimming in the same spot, as opposed to driving as past a lateral just to do a feeder. So we wanted to streamline that process. And so far, our vegetation management, aside from some of the voice complaints that we get from Amelia Island, we've already seen paid

dividends with our reliability metrics, so -- and we do -- we do that for both our transmission and our distribution service.

Accomplishments in 2023, about 65.22 miles of distribution feeders. That also includes our -- our hotspot trimming. What I will call our spot trimming, when you have some vegetation that's just grown into our -- our distribution or transmission circuits that needs immediate attention; and also 98.22 of distribution laterals.

Again, the plans and initiatives. Our wood pole inspections. We are also on a eight-year cycle. We inspect our transmission and distribution poles at the same time. Total poles inspected about 27, 28,000 or so.

And failure rates, about 2.67. It's been fairly consistent with what we've seen year after year for our -- for our failure rate. We do have a bit of a backlog that we are continuing to work down with some contracting resources, but we do anticipate another 200 poles, I would think in the upcoming year, to be replaced.

Again, just touching on that storm protection plan, it's a -- it's a much needed investment to the infrastructure and building grid integrity.

Again, we've already seen dividends pay. And I think to the presentation -- the previous presentation, obviously it helps, we look at based on circuit performance. We want to address those circuits that need the attention most in the top priority, and then move down systematically.

Some improvements based on lessons learned. The supply chain piece. Again, I can't -- I can't stress enough how big of a pinchpoint that has been for us over the course of the last few years. Just trying to get material -- material on hand. And, you know, as an industry, we face these -- these same problems based on storms in the midwest, you know, everybody is looking for those -- those bread and butter items, your transformers, your poles, your wire. So it's become -- it's become a challenge, but to address that challenge, we -- we certainly try to inventory prior to hurricane season or storm season so that we have adequate resources available for us when we are moving into those times where our -- our risk has increased.

More drone usage. Again, that -- just the benefits of -- of getting to inaccessible areas with technology that you can get information from. And information is power when it comes to storm

restoration, knowing where you need -- what material you need and what logistics you need to get people restored.

The recordkeeping portion of it, that's kind of a back-end piece, and it's imperative that we keep consistent with many accurate recordkeeping so that we can document labor, materials, equipment used in the restoration efforts.

I think a lot of times the -- I have ran my fair share of storms over the course of 23 years, and the most challenging pieces of it are the logistical pieces of starting a storm and ending a storm. How you start and how you end is probably the two most difficults. I dare say, it's almost as Groundhog Day. Once you are into the storm restoration, you are kind of just doing the same things over and over again, moving from circuit to circuit. But those being -- being accurate on the front end with what resources you need, and having material available, and then also documenting what you used.

The Storm Protection Plan initiatives. Again, I can't stress enough how valuable that's been to upgrading the infrastructure of our -- of our system, and we are going to continue to move on as

the years come.

Technology. We always are looking to leverage different tools and technology and improve our GIS system, being our OMS system. And again, just anything that we can do to gain Intelligence on storm restoration is imperative for us.

I will open it up for any questions.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you. Much appreciate the presentation.

Commissioners, any -- any questions?

Commissioner Fay, you are recognized.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Just real quick, Mr. Chairman.

I know we talk a lot about the electric system and all the requirements in that. Just in general, can you speak to -- like, in Tallahassee, we have a high level of residents that are relying on gas and backup generation for their -- their homes. I think at one point, you guys had maybe, like, virtual power plant, a way to transmit gas that, you know, when there is a disruption. Any -- any thoughts on how that's changing and evolving and, like, intertwining with the electric.

MR. WALZ: It's a great point. And, yes, it's completely intertwined. And we've taken that with

our Sharp Energy group to -- to utilize some of that mobile transportation of natural gas so that we can -- we can inject if we have to. We can do things outside the box to -- to keep that resource flowing as well; but, yeah, it's a great point.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Are you hearing more from consumers about that being an issue, the feedback, or is it more just vegetation?

MR. WALZ: We haven't -- I don't know that consumers always connect the dots between natural gas and electricity and the generation portion of it. It's more that you meet a concern when the power is out, you know, how we get the poles and wires put back. But it's a -- yeah, it's certainly something to take -- to take account for.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Passidomo.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Thank you.

I have -- I have kind of a random question. Like, I didn't realize that the supply chain, that that was really the still being an issue. That's disappointing to hear.

In your mutual -- in your mutual aid agreements, is there a way that, with other utilities, you can work on bulk purchasing or

something like that, and splitting provisions? Do you guys ever do that as a way to sort of mitigate that issue? Because I think our -- I don't know if that issue is as big for larger utilities that have, you know, that are purchasing so much at one time.

MR. WALZ: Sure. I think it gets -- it gets back to the, not the same, but a similar trend of IOUs helping municipalities. There are just the logistical concerns in between all of that.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Right.

MR. WALZ: It's more of a shared -- shared resource that we would go to leverage --

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Okay.

MR. WALZ: -- if we needed the material.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Yeah, that makes sense. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Clark.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: I will follow on to that with just a comment and question about what you are seeing in terms of it costs. We are looking at the supply chain issues. And in my opinion, we have not only caused some logistical problems for us, but they are also causing cost issues.

You mentioned some of the costs were you up.

The numbers that I keep seeing, it's not like we are seeing 10 and 20 percent increases. We are seeing 100 and 200 percent increases in the cost of the materials. Can you specifically talk about transformers, poles and wire being those three? What kind of averages have you seen in cost increases in those three areas?

MR. WALZ: To be somewhat vague, to your point, yeah, it hasn't gone up to 10 to 15 percent. It's gone up in multiples of hundreds. So it -- yeah, it's a concern for us. And we have to make those capital investments so that we have that material available to us. By the same token, we have to -- it's a balancing act, much like your -- there is no one clearcut answer of, yes, we are going to go all in and put our chips in this basket. We have to be -- we have to be logistical about it and focus on -- you know, we are providing a service. So that service has to be affordable as well. And across the organization, it's been a juggling act for us.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: And in similar conversations with some of the suppliers, it's not necessarily the fact that we don't have the capabilities in this country to produce or to get

the materials out. It has been a supply chain issue on their part where the raw materials, the resources needed, i.e., specifically I believe copper being one of those, being such a resource that is in such scarcity right now, they can't get the proper materials to make the stuff. Is that a fair assessment as well?

MR. WALZ: It's a fair assessment, yeah. And just the raw materials, you know, you -- would look at doing things outside the box with, you know, recycling transformers, because just the sheer raw materials are -- there is less availability.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you. Great questions, and I am just kind of just commenting in general. There is equipment issues. There is supply chain issues. And as I talked to commissioners, you know, at NARUC from across the country, many of them are experiencing similar, you know, issues in their states, and I hear from, you know, most power companies, hey, you know, this is an issue.

A lot of it, from what I understand, obviously copper is a super expensive metal at the current moment. Some of these are not even manufactured

here, and there are no other options for vendors. We are relying on folks from overseas to be able to supply us equipment. That's obviously no fault of -- of the companies, but it is a concern just from both a state and national perspective.

So it is something I actually do want to talk about as a commission, and learn more about maybe in a future IA meeting, to -- to just dig a little bit deeper and maybe to kind of put our -- our brains together and our thoughts together, and hopefully try to, you know, kind of settle this, or at lease, you know, improve it as best we can, so great questions.

All right. Awesome. Well, thank you. I know we went off a little off topic, but I much appreciate you being a part of it and present, so thanks again.

MR. WALZ: Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Of course.

Next up we have Amy Zubaly. She is Executive Director of Florida Municipal Electric Association. I will allow her to get situated, but before that, we are going to bring the water to the table so that it's a little more accessible for our speakers. So I apologize for the first two

speakers keeping you -- keeping you thirsty as you were.

You never know. These presentations can go long. We do ask a bazillion questions. We certainly try not to, but the floor is yours when you are ready.

MS. ZUBALY: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. It's a little disconcerting that you bring the water out for me, but my presentation will be like that. Thank you so much for having me today.

I am Amy Zubaly, Executive Director of the Florida Municipal Electric Association. Unlike my colleagues that presented before me, I am not an electric utility. We are a statewide association, represent Florida's 33 municipally owned utilities, or public power utilities, or munies, as we are often fondly called.

So if you have specific questions directed on one of my utility members and I cannot answer that, I will make sure to get you back that information. But collectively, we represent all of them, and we have a big role in emergency and storm response as well.

And given that these presentations were due

May 9th, and that May 10th was the series of tornadoes in Tallahassee, I did prepare some fact sheets on those tornadoes, and I can cover at the present of the presentation as well in case there are questions.

So a little bit about the footprint of public power in Florida. I mentioned there are 33 public power utilities in Florida. Collectively, we serve about 1.5 million customer meters, or about four million Floridians, which is about 14 percent of the state.

Our big five, JEA in Jacksonville, Orlando, Lakeland, Tallahassee, Gainesville. We also have a multitude of very small utilities, Blountstown, Chattahoochee, Moore Haven and Clewiston, geographically dispersed throughout the state from Blountstown, in the Panhandle in Calhoun County, all the way down to Key West at the southernmost point of the state. And collectively, we employ about 5,700 Floridians as well.

I am going to go over our storm response role. FMEA, we kind of put our storm response role basically in two buckets. One, FMEA serves as the mutual aid coordinator for our members. And so whenever any of our members need additional mutual

aid support, those requests for assistance come in through FMEA. We have a very close network, both within our own member utilities in the state, as well as through our national association of my counterparts around the country. And so depending on the magnitude of the storm, those requests for mutual assistance may come from very far away, but those go through our national association, the American Public Power Association.

And again, when the other states need support as well, those calls would come into FMEA, and we would gather our member utilities' available support to send to other areas in need.

In addition, FMEA serves as a liaison between our member utilities and our state and federal partners, including you all. We are involved and have a seat in the state EOC. We work very closely the Governor's Office and Division of Emergency Management. And at the national level, through our national association, we also work very closely with the United States Department of Energy, and with FEMA and the Electric Subsector Coordinating Council. So instead of having to reach out to 33 of our member utilities, all of those requests go through FMEA.

Hurricane Idalia, I will cover this from the getgo. We were incredibly fortunate with the path of Idalia. You know, as FPL speaker spoke earlier. You know, the storm bounced around a little bit. There were times when it looked like it was going to be coming straight up to Tallahassee. It did take a turn, and so we were extremely fortunate with the impacts that we received. We had about 42,000 customers out collectively. A large majority of them were from City of Tallahassee. I would say that Newberry and Williston were probably our other ones that were -- that were hit, or had some substantial impacts.

We prepared well in advance for this storm, not just Tallahassee and those communities that I mentioned, but several of the north Florida ones, because you don't know, again, where the storm is going to come, or what the magnitude is going to be. So we had a large amount of mutual aid from about 23 different states that had already been deployed, and many others on standby.

All of our member utilities were restored within 48 hours. And because we had a fairly large response of public power and mutual aid, we were able to shift a good portion of our mutual aid

crews, along with our own Florida crews, over to several of the co-ops that were much harder hit, and so we supported them as well in Idalia.

Mutual aid. There were questions on mutual aid, and I would say we -- I put these into two buckets as well.

Number one, all of our member utilities in Florida operate under the same mutual aid agreement, and that mutual aid agreement is done through our national association, American Public Power Association. All of my member utilities in Florida are signed on to that.

Likewise, all of our electric co-ops in Florida are -- also operate under that same mutual aid agreement through their national association. And so you may hear Mr. Bjorklund talk about that a little bit later.

So all Florida munies and all Florida co-ops, along with about 1,600 munies and coops across the country are all signed on to that one mutual aid agreement.

In addition, back in 2017, through FCG, we developed the statewide mutual assistance compact, and that was mutual aid with the investor-owned utilities. I know that that was mentioned earlier.

FMEA, on behalf of all of our member utilities, signed that compact, which basically lays out the stipulations of what it would be if we needed mutual aid from an investor-owned utility. And as part of that, each of those IOUs' mutual aid agreements were attached to that compact, and about a dozen or so of my members went ahead and signed every one of them.

So we have many agreements in place with each of Florida's IOUs. And if any of our other smaller utilities would ever need that assistance, which is probably highly unlikely the City of Blountstown would need FPL, but if they did, it's already laid out. That document is there. It would just need to be signed.

So we do have mutual aid agreements in place with all of the utilities in Florida. They have been used reciprocally, most recently during these tornadoes, and I can talk about that a little bit later, on some supply chain needs, and we received some materials from the IOUs as well in the state.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Amy --

MS. ZUBALY: Yes.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: -- is that agreement just with the IOUs, or is it also with the co-ops?

MS. ZUBALY: It's just with the investor -- so we already have agreements with the co-ops, so we -- that's a separate agreement we have. And so our agreement is just with the IOUs. And that indemnity issue is definitely still there, and it is a big concern with all of our members. Some of the large ones -- I would say the medium to large, those dozen or so that signed that, it was important to them to just make sure that they had that in their back pocket if they needed ready to go, and so they are signed on to that, but it does not solve, unfortunately, those indemnity issues that --

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: What are some of those issues?

MS. ZUBALY: It's liability. So as, you know, we're -- as local governments, we have sovereign immunity, and so we waive our sovereign immunity by doing mutual aid with the investor-owned utilities and have that liability put on us.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Damn attorneys.

MS. ZUBALY: Yeah, it's a lot of attorney issues.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: You would think, you know, the Governor -- the Governor declares a State

of Emergency, that you are playing with a different -- it's a different ballgame --

MR. WISEMAN: Different issue.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: -- and, you know, you are allowed to -- you know, everybody gets sovereign immunity. You wish it was that simple, huh?

MS. ZUBALY: I wish it was that simple. So we have worked on those issues. And again, we have used those mutual aid agreements reciprocally with our IOUs in the state of Florida.

You are going to hear a lot of echoing of comments from some of the former speakers in terms of hurricane preparedness, and planning and improvements that we have done.

Our member utilities are continuing to make investments into their infrastructure. Some of these pictured here in the upper right, that's New Smyrna Beach, utilizing you drones and infrared technology to inspect some of their transmission services.

That middle picture there I believe is Winter Park, who has been very aggressive on their undergrounding that they have been doing in the city. And then some other self-healing type

technologies, like tripsavers and automatic reclosures, and I think that is actually Lakeland on that bottom there.

Tree trimming and pole inspections. We, again, follow suit. And to not be too redundant, pole inspections done typically on an eight-year cycle or less. Some of our smaller communities can do those pole inspections in a much shorter time. And that's primarily all for distribution. Transmission seems to be done in about a two- to five-year cycle on average.

Vegetation management, that is generally done on a three-year cycle as well. Tree heavy areas, obviously the setbacks are increasing to provide a little bit more reliability.

Hurricane preparedness. And again, I will kind of focus it on both FMEA's perspective and individual member utilities' perspective.

From the association, we do an annual hurricane and storm preparedness workshop. That workshop was just held a couple weeks ago. We had about 160 personnel from our member utilities there for our workshop. We shared best practices, lessons learned, peer presentations from different utilities on what they have done in terms of

preparedness and response. Typically, we have the National Weather Service present a forecast for the upcoming season.

I will say last year, from FMEA's perspective, we held our first statewide tabletop exercise. While many of our member utilities do their own tabletops, we did a very large statewide tabletop exercise that involved staff from the PSC, the EOC -- the PSC and EOC, FDEM, DOE and FEMA were a of it, and that's what that bottom picture is. And so it was an opportunity to run through a tabletop example and let a utility see how each other would respond, and so it was a great learning opportunity for them.

I also participate in a national mutual aid exercise with my counterparts from around the country from a mutual aid perspective. But our individual utilities do their own exercises. Many do tabletops. Many do hurricane disaster drills.

That picture in the upper right is actually Kissimmee Utility Authority doing a disaster drill this year. They had a simulation even of a rescuing a hurt man from one of their power plants. So they do a very wide variety of disaster drills and exercises leading up every year into hurricane

season.

And as entities of local government, we are naturally aligned with our state emergency operations center. So either somebody from within the city is tied with the utility, is housed within the EOC. Some of those larger utilities are JEA and OUC and KUA that are authorities, have designated people that sit within their EOC, and those areas of priority restoration are reviewed with their county EOCs every year as well.

Communications and outreach. If those of you are -- any of you were in Tallahassee over the last week other so, you probably had a multitude of text messages coming on your phone. You know, we -- we go through many of the same customer outreach prior to seasons or during storms that my counterparts here did as well. We emphasize safety and preparedness in advance of the storm. Prepare hurricane guides for our customers.

We found a lot of great success from emergency text communications. As I mentioned, just in these tornadoes, there has been some test markets that customers have responded very well to getting those texts repeatedly during an event, and so more and more of our utilities are utilizing those emergency

text type services.

Social media, you know, before, during and after, pushing out a lot of information. That picture there in Lakeland of the crew safety, you know, talking about crews and using crew pictures kind of humanizes the situation and lets customers understand that these are, you know, real people out there that left their home, that are working around the clock.

We report our ETRs and outage updates. And using traditional media as well. I don't want to say that social media and texts are the end-all. Still utilizing the local newspapers and local TVs is beneficial as well.

And then of course, the meter center responsibility, that was another one that was very beneficial for Tallahassee this past year. There was so much damage to customer side, meters and to overheads, and so pushing out those types of messages so that they know what they are responsible for, versus what are the utility' responsibility. So even though power may be restored, they may not be able to safely receive that power.

FMEA also helps our members with -- with

communications. This is just a sample of -- we have a hurricane and emergency response page on our web site. During hurricanes, we will hold daily update calls with our member utilities. They usually start a couple of days in advance of potential landfall, discussing situational awareness. Where are the greatest needs? What mutual aid situations look like. Where are they all coming from?

We have a hurricane, as I mentioned, hurricane and storm response on our website. And as part of that, we have a hurricane social media toolkit. It involves premade social media messages and graphics for our safety, pre, during and after a storm response. This is very helpful, particularly for some of our smaller utilities that may have not have a big robust communications team, they can pull those messages and copy and pace them and have them ready to go on their own social media websites as well.

And then we have also, because we serve as that mutual aid coordinator, we track our mutual aid partners and we track their social media, and push out what they are sharing on their end and tagging who they are with, and so we work

hand-in-hand with our member utilities on the communications aspects of things.

Some lessons learned and potential obstacles. Lessons learned, definitely the infrastructure investments in storm hardening is working. We are seeing fewer outages and improving liability, and so those are all wonderful. Logistics are certainly key.

Having food contracts in place in advance has definitely paid off. I can talk about it again with Tallahassee. As those tornadoes hit that morning on Friday, they already had a food vendor in place as part of their hurricane planning. They had a vendor set up, feeding more than 300 people at five o'clock that day. And so having those contracts in advance certainly have paid off. Same with lodging.

You know, some of our smaller communities have gotten creative on the laundry aspect. And once power is restored, they utilize other members within their community who just want to help, and so we've shared those resources in terms of providing laundry facilities.

And I will definitely echo the supply chain concerns. You know, I think that restoring power

in a major hurricane this season we will be able to use do, utilizing resources amongst our other utility partners in Florida, in the southeast, you know, multiple large-scale hurricanes, and we may be running into supply chain issues.

We had some supply chain needs and material needs during the tornadoes from Tallahassee. Those requests for resources went out, not just to our own public power utilities, but also to the Florida industrial utilities and co-ops, and as well as my other public powers in the southeast. And we did get all the needs that were -- all the needs were met. And I wanted to personally thank all of the IOUs and co-ops in the room, because several of those material needs were filled from the IOUs as well.

And so again, that mutual aid agreement that we have in place came in handy then, because that was already there, and Tallahassee had already signed then, and so we used it for material needs as well.

I passed out a Tallahassee -- the tornado fact sheet just to kind of go over it very briefly.

There were three tornadoes that touched down in Tallahassee almost simultaneously, two EF-2s and

one EF-1. The two EF-2s eventually merged into one right over Myers Park, Capital City Country Club area. Those tornadoes made landfall within about a 20-minute time period between 7:00 and 7:30 that morning. And customer counts went from about 15,000 customers out to about 70,000 customers out literally in the blink of an eye.

I would say by eight o'clock that morning, we already had mutual aid resources confirmed to be coming in later that day. That's how fast that network moved, and how fast those calls came.

Some of the areas in Florida that provided mutual aid were waiting to see what that storm was going to do as it moved across, and so we worked from west to east, knowing that they would be a little bit later to deploy, and then from south to north, knowing the same thing. And so we had many mutual aid crews already on the system by the end of day Friday, many more arriving Saturday, and some additional ones arriving on Sunday.

And the damage that Tallahassee received was worse than what they received from Hermine, Irma and Michael combined. And so it was a substantial amount of damage. They went through two of the heaviest tree canopy neighborhoods in the city,

Myers Park and Indian Head Acres. So there was massive, massive amounts of tree damage and uprooting of trees.

80,000 customers without power at peak. They had 15 transmission lines off and nine substations out of service. They had set a goal of restoring 75 percent of their customers by the end of the next day, on Saturday evening, which they met. They had a goal of restoring 90 percent by the end of day Sunday, and they had met it, at 91 percent. And so they were 99 percent restored by first thing Thursday morning, with just a little bit less than a week.

And then you can see here some of the material needs that they utilized. And this is a city of 120,000 customer meters, so it's not a massively large utility. So a lot of supply needs that were requested and fulfilled. And so, again, we appreciate everybody's support on that.

So with that, I am happy to take any of questions.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Thank you.

And I will tell you, on the communications side, the sketch designating the meters, and kind of whose responsibility is incredibly important. A

lot of times, folks don't really think about it until the situation arises. And I know we added something to our website to help customers, so just want to point that out.

Commissioner Clark, you are recognized.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Amy, just a couple of questions regarding the supply side issues.

Do the municipals have a different design specification than the other utilities in the state of Florida using in terms of characteristics, equipment, distribution voltages and things like that, that cause more of an issue than -- than I think we see in other places?

MS. ZUBALY: Not necessarily, no. You know, wire is wire, for the most part. Transformers, if you have seen one, you have seen one. You know, there are hundreds of different types of transformers in terms of voltages, and even within a utility, and so that is across the board, you know. So some supplies are easier to find, you know, cross arms and the basic supplies. But when you get down to transformers, then those types of specifications, there may only be a few other utilities in the east coast that have that

specification.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: My second question comes to the, specifically the storm this week. And I think that the City did a tremendous job with the amount of damage they had. You know, seven, eight days seems like a long time, but in realistic -- realistic terms, the amount of extensive damage in that isolated of a place required a lot of rebuilding.

Was there any specific things that -- that caused the longer length of time in the restoration? Were there any major hiccups that you saw that we can address?

MS. ZUBALY: No. I think that those areas that took longer to restore than others were, particularly in that Myers Park area, where it was just so much tree damage and you couldn't even get to the easements where you could put the poles back up because of the amount of tree damage that was there. And so it was just a matter of getting into those hard-hit areas to get the power restored.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Did you feel like you had adequate resources? You had plenty of folks --

MS. ZUBALY: Yeah, we did. And we talked about that a little bit earlier with one of the

speakers. You get to a point where, you know, safety becomes a concern and you don't want to put too many crews on a system when you are -- particularly when you are working within a smaller area, because crew safety can become a concern at that point. And making sure that there are enough birddogs from either the main city's perspective to work with those mutual aid crews, or mutual aid partners that have been on the system multiple times.

You know, Tallahassee has been hit with multiple hurricanes over the last five years, so there are some utility partners that have been here repeatedly that know their system almost as well as Tallahassee's own employees. And so making sure that you have got those crews embedded with all of the mutual aid crews, but keeping everybody safe as well.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioner Fay, you are recognized.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Chairman.

Just a real quick comment. Commissioner Clark mentioned it. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the City of Tallahassee and their

response to -- to the storm. I think historically, there have been some probably fair and unfair criticisms of -- of the municipality and how they operate, and their response. The communication was so significantly improved on this.

I mean -- and I don't know if that's from working directly with FMEA, or if they worked on that themselves, but it's just a -- it's a very clear acknowledgment that there was room for improvement, and I think they did so. And it's not perfect, obviously. Every storm is different, and the response would be different.

But I drove through the City to look at some of the damage, and the impact, I think, you know, mirrored some components of where Michael hit, and you saw disaster, and Commissioner Clark mentioned it, such a narrow area, a smaller area that just was not prepared and didn't really have the structure to be really responsive to that type of damage. And I still think that everybody involved did, you know, the best they could.

And I appreciate you mentioning the IOUs too, because I think it's -- we probably -- everyone is probably tired of hearing us say this, right? It's just so important that we have those relationships

during the time of the response. And I know Commissioner Passidomo has seen the damage up close in Naples.

When you see it as a customer, and as a commissioner, it -- it really hits home to you the impact that this has on an individual's daily life. Their ability to go to work and perform their job, and do the things that they need to do just to continue to support their family, and they can't even get out their road to -- to go to work. I mean, it's just -- the impact is so significant, that I really appreciate you guys working with a better cooperation. And maybe you will find someone other than the lawyers to blame for it at some point. Maybe the engineers will be to blame, or somebody --

MR. BAEZ: Not a chance.

COMMISSIONER FAY: -- I don't know how it works, but, you know --

MS. ZUBALY: I try to stay out of it as well.

COMMISSIONER FAY: But I do appreciate the commitment to keep working on it too, because I think there is different business models, and a way to improve as that goes, and that's probably just a conversation that continues to -- to work through

the process, and maybe it's a legislative change, maybe it's not. But anyway, I think we -- if we keep moving in that direction more and more.

It sounds like some of these municipalities can sign and be prepared for this, and then if they choose not to utilize it, that's different than when the actual action hits, and then they are trying to be responsive and get that agreement through at that time period. It might just be worth, you know, doing as much as you can. But I know you have different members, and some choose to, you know, make different decisions for their strategies.

MS. ZUBALY: Thank you for those comments. I appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Well, thank you very much, and much appreciate the insight, especially with, you know, what's just passed us in these last couple of weeks. And I will tell you kind of my quick input of what I heard around town with the communication was phenomenal. Just kind of the chatter was that folks knew what was -- what was going on and what the expectations were. And, you know, like -- like most of us, of course, it

surprised us, right, from a hurricane where we don't get to plan as long. So certainly much appreciate the thought and the input, and of course, the update on things. So again, thank you for being here today.

MS. ZUBALY: Absolutely. Thank you for having me.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Before we move on to our next presenter, do we need a break from the court reporter's perspective?

COURT REPORTER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Good or about five-minute, 10-minute?

COURT REPORTER: About five minutes.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay, let's do a seven-minute break. Let's take a quick seven-minute break, and we will get started back at 1:30.

(Brief recess.)

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. So jumping back in to get to the schedule. Next up is Mr. Archie Collins. He is the President and CEO of Tampa Electric Company.

Sir, thank you for joining us. The floor is yours.

MR. COLLINS: Thank you very much. Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Commissioners, Executive Director Baez, and staff, colleagues and friends from across the industry.

I just -- I just wanted to state before I get started, I am a bit of a country music buff, and with all due respect to the Chair, I would like to suggest that maybe the song of the month change to Storms Never Last by Jessi Colter and Waylon Jennings.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: There are a lot of folks listening. I got a feeling there are somebody in -- in the agency that might, you know, take note of that. Who knows, could make the list.

MR. COLLINS: Very good.

I just wanted to -- to begin, really, by saying what a privilege it is to do -- to do what I do, to lead the 2,500 TECO employees who share a common purpose, and are just so committed to the communities that we serve, and to the 840,000 customers in west central Florida that count on us ever minute of every day. And that is a responsibility that we know is -- is amplified during storm season, you know, in the planning stages and in the aftermath of a hurricane.

I am similar to the previous speakers. I am just going to -- I will speak to the slides as well. Happy to take any questions throughout or at the conclusion of the -- of the presentation.

As you have heard from the previous speakers, if you work in the electric utilities sector, planning for severe weather is a year-round activity. It's not just something that we decide to start working on in -- in April and May with the -- with the onset of the hurricane season on June 1st.

We are continuously trying to improve. While we think we -- we've got more practice at dealing with hurricanes than we would like to here in the state of Florida, and we are good at it, we are always -- we know we can always be better. We are looking for opportunities to be better. We look to continuously improve our processes, our training, our approach, leveraging technology to the extent we can.

And also, as previously noted, we aim to be good partners. Good partners with our -- with our -- within our community. Good partners across the sector. And being as supportive -- supportive as we can.

I wanted to -- I wanted to start with the SPP program. Armando spoke to this. I wanted to echo some of his -- some of his comments which was complimenting both the Legislature and the FPSC for their foresight and acknowledging that in the state of Florida, the resilience of our grid, how they are designed, how they are maintained, the strength of the grid is critically important as the frequency and intensity of hurricanes increases across the peninsula.

A little bit of stats on our system. Our distribution system consists of around 12,500 miles of circuits, 52 percent of that is currently underground. So we've got around 6,200, 6,300 miles of our distribution infrastructure is currently underground. And through our SPP program, we aim to move 100 miles of existing overhead assets underground on an annual basis. And so we are slowly chipping away and increasing the percentage of our infrastructure that is -- that is undergrounded.

Much 89 -- 90 percent of our transmission system currently is either steel or concrete. Only 10 percent of it is wood. Our goal is to have everything migrated to nonwood by about 2028 under

the SPP program.

Anticipating, planning for, designing for flooding, storm surge, is also a critical part of what we do through the SPP program, particularly with low lying substations, and raising them so that they are lifted out of the flood zone is a core piece of what we are doing.

And finally, you know, through the SPP program, we also do much of our vegetation management activities. And I think it's fair to say, as you have heard previously, as you can see as you travel the streets of Tallahassee today, the vast majority of hurricane related outages is really the direct result of tree damage. And so as utilities are always trying to strike this balance between doing what we need to do to protect overhead assets, but not to an extent that it draws the ire of the customers that we are serving. I enjoy the trees in front of my home. I know my neighbors do as well. But -- but they certainly pose a risk during periods of -- of high wind.

The investments that we have made in the SPP program over the past -- over the past five years, together with just our -- our ongoing focus on asset management, are re -- are showing up -- you

are going to see in the stats that we are seeing the benefits of that not just as we prepare for what we call black sky events, but just in our -- in blue sky, you know, for over the course of the year. As we improve the resiliency, we are also improving the reliability, and you will see that in the stats.

I wanted to call out two specific programs we had, vegetation program. I just alluded to. Similar to those who have spoken before me on our distribution system, we maintain a four-year cycle on our -- on our distribution assets. In recent years, we have increased that. We do more supplemental and mid-cycle tree trimming through the SPP program.

If you think about the math I shared earlier. I said we've got about 12,500 miles of -- of distribution circuits, 52 percent of which is underground. So you have got about 6,000 miles of overhead. In 2023, about half of that was trimmed.

So while we try to maintain a four-year cycle, we are doing considerably more tree trimming than we've done in the past to really get at that risk, and to really improve both the resiliency and the reliability of our grid.

From a transmission perspective, bulk is a two-year cycle, non-bulk is a three-year cycle. We would have trimmed 536 miles in 2023. To put that in perspective, our transmission system, which is 99 percent overhead, we only have a very small portion that's underground, is about 1,100 miles. So 536 miles also represents about half of our -- of our system would have been trimmed in 2023.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Archie, do you guys ever sit back and look at the whole tree trimming and say to yourself, if we cut another two more feet off how much money we would safe because we don't have to do it as frequently?

MR. COLLINS: We do. But again, it comes back to the balance, right, that even with the trimming that we do, if you ever -- you know, I pay attention. I sort of -- I frequent things like Nextdoor and, you know, some of these other social apps. And so you see that even as much as we consult with the communities, and consult with customers, and we are so careful with how we go about using arborists to trim the trees, we still get so much criticism because of it.

So doing more than what we were doing, while there probably is a cost benefit analysis there, is

something that just needs to be really carefully balanced in order to maintain relationships with the communities we serve.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Because we are not doing any real damage to the trees. I mean, the trees are going to live. We are not killing any trees. We are just --

MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Are you had the choir?

MR. COLLINS: Not everyone shares that perspective.

It's a great question. It's a great question, and one that we are -- because we want to optimize the cost of everything that we do. We very much acknowledge that anything we spend is customers' money. We need to be careful stewards of that spending. And so tree trimming is something that you are trying -- you are just trying to strike that balance. Be as efficient as you can to derive both the resiliency and reliability benefits, but again, we are limited in how far we can go in some cases.

Pole inspection programs. Same story. Distribution -- our distribution system is on an eight-year cycle. We have got around 250,000

poles. We would have inspected 36,000 of them last year. Three percent or so failure rate. And we would have replaced 787 poles in 2023. Transmission also on a eight-year cycle. And you can see the stats there.

So as you kind of reflect on everything that I have covered, which is, you know, we've really doubled down on grid resiliency through the SPP program. We have these cornerstone asset management programs that set around -- that set around the integrity of the poles, the infringement of, you know, vegetation within the overhead -- within the overhead structures.

Here's where you really see the benefits, on a day-to-day basis of -- of the very thoughtful investments that we've made over the past five years. These are just a subset of the reliability metrics that we monitor daily. SAIDI, the average duration that a customer is without power on an annual basis. SAIFI, the frequency with which our customers, on average, experience an outage. And MAIFIe is momentary outages. Outages that last less than a minute.

And you can see, as you look at each one of those, over the past six years, the average

duration that a customer is without power within our service territory has declined from 96 minutes in 2018 to 57 minutes last year. So 41 percent improvement. MAIFIe has improved 34 percent, and SAIFI has improved 32 percent.

So we are proud of these stats, because they are a testament to the resil -- to the reliability benefits that our -- that our resiliency investments are making, and just our ongoing careful attention to -- to asset management.

Of course, the other -- the other area where we -- where we assess the -- the value that is created from the investments that we make is -- is during times of black sky. And an example of that would be a comparison of -- of how our grid fared, and how quickly we were able to recover from Hurricane Irma as compared to Hurricane -- Hurricane Ian. Of course, Hurricane Ian occurred in 2021. Hurricane Irma in 2017. Similar storms with similar tracks that had similar impacts across -- or similar paths as they traveled across our service territory.

The data speaks for itself. Despite the fact that Ian was slightly worse, had a greater, higher wind speeds on Tampa Electric's service territory,

we were actually able to complete that restoration one day sooner.

The SPP hardened circuits experienced 57 percent less outages during Ian as they did in -- in Irma. We had zero pole or wire -- wire failures on feeders that had been hardened through the SPP program. And not surprisingly, there were no outages on any of the -- any of the laterals that were undergrounded through the SPP program.

So, you know, that's a data point that we hold up as, again, further evidence that the -- the improvements we are making in our infrastructure and in our processes, in our programs, in our overall asset management are yielding benefits during -- as we prepare for hurricanes.

We -- as I mentioned early earlier, we -- we prepare for storms year-round, and we -- and we strive to -- to continuously improve. We consider every storm prep, every storm response to be -- to be a learning opportunity.

Despite the fact that, you know, we felt we were -- we were pleased with our response to Ian in 2021, we still know that we -- there are opportunities to improve. And so as we would do after every storm, we take the time to reflect. We

engage all of our employees. We engage our community partners. We create -- we engage with our peers to understand their lessons learned and best practices, and -- and we've made -- and in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian in 2021, we made many improvements, which -- which are noted here.

We improved our training. We acknowledged that the -- the -- the external weather service that we have -- that we have been partnered with for years could have served us better. And so we've made -- we've made changes. We've -- we've -- we now have added a second Florida based weather service provider to augment the -- our -- our existing weather forecasting service.

We -- we now have increased the number of third-party logistics firms that we deal with to help set up base camps, to feed, to house, to clean, all of the external crews that we would -- that we bring into -- to our service territory.

And we've tried to improve -- Armando spoke to this. We've -- we've made real strides to try to improve the efficiency with which we onboard and bring up to speed the import crews that we are bringing into the service territory. That can be a clunky process, and you are trying to do that as

crisply as you can to get people out as quickly as possible, and as safely as possible. We've made some real improvements in that area.

In addition to -- in addition to improving our processes, our training, our partnerships, our programs, we are also taking advantage of technology to improve our -- our planning for and response to hurricanes as well -- as well. And so at Tampa Electric, we invested in an advanced distribution management system back in 2021 to replace our outdated outage management system. And this has really allowed us to -- it's been a real platform for us to move forward in a meaningful way. The -- the benefits of the ADMS investment are -- are realized year-round, but insofar as they relate to hurricane response and restoration, the -- the ADMS affords us quicker response, decentralized dispatching, improved ETR accuracy, the estimated time of restorations, and -- and just better insight into the current state of the -- of the grid at all times.

We are also in the -- in the midst of constructing a -- a new upgraded Energy Control Center, which will also house Tampa Electric's critical cyber assets.

Quite frankly, after -- so first of all, the existing Energy Control Center has been -- has been in place since around 1980, I believe. It was not designed for the -- for the types of storms that Florida has been experiencing recently.

And after witnessing the storm surge that Ft. Myers experienced in the aftermath of -- of Hurricane Ian, we just grew increasingly uncomfortable with the design and the location of our current Energy Control Center at Palm River. And so our new -- the new I have Bearss Operation Center, the BOC as we call it, is located within Tampa city limits, but it is on high ground. It's 12 miles inland. It's designed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane, and it will be completed in July of 2025.

So this is an investment that we feel really supports our need to be available 24/7 to effect an efficient timely restoration in the aftermath of a hurricane.

Like the peer utilities who have spoken before me, we test our people and our processes regularly, including conducting annual mock hurricane drills. We just completed two such drills in April and May, and they cover all aspects of -- of storm

preparation, allowing employees to actively engage with their storm assignments. Similar to what you have heard from some of the other utilities, at TECO, all employees are assigned storm assignment, and -- and that storm assignment becomes their primary function during restoration, assuming that the storm impact warrants it. This is something that we -- that we train on on a regular basis.

Again, similar to -- to the peer utilities, we are members of the Southeastern Electric Exchange. We are members of the -- of the Edison Electric Institute. And through both of those organizations, we benefit from mutual aid agreements. It provides access to over 100 peer utilities that -- that we support when they are in need, and that we can call upon when -- when we are the utility that has been impacted by -- by a storm.

I just wanted to -- actually before I leave this, I just wanted to make one other point, which is to add that the vice-presidents of electric delivery for -- for TECO, for FPL, for Duke Energy Florida enjoy a very strong collaborative partnership. They check in regularly with each other in advance of storm season, and especially

during storm season. And those relationships are strong. There is a lot of trust and openness. And it provides for a lot of sharing, sharing of weather forecasts, damage estimates, resource needs, resource sharing, safety incidents and -- and lessons learned. And that's done before, during and -- and after hurricane season.

And so to both Armando and Melissa, I just wanted to say thank you for their openness and collaboration. I think that it really goes a long way to making sure that residents in the state of Florida are benefiting from as much collaboration as -- as -- as should exist.

I also wanted to acknowledge both Manny Miranda and Barry Anderson from FPL and Duke Energy Florida respectively, both who -- who recently retired or will soon be retiring, leaders within their organizations when it came to hurricane preparation and restoration, and -- and leaders within the state, quite frankly. And so to both of them, I say congratulations on -- on such an illustrious career and enjoy -- enjoy your retirement.

In addition to preparing our teams and in educating our -- our customers, we also -- we -- we

engage with county emergency management organizations annually, all the agencies that would operate within our service territory. We review the list of critical facilities to ensure we have the right ones prioritized for restoration, we do that regularly. We review staff -- we review staffing plans with county and municipal EOCs that we support. And these are just things that we do in an effort to ensure that we are just being good partners within our communities to support -- to support their -- their storm readiness in parallel with ours.

From -- from a communication perspective, from a customer communication perspective, we've -- we have very robust internal and external communication plans for -- for different levels of severity -- severity of hurricanes, and that includes communications that are -- that are delivered pre-storm, during a storm, in the aftermath of a storm, to ensure that our customers are kept well-informed of -- of what we are dealing with.

The communication channels are very diverse, social media, print, newspaper, live stream, done in the language and preference, whether that is

English or Spanish, within our -- within our service territory, and covering the items that are noted here: Outage reporting, proactive outage communications, restoration notifications, and just general safety communications throughout -- throughout the hurricane.

Of course, we -- we know how important the accuracy and the timeliness of the outage map is during a -- during a storm, and we've recently hardened and upgraded this resource. We've expanded its usefulness to customers, so that in addition to outage information, it also keeps customers informed on such things as damage assessment, ETRs. We provide safety messaging through this portal as well.

Increasingly, we have noticed that with the -- just with the proliferation of -- with technology, with cell phones, during a hurricane, people really -- customers really are relying on that outage map for -- for timely information. And so we are doing everything we can to enhance the quality of the information that is there.

In closing, I just wanted to sort of reiterate some of the points that I made. And, you know, designing an electrical grid that is capable of

withstanding hurricanes is really just -- just what we do in the state of Florida. Training our employees, providing them with all of the tools and resources to prepare for and recover from hurricanes is just what we do. Educating our customers to be prepared and working with our community partners to recover quickly following the passing of the storm, that's just what we do.

We acknowledge the trust that our employees place in us. And we are committed to doing everything we can to justify that trust every day, but especially during hurricane season, when we know that is when we are needed most.

So thank you. Thank you for your support of the industry, and happy to take any questions.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Well, thank you for your presentation and your summary.

Commissioners, are there any questions?

Commissioner Fay, you are recognized.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for being here. Tampa was home for me. That's where I grew up, and I -- I am always aware when those storms are approaching that coast, that significant impact that a storm, a direct hit could have on some of those areas of Tampa that you

serve.

I want to ask you about your -- you mentioned this additional third-party information related to weather. I thought it was a unique approach, maybe other utilities do it and I am just not aware of it, but are you finding that there is information that exceeds kind of the standard National Weather Service type of information that allows you to plan better?

And one of the reasons I ask this is, you know, there is -- there are these -- these neuro off network models, which essentially are AI models that are now looking at a lot of this data that able to process and put it back out at a fairly high level for accuracy. And it seems as though those models, some -- Google has DeepMind, has one, and they are basically open source, minimal cost. They are ways to improve the accuracy of the information that's out there that may or may not require a ton of investment on the front end.

Are those things that you are looking at, or is it more kind of a third-party expertise that's consulting on how to evaluate the data that you are getting?

MR. COLLINS: Well, we are, you know, the --

the -- the movement that is a foot around leveraging data, generative AI, trying to figure out what are the prudent use cases for -- for generative AI is certainly something that we are, like all companies, like all utilities, are assessing at the moment.

When it comes to weather forecasting, we acknowledge we are not -- we are not meteorologists. We are engineers. We are lawyers. We are economists. And -- and so we benefit from -- we benefit from third-party expertise.

And so to the first part of your question, the quality of the whether forecasting information that we get from our third-party service providers is vastly superior to anything else that we would -- that we would be able to get off the shelf. And it justifies for us the incremental expense we incur to retain -- to retain those services.

The -- we get information -- when you see a hurricane approaching, you are getting forecasts every two hours. I mean, very detailed information on what exactly will happen in Plant City versus Winter Haven versus downtown Tampa, and we need that in order to run our models to determine those damage estimates and, therefore, the resource

requirements.

So as we travel through time, we will see whether or not there are opportunities for -- for us to leverage data and get into, you know, use AI to -- to do better predictive modeling. At this 10 seconds, third-party meteor -- meteorological services provide good value for us.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. That answers my question, and it sounds like it's worth the investment. Just it feels like the past few years, as we track these storms, what we are seeing, the public side, there is increased severity at times that is unexpected, and then, of course, the path is always debated as to how large that cone should be and the impact of the path. And so it seems like anything we can do to improve that accuracy going forward arguably saves costs --

MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER FAY: -- but probably more importantly, just gives you a better response to what's out there. So I think it's a worthwhile investment.

MR. COLLINS: Yeah, I do think -- you know, this question was put to Armando when he was up here, regarding the increase the level of

difficulty to plan for a hurricane that's coming, because of how predictable -- unpredictable they are proving to be. He referenced a value which went from a 1 to a 4 before landing as a 3. We saw the same thing with Ian, you know, so Ian was never forecasted to be a Category 4 hurricane until just before it landed down in -- at Ft. Myers beach.

And so what I tell the team is we can never afford to be wrong. We can never afford to be wrong. If there is -- if there is a system coming and they are saying it's going to be a Category 1, but there is some chance that it may -- it may intensify and become a 2 or a 3, we have to plan for a 3.

We did that during Idalia. We -- we planned for -- for a Category 3 hurricane because there was a period of time when it was about 24 hours out where it was forecasted to make landfall right around Crystal River, which is a pretty much a worst case scenario for TECO.

And -- and so, you know, our blessing was someone else's misfortune, but of course, that system ended up going up towards Keaton Beach, and up in the Big Bend area. It was a glancing blow for TECO, but we still brought in almost 4,000

resources from out of state.

And most of those resources -- this gets to another question that was posed earlier. Most of those resources were coming from Illinois, Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma. They weren't coming from Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, because, as Armando spoke to, those utilities were also very uncertain as to where is this thing tracking, and I can't afford to give up my resources to you because I might be the one who gets affected in if this trajectory changes. And so we find ourselves nowadays, because of the unpredictability of these hurricanes, you are planning for a circumstance that's worse than is being forecasted, and -- and you are also receiving resources that are coming from much farther away than they probably were coming from historically.

And unfortunately, both of those things result in added cost. You are paying for an insurance premium to make sure that you are adequately covered, because we would never want to be standing in front of customers saying, we -- you can count on us. We've got your back. We have people coming. They are four days away, but they are en route, so don't worry about it. We never afford to

be in that circumstance.

And so anyway, I will stop there. But it's -- it is becoming an increasingly difficult game to figure out how to find that balance between being well-prepared and not overspending on -- on planning for an impending hurricane.

COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Thank you.

Commissioner Passidomo. You are recognized.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Quick question regarding communication efforts. I mean, there are so many people, obviously, every day moving to Florida from out of state, but there are so many people moving into your territory. Do you find you have to adapt your communications, or prepare for those people who are coming from, you know, New York, or Michigan, or where -- you know, that don't deal with hurricanes very often and don't really know what to expect? How do you amend your, you know, your preparation, your communication to them ahead of time to how they can adequately prepay, and what they should expect?

MR. COLLINS: Well, that's an excellent question that hits close to home, because you may

be able to tell from my accent, I am from Canada. And I can tell you when I -- I left Canada in 2016 and moved to the Bahamas. I was in the Bahamas for one week, and Hurricane Matthew struck the island I was on as a Category 4 hurricane, and I -- you now, as we were preparing for it, I was sort of looking forward to it with a bit of, like, excitement, like the super bowl was coming. There was going to be this hurricane.

As it traveled over the top of us, I remember thinking, I just didn't realize that it was going to be this bad. Like, I just had no appreciation as a Canadian of how intense, and sustained, and loud a hurricane is as it's traveling over the top much you.

So -- I mean, to your specific question, we do everything we can to educate all 840,000 of our customers repeatedly. We get into this time of year, and we are putting out information on social media, in press releases. Running ads on television. Doing everything we can to educate.

We just have to hope that the people who are coming from New York and Philadelphia and Canada and other jurisdictions paying attention, and really internalizing that this is -- this is

serious stuff. It's not similar to -- to storms that you would experience up in -- up north, and you need to -- and you need to take it seriously and prepare.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Right. And I am hoping -- hopefully, you know, the outreach that we see from the Governor's Office, the Legislature, by giving -- affording Floridians, you know, tax breaks to get the necessary, you know, equipment and things that they will need in preparation, just further, like, you know, puts a spotlight on how important it is to prepare so -- but, yeah, I am sure it's always -- it's always a struggle to get people to -- until they have their first summer here, and then they will know.

MR. COLLINS: Exactly.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Actually, the problem is not the new people, it's the people that have been here forever.

COMMISSIONER PASSIDOMO: Yeah, you are complacent, yeah.

MR. COLLINS: That's a great point.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yeah, but my -- and that's a great question. And my experience and opinion is that a lot of folks are moving from the northeast

that maybe have experienced hurricane, see it more as a rain event and maybe less a wind events, of course, when you come to Florida, it can be both, and sometimes you don't know which will be worse, but sure.

Great -- great presentation, and thank you very much for joining us.

MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Next up is Mr. Mike Bjorklund. He is the Executive Director and General Manager of the Florida Electric Cooperatives Association.

Mr. Bjorklund, the floor is yours when you are ready.

MR. BJORKLUND: Thank you, sir. I'll go ahead get me some of this.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: And that's why -- that's why it's there. Like we've learned, it's always good to be prepared.

MR. BJORKLUND: That's right.

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, thank y'all very much for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

Again, Mike Bjorklund with the electric co-ops -- I guess I should familiarize myself with this little fellow. There we go -- with the

electric co-ops, representing the 18 electric co-ops around the state doing business in and around Florida. We have about 2.7 million Floridians we serve, and we are in 57 of Florida's 67 counties.

And our culture of being storm ready has -- has been something that's been a process of starting it and then continuing it. And I think that we do have a bona fide culture to be prepared. That was evident during the last little round of tornado we had.

For us, it hit several of our co-ops in north Florida in the Panhandled and up in north Florida, and it was very decisive on where it landed. I mean, I thought we were going to have massive destruction from Century all the way over to past Tallahassee, and it really just kind of hopscotched. But the co-ops that were impacted, it was significant. But I think that culture helped us be there and be prepared, even though it was unexpected, to help rally the troops and get everything going. And I think we affected a very good restoration in a short amount of time, all things considered. But it also brings me to what we do daily for hurricanes.

But as has been mentioned before, it is not up to just any one utility to do this. And I want to thank all our utility partners for all the assistance they have provided, particularly during Hurricane Idalia. We worked quite closely. We had outreach from all the -- the utilities, but we worked very closely with the municipals, with Duke and FPL, in providing and sharing resources, and getting that restoration done quickly would not have been able to do that without that cooperation.

So in our efforts to ensure reliability, there is -- much of the things I would like to talk about y'all already heard several times, so please don't think I am trying to glance over anything, but I just don't want to keep making y'all buy the same property twice.

Poles and vegetation management, we have either similar inspection processes or identical to what y'all already heard about. We also file those reports with -- with staff here at the Commission.

The one thing I will say about vegetation management, we do spend more time being aggressive on that than most anything else, because that is one thing that, like you said, if you can get that extra one foot off that limb, extra six inches, it

might make it all worth while.

But we have also, particularly with the areas that have been impacted with the storms recently, it's about going back through and getting those trees that are leaners, that might be just on the cusp of being a trouble -- a trouble tree down the road. So going back through and not only maintaining your right-of-way, but trying to get ahead of it, particularly with these damaged -- damaged trees during the storms that we've experienced.

We also utilize undergrounding. A lot of the undergrounding comes from new developments. As those new developments come in, we are undergrounding there. We are also -- some areas where growth has come to other places, it makes more sense during those upgrades to install undergrounding in those places as well. But there is still a lot of overhead that we have, but there is a fair amount of the other, and we find that there is -- that they do complement each other. There is the hardening versus how you put your facilities down.

I wish I could say there is a silver bullet, but it seems like the more that you are able to

throw at it and mix those things together, the better opportunities you are going to have post-storm to have a quick restoration.

Some of the hardening projects that we've taken on, one comes from Glades. I will just give y'all some specific examples. They have been working to do a variety of things, one of which is to install fault -- fault line indicators on their mainline feeders.

They have also gone through and installed downstream sectionalizing switches. They are working on switching out some 4,500 poles as part of their inspection process and putting in stronger. Again, like with where it makes sense, trying to make sure that important feeders, like we have one three-phase feeder that handles a lot of critical load down there in that area, they are going back through and replacing those poles with iron, and getting rid of the wood, to try to make -- make them more durable. And also doing various reconductering and relocating so that you can help increase the efficiency, and really bringing up some of those improvements on the resilience and reliability.

Innovations are also a part of -- of what we

try to do in hardening. We've got SECO Energy, which is primarily down around The Villages area, is what folks think about, Lake Mary and Citrus Counties. They are working with Lake Sumter County College to build a microgrid, and it's going to have solar, and it's going to have battery backup.

And they also have a lineman training program, so there is a lot of -- if you had to do a diagram, a lot of benefits there. So this next generation of linemen is getting -- are getting ideas on how it might work for this type of facilities if they ever run into them. We are getting an idea of how they work with our system. And it's also going to provide a little bit of redundancy there for the members that are in the great -- greater area.

We are also working to do more on procurement up front. And procurement is always a big part of our storm preparation. And what I mean by that is we are -- we are looking to try to get more contractors and other vendors that we can deal with so that we can bring in more folks from out -- from a variety of different places, and not be so dependent on any particular one.

It's -- it just takes more and more to keep up with restoration, it's been mentioned several

times, and that's one of the ways we are -- we are looking to do that.

Elsewise, working through our working groups. And we always get together and do the debriefings that we talked about, the lessons learned, try to make sure we are having a free flow exchange of ideas. And even that process, we are trying to streamline to get that done quicker and get that information moved out faster.

But really and truly it comes down to relationships. And we spend a lot of time building relationships. Not only with our consumer members on the education, how restoration occurs, what's theirs, what's ours, what to expect.

And to both of your points, Commissioners, about, you know, the folks that are just coming into the state or those that have been here for 100 years. You have a challenge with each one of those groups, and making sure that they -- they are recognizing the danger.

We work very closely with all the utility partners, and we appreciate their willingness to not only share ideas and resources, but -- but listen to our ideas and resources. I mean, it is a two-way street, and I appreciate that kind of

cooperation.

So Hurricane Idalia, you know this -- this little jewel is quite pleasant to have on Labor Day weekend. But three days out, if y'all recall, that -- that cone was almost from Century to Lee County. And that's the kind of stuff that really drives us crazy when we are trying to reposition assets, because until you have that moment of certainty, and you can have, you know, third-party folks helping you out. You can have got a lot of stuff. But, man, until it gets a little closer, you really want to wait to make sure you have got them as close as you can to -- to make sure that they are going to be able to start work as quickly as possible. And that's always a challenge.

But Hurricane Idalia made landfall right there at Keaton Beach. It's been mentioned. That's right in the heart of co-op territory. We had two -- several co-ops that were impacted, but the two co-ops most heavily impacted were Tri-County and Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperatives, almost -- the storm track went almost directly between them, and it was east of the eye and west of the eye. And so those -- those two took the brunt of it.

And base camps have become something we are very familiar with. We have -- previously we have a lot of experience with trying to use really hotels. And hotels were always difficult, particularly in the rural areas. You don't have enough occupancy for folks to come in, particularly during a large event. Then you are worried about, well, were they impacted? Do they have power? Is the structure damaged? Is it safe for folks to be in?

And then farther down the line, then you start experiencing other problems. Where you have more people coming into the area. Perhaps FEMA can come in and take it away from us, or we even had instances where parts of a service territory were put back on and the hotel said, well, that's a great job, guys, we are going to have our conference that we've had scheduled for six months, you need to go find somewhere else to stay. But -- but the base camps really work, and they work well.

Just like the U.S. Army, come on down, you got a place to stay and free today, and it cuts down on the windshield time, it's been mentioned before, and also just does a lot for helping us streamline the process.

For Suwannee Valley, we had their base camp, they had actually had two. Their primary base camp was set up out of their headquarters. There -- they have a nice big piece of property there in Live Oak that they were able to work out of.

Tri-County was actually was out of Perry Airport. And we co-located with Duke there. And not only was that great, but as we started working together again on assuming some of their resources down the road, we were able just to leave those folks in place as we all continued to muscle through the -- the restoration process.

And then both co-ops actually assumed the base camp and resources that were at central Florida, which is slightly south and east.

That's just a great picture of a meal tent. Air-conditioned. As you can take a sea there, they get two hot meals a day and a boxed lunch. And over there, they also have a little grab and go snack area. So if the box lunch isn't sufficient, they can get a little bit extra to go with them.

This is Suwannee Valley's base camp, like I mentioned, on their property there in Live Oak. You know, for the first two storms I -- I was part of, you know, y'all may recall, I was the first

that came up here and talked about Hurricane Irma, it was like old Jerry Flowers story, the first football game ever played -- the first football game I ever went to I played in it, and that's the way that Irma and Michael were. I thought I knew something after Irma. And then after Michael, I learned that there was never an ending point for storms and the knowledge you gain.

But -- but for those events, we were primarily in tent cities. And tent cities is not ideal for work -- those working conditions, particularly for an extended event. We made it work. That was what was available, and it was -- it was difficult.

But as you can see here, what we have now, sleep trailers, as y'all have seen in some of the other presentations. Much more comfortable. Much more manageable. They are easier to scale up, scale down. Those that you are looking at on the screen can house about 36 people per unit. They allowed for us to be -- allow to be sectioned off in case we have any folks that need a little extra privacy, which is becoming more and more common. And it's -- it's just a lot easier to work through.

And what you can't see because of the night view is the nice big roads that they have in and

out of that facility. So not only was everybody located in one spot cutting down on the windshield time, they had the ability to move folks through, not only gassing them up, getting them loaded up with their equipment and their materials, fed and watered, and then out the door without hitting too many bottlenecks.

And that configuration is actually -- we -- we got help from the contractor that set it up. They've got a software tool that takes the dimensions and helps you figure out what -- what you need and how to place it so you maximize your efficiency.

So managing 20 times your blue sky workforce. In a slide down the road here, we will show you some of how that looks for Tri-County and what resources they assumed. But it's -- assuming these extraordinary resources, primary A number one is safety. You got to make sure that everybody that comes in goes home exactly the way they came.

And I am proud to tell you that out of having all those folks on those two systems working, we had no lost time accidents, and that is critical. That doesn't happen on accident. That is part of the daily briefings, the making sure that they are

doing just common sense things, you know, to make sure everything is grounded when they are going out, even though technically the system is dead, you always have to worry about backfeeding. Somebody might have a generator hooked up to the house that's putting power back on the line, so you have to -- you have to be careful of a variety of things. You just have to let folks remember -- to remember that. And we also depend a lot on our native employees to lead by example, and make sure that they are showing their folks the best way to get out and do things, and do them properly.

I think there was a lot of -- a couple of questions earlier about the birddogs too.

So one of the ways we try to handle it is we had to turn basically everybody into a birddog. Anybody that has any knowledge of that system that's in-house, they are going to be going out into the field and trying to help make sure that the crews are getting the information they need back, materials and work orders, so forth, and so on.

And mutual aid just doesn't look like it always did. It comes in a variety of forms. You know, we also do things like making sure we get

help coming in for warehousing, some material handlers. It could be member services, some folks dealing with the public and our consumer members, have extra help there, communicators, mechanics, incident commanders.

But as you can see, here's kind of a breakout of -- of how many folks Tri-County had for restoration and where they came from. And I think, Commissioner, you were asking about the -- the blanket mutual aid agreements. And while we may not have that, and I think there are -- I appreciate Mr. Pimentel's comments on it, and recognizing both sides of the scenario, I think we have proved that we will work together, and can work together quite efficiently, especially whenever we need to. We are not looking to let anybody that's in the state go out if we can help. That just makes no sense. So we appreciate our partners, with the IOUs and the municipals, in this respect.

And just for perspective. So Tri-County had 1,666 restoration personnel, Suwannee Valley had about 1,950, totaling approximately about 3,600 folks. That's one restoration team member per 13 consumer members of those two systems.

And y'all may recall from last year, Mr. Allan Ruth presented on behalf of the co-ops, talked about their experience in LCEC and Hurricane Ian. That's Mr. Ruth right there. He is a little different outfit, but he came up to Suwannee Valley, and not only did he bring his 30 plus years worth of utility experience, he brought that Hurricane Ian experience.

And so one of the things that we did is we just simply gave him the circuit and his crews. And he worked very closely with some of the contractors and the folks that came over from Duke to -- to work on that and affect of that restoration right there.

And density is probably one of the biggest challenges that we have. As you can see, we have Suwannee Valley, approximately seven members per mile line, for Tri-County, approximately six members per mile line. So we have all the resources we need to help, but every time you are replacing that mile of line, you are only picking up six or seven, versus some of the more dense areas, where that number is bigger.

So the same work is being performed, but you may not being seeing it on the backside on the

meter counter. But the restoration, it really starts and ends with the poles and the spans, otherwise we will never get the meters turning again.

And this picture just kind of gives you an idea of what a long lonely line can look like without any service drops.

Hurricane preparation, and I know y'all have heard much about this already, so I will try to breeze through it, but meeting with the local officials, making sure that they are all aware of who we are, and how to get in touch with us. While we may not be able to man every EOC, we meet with them ahead and make sure that if we can't be there, that we do anything that we can, like offering also dedicated conference calls that we have them daily, and also doing check-ins. So even if we can't be there full time, we at least have folks stop by. But we do have a lot of co-ops that are actually manning the local EOCs.

Member education, which we touched upon. Storm resources and tree trimming, our storm response group and the mutual aid as it comes in so many different forms.

We also hold a hurricane conference annually

as part of our preparation. And I guess I should also mention, you know, we -- we also participate in FCG's events for pre-storm planning. We work with our national association. We do an annual event with them with other storm mutual aid managers and my counterparts to talk about things that went right, things that went wrong, and how we can them and, again, improve the process.

So we try to maintain a real cadence of how we deal with our folks, how we deal with others, and make sure that we keep those lines of communication open and exchange of ideas going.

This year's hurricane conference, we hosted DEM, FHP, Mike Moylan from Mike's Weather Page. If you never heard that guy, he is a hoot. He is just a great fellow.

We also had some presentations on crew management software, and had some base camps there -- base camp providers, contractors, vendors that showed up some of their wares off, and had that there for folks to look at. And then we also, of course, did the standard of having our co-ops that were impacted by Idalia talked about their experiences and what they learned.

And, Mr. Chair, if it's okay, I would like to

just take a point -- a moment of personal privilege --

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: You got it.

MR. BJORKLUND: -- if I can get it out, to say thank you to the PSC staff, Manny, SF 12, Todd Brown was excellent to work with. You know, Todd came in literally as the storm was hitting, as it transitioned, never skipped a beat. So we very much appreciate that relationship.

I am happy to take questions should y'all have any.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Awesome. Commissioners, any questions?

No questions. That means you were very thorough and precise.

MR. BJORKLUND: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: No problem. Thank you very much.

All right. Next up is Ms. Melissa Seixas. She is the State President for Duke Energy of Florida.

The floor is yours as soon as you are ready.

MS. SEIXAS: Yes. Good afternoon. And if I may, Chairman, Duke Energy Florida has an ongoing growing hurricane playlist. We are happy to share

that with you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: See what we do. We even get some folks outside the building. That would be great.

MS. SEIXAS: And I realize we are running up against the clock, so I think what I will do is go through the presentation but try to emphasize some things maybe that are unique -- unique to Duke Energy Florida, but also try to hit some of the questions that you all asked as well.

So thank you for being here, and I want to follow up on what Mike said. A huge thanks to the staff, and those that man that we work side-by-side with at the state EOC for every emergency, whether it's storm, COVID or any other event that Mother Nature wants to -- to throw our way. So thank you very much.

So we will move on to the next slide.

So I think all of you are pretty familiar with Duke Energy Florida. What I -- what I want to emphasize here is that we have a very experienced, committed, talented team of Duke Energy employees that are well versed in a diverse geography that we serve, from the urban areas of Pinellas County, Orange County, up to, of course, the Panhandle.

And we've seen, both with hurricanes Idalia and with Michael, just in the last few years, we've had to gain some invaluable experience on the rural restoration process.

And so moving on to this next slide here, you know, storm preparedness is right up there with our commitment to safety, reliability, resiliency, prudent spending. And that is what allows us to basically stages an army. And that's what all of us have to do. I think Mike touched on this. We are literally staging an army. We got to house them. We got to feed them. We got to get their clothes washed. And, of course, we need to help keep them -- to keep them safe.

This is actually a staging site for Hurricane Idalia. For Duke Energy Florida, we brought in about 5,000 resources. We were able to restore service to those areas, about 95 percent of our customers that were outside of the hardest hit areas within 36 hours. And this base camp, which is, I think, a great source of pride is because we shared this with Suwannee Valley and with Tri-County.

Hurricane Idalia came through Taylor County, which is one of the areas we serve with the City of

Perry.

So storm preparedness. So I started with the company in 1985. I was 19 years old, and I have had a storm role every year since then. I was equipped, very technologically advanced with a legal sheet -- a legal pad of paper, a pen and a radio, and I worked as a runner, if you will, in the operating centers, going back between kind of information with field crews.

And as the other utilities have mentioned, every single employee at Duke Energy Florida has a storm role. Two of our attorneys who are here today, they both sit in the state EOC for every single event, and that makes a difference. And so that allows us to prepare in a way, in a depth that allows us to serve our customers, anticipate their needs, and meet them where they are.

Much like the other utilities, we work incredibly closely with our emergency operating centers, both at the municipal level, the county level and the state level, as well as the federal government, when we -- when it warrants.

And so I am just going to do a few highlights of our 2024 drill.

As I said, everybody has a storm role. And

this is also a critical time that we've got to ensure that our employees are ready. Some of them could be gone for weeks. They've got to be able to take care of their families, have them ready to go so that they can concentrate on what they need to do for our customers.

And I will tell you, I believe so strongly that our employees perform at their very, very best in these situations. There is such a commitment to restoring service. And I think all of you have heard those stories, or you have seen them, where everyone is trying to leave the state of Florida, and there is a calvary of trucks coming into the state, and we are incredibly grateful, because they are not just Duke Energy resources, but they are, of course, our fellow IOUs, and they are also the -- that come from everywhere, including Canada. You heard a lot of the states that have come through.

One thing I do want to point out on the meteorology front, since that's come up. Duke Energy has its own meteorology team, and so they are helpful every single day of the year, not only for storms, but when we are experiencing excessive heat, and also when we have ice storms, which I

never want to have that experience, but some of our sister states do have that.

Having that team, they are actually immersed, they are on the ground with us. We have an event in Florida, they are in the storm room with us. And their participation has really allowed us to, I think, be very successful.

They have predicted that we will have 25 named storms, 12 hurricanes, five major hurricanes, so higher than a Category 3 or higher, and five that will be in the Gulf of Mexico. So what's coming from our meteorology team, so that is what we are preparing for.

And so much like our colleagues, we have spent a lot of time focusing on communication with our EOCs; communication with our employees; going through the incident command structure, ensuring that every section chief knows that they need to do.

When I stepped into this role as President three-and-a-half years ago, I had long been the liaison section chef. And it was such a satisfying role. I asked if I could still do it and be president, and they told me no, so -- but we have a fantastic person in that place in Sharon Arroyo, so

I am very proud of that.

So a little bit on storm hardening. Concurrent to everything that we are doing, it makes me incredibly happy, satisfied and thrilled to know that concurrent to all the work that we are doing, the Legislature support, your support of the storm protection plan has made such an incredible difference in what we are seeing with our customers. We have been able to improve our SAIDI by about 27 percent since 2018, 2019.

I get calls from people, or text messages, and they say, you guys are blocking traffic, but whatever you are doing, it's making a difference. So they call to complain, but the flip side of it is, they recognize that there is a difference and a huge improvement in what they are seeing on restoration.

And you can see in some of the numbers in front of you, with Hurricane Idalia, Hurricane Ian, just the sheer number of minutes saved and customer minutes of interruption that have been saved, that makes a huge difference. And customers are really quite excited, I think, to hear how the company is using technology to reroute power in these types evidence events. So thank you for storm hardening.

It's making a significant difference.

Mutual aid. I think we have heard so much about this today. Mutual aid is obviously critical to every single one of us in this room. A couple of things I want to share.

For Duke Energy Florida, we have the benefit of the scale of Duke Energy, because we can first and foremost go to our sister states in the Carolinas, both South and North Carolina, in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana, we can go to them first to get resources. And, of course, then we have great benefit from having partnerships with the many mutual aid agreements that you have seen in front of you.

And neighboring utilities. You know, this -- this is really of great importance to my team, and it's of significant importance to me, because this is a process where not only, you know, co-ops are looking to investor-owned utilities, we are learning from the munies and the co-ops as well.

And one of the things that we have worked very hard on in the last three years is to ensure that the only time we are interacting is not during a storm. We are interacting and sharing lessons learned all year long. We work with these

utilities in so many ways, because we provide them transmission level service. So improving those communications and those relationships, as technologically advanced as we are, the relationships make a huge, huge difference.

And I am proud to share that with our storm training and storm drill this year, we actually did several events with Suwannee Valley and Seminole. Both of them came down to our distribution control center so that they could tour that, talk about communication, talk about restoration. That was incredibly valuable. We participated in Seminole Electric's storm drill this year as well. And we also had our meteorologist and our emergency manager participate in the Suwannee Valley drill.

And I mean, we've even gone as far as with Lee County, and the very special relationship that we forged with them during hurricane -- in the wake of Hurricane Ian, we even did a volunteer event together to plant mangroves on part of the coastal area that had been devastated by the storm after Hurricane Ian.

And I will give a quick example. When -- when the call came from the Governor's Office and said we need you to go to help in Lee County, our

immediate response was, yes, we will do it. We will figure out the rest later.

I called the CEO of Denise Vidal at the time, and I called her and said, you don't know me and I don't know you, you don't know our team necessarily, but I guarantee you, when you meet our team, you will know that we are there to help you. And we have forged such a special relationship and developing that trust. And so I am very confident that that is going to continue to work.

The crew on the top is a group of our linemen outs of north Florida. And when I went to go see them standing in somebody's back yard, what was left of their home, I asked them, you know, how's is it going? And, you know, the guy -- one of those young men looked at me and he said, you know, I have got no complaints. They were thrilled with the sleeper trailers and the showers, and just the realization of the devastation around them, right? And the gratitude that all of us should have. So I am really thrilled about that.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: This is actually great seeing that kind of stuff, because back when Rick Scott first got here, I think Hermine came through here, and it was just amazing none of this was

going on. You know, he picked up the phone saying, well, got all those trucks right there, why can't they use it? You have got all of this stuff right here, why can't they use it?

MS. SEIXAS: Right.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: I mean, he brought everybody into one room. I thought it was fantastic. It was like, you guys should know each other by first names.

MS. SEIXAS: Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: You got to pick up the phone and call people --

MS. SEIXAS: Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: -- and stuff.

MS. SEIXAS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: That last picture, I thought that was fantastic. That's awesome.

MS. SEIXAS: Well, thank you for recognizing the team.

We have -- and even before Idalia, you know, I called all the EOC directors, I called sheriffs, I called, you know, the people who would be the leads and just said, here's my cell phone number, if -- listen, you got my team. They are the best, but if you need me, call me.

Storm materials, and hopefully I am not clicking too quickly here. So storm materials, much like the others, we have blue sky and red sky strategies. And I will just say that our teams protect with body and soul the red sky. We do not touch our storm inventory for regular day work because we know that we are going to need it, and we continue to commit to that. And the ability to deploy these -- this equipment, the material where it needs to go quickly, of course, makes all the difference, because we can have the resources there, but we've got to put the tools and the equipment in their hands.

On the community outreach part, this is, again, of critical importance. We do this every single day. This is a photo of me and our Vice-President of Government Community Relations visiting one of the EOCs.

And the EOCs are so, so incredibly important. We, much like you talked about with Florida Power & Light, we have a person in every single EOC in the state of Florida. Some of them are there a couple days, or at least 12, maybe 24 hours before the storm. They ride out the storm. They are living there. They are creating a family among their ESF

partners.

Then for those counties where we don't have somebody in there overnight, we have nighttime resources that are available over night. If they need to reach somebody, they know how to contact them, somebody at the operating center. So it is as seamless as possible to ensure that emergency leaders can reach us all of the time.

The other piece with the EOCs that I am not sure that it has been mentioned yet, that's critically important to them, both municipals and counties and the state is road clearing. And so we have a whole road clearing program that we implemented -- implemented several years ago that we assign a couple units to those road clearing crews that are brought in by municipalities so that we can be with them, embedded with them to clear. We don't want them touching wire down, obviously. And that has made a huge difference for fire rescue and for law enforcement to get where they need to be.

The other piece in hurricanes in the past, we experienced a number, right, of calls that would come in. There is wire down in an intersection. You know, there is law enforcement standing by.

Fire/rescue standing by. They could end up being there for quite a long time if we had crews that were out restoring service to critical customers, hospitals, water treatment plants. And so now we have something called wire guards, where we have -- they are typically contractors who literally come and stand and make the situation safe so law enforcement and fire/rescue can move on to save lives, if that's what they need to do. So very proud of our partnerships with our EOCs.

And for me, since the team won't let me be the liaison officer anymore, I am out in the field immediately, probably within 24 hours. The gentleman in the cowboy hat is Sheriff Padgett from Taylor County. Our team was embedded with them. They were hit, you know, just devastatingly hard. And our ability to be there I think brought them a level of confidence and comfort that we were glad to -- to provide.

Customer outage reporting options, you know, again, all our customers, they receive information in so many ways. There are so many different channels. From calling to texting, and we do a lot of national media as well. So if people are watching, you know, if they have -- if they are

able to watch television, they are getting reports update, also whether they -- whether they are watching Fox or whether they are watching CNN. We will speak on any of the national media, as well as local.

But customers, they are craving for information. And you all know, if you don't provide information, people fill it in, and that's how rumors get started. And people need to make decisions, and we want to be able to arm them with information that will help them make decisions on what is best for their families.

Some of our direct communication, we have the preparation message that goes out. I do have video for that that goes out to customers. We very a during, the, you know, the estimated restoration time campaign, and we have the restoration campaign as well. We have campaigns medically essential customers at the same time as well. And we will customize them, especially when it gets down to some of the hardest hit areas, we will get very specific on what those restoration plans are.

So on -- just a quick update on vegetation management. I mean, it's much of what you heard from our other teams. Overhead and -- and trees

still, after all these decades, don't get along. I also point out to people that I have seen many a time where an oak tree root ball has pulled up, you know, feet after feet of underground cable. So depending on the storm and Mother Nature's wrath, it may depend, but tree trimming continues to be a critical part of keeping the system safe.

I think Archie Collins from TECO hit it accurately, it is a balance, and part of it does really ride on how well we communicate with our customers on why we are trimming. And of course with transmission, if it's a danger tree, we are typically removing ground to sky, which has a different effect on people versus the trimming.

So we are going to great lengths, and currently -- currently even reevaluating how we can even be better on communicating around the importance of vegetation management.

These are just some numbers which I think all of you have in there.

Pole inspections. So under Storm Protection Plan -- I will go back. Under Storm Protection Plan, we have made about 40,000 poles up to the standard of the storm protection plan for distribution, about 9,000 or 10,000 for

transmission. So, again, thank you. That work is essentially import -- I to say I was really actually thrilled coming up here yesterday, and I could see some of the steel poles, and they weren't ours, but along 19 and 27, and seeing those replaced after Hurricane Idalia.

So I will go on to -- I think we talked about, you know, the pole inspections. You can see the details, see the details -- see the details there. But I want to talk a little about -- a little bit about lessons learned, because this goes to, I think, the partnership with our co-ops and our municipalities, especially, of course, in the rural areas.

One of the things that we spent a lot of time on in this past drill, just in April, was really setting an ETR. We typically do it by county. But obviously, in a lot of counties, we don't serve the whole county, so we don't want to confuse people by saying, okay, we are going to have 95 percent of customers back on in Taylor County by a certain time, when what we are talking about those who are in Perry that we serve. And so this is where it's critically important that we are coordinating the communication with our co-ops.

I know that I spent time with Talquin doing that as well. It was helpful. Lessons learned for sure. We don't want to confuse their customers. In some cases they are waiting on us to get our point of delivery restored so that they can do work on their side.

So not only with the CEOs, the presidents coordinating, but with the public information -- excuse me -- public information specialists who are coordinating to get the message right so people are not confused. And I think that that has been incredibly helpful.

And recently, Duke Energy Florida merged our transmission and distribution leadership. I think that's going to bring a lot of efficiencies and advancements and communication, I think ETR being one of those.

And like we also talked about, just the number of resources that we bring on-line, and number of trucks we can physically have in a place. Staging will continue to be critically essential. We have a very large location at The Villages, which can stage about a thousand trucks. Of course then we have to move them out to base camps, where we know -- after we know, through damage assessment, where

the -- the greatest impact has been. So whether that's Tropicana Field, Honeywell, a substation or a Perry airport, Apalachicola airport, we have great partnerships with those who will allow us to bring our resources in, and will forever continue to be grateful for that.

So I hope that that went quickly enough, but I am happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Any questions?

Commissioner Clark, you are recognized.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Just, I guess, one comments and short question is I think it says a lot about a career trajectory for an individual when the first assignment you get during a storm is you actually get a radio.

MS. SEIXAS: I know. And I thought that was pretty fancy, too, getting on that radio.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: My first one was put in the kitchen making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I didn't know whether to spread the peanut butter or the jelly. It was a lot different assignment.

Looking at your customer outage reporting, can you tell us a little bit about how your AMI system plays into outage reporting? Is there a point in

time where you get that dispatch information -- you keep that system on and reporting down to the customer level at all phases of the storm?

MS. SEIXAS: One of my many jobs years ago was calling the one-call list, where essentially we were so sophisticated, we had a list of customers, we called them and we would ask them if their power was on. And that's how we figured out, right, if -- if the service was on.

So with our advanced meters, it allows us to see that. We still encourage customers to call in to the report, but we now know that in advance of whether they are out. Of course we know it from the transformer level, the fuse level, the feeder level, you know, substation outage, those kinds of things.

So that system, along with our ADMS, which Tampa Electric also talked about, has really allowed us to be much more sophisticated in understanding who is out, when they are out, and that helps us on communication, that helps us on resources. It -- we would fly blind without that.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: So you keep the system on down to a meter level -- down to the specific meter level, or do you have it at, like, a line section

level?

MS. SEIXAS: No. We keep it -- I mean, we keep it every level that it's available to us. Things that change would be, though, you know, in a regular blue sky event, storm, power goes out, we have an automatic way of communicating with the customers, your power is out, here's the -- you know, we give them a series of updates.

There are points in the storm where we turn off that automatic process because we are going through damage assessment, and we need to assess whether the outage could end up being longer, so those kind of communication tools. But when our tools tell us what's out in the field, they are our eyes, we keep them operational as long as possible.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: Great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioners, any further questions?

Awesome. Well, with that, thank you very much.

MS. SEIXAS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: And thank you to -- to all that have presented before us today. Certainly, I thought this was a good discussion, obviously important timing as we are -- we are getting close

here, really close to hurricane season.

I know it's lunchtime, and standing between us and lunch is just me talking, so I will go ahead and just quick announcement, Special Agenda will start at 2:00 p.m. So that's a little over an hour from now over in the hearing room.

Besides that, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

(Proceedings concluded.)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

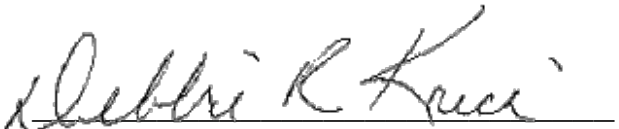
STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 10th day of June, 2024.



DEBRA R. KRICK
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