



Report  
02/28/2024

Lee County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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February 28th, 2024

Mr. Thomas Ballinger,  
Director Engineering Division  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

RE: Annual Report on Standards of Construction, Facility Inspections and  
Vegetation Management

Dear Mr. Ballinger,

Please find enclosed Lee County Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (LCEC) Annual  
Report on Standards of Construction, Facility Inspections, and Vegetation Management  
for the calendar year 2023. This filing is pursuant to Rule 25-6.0343 F.A.C.

Also enclosed is a matrix that summarizes many of LCEC's activities for the  
calendar year of 2023. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out, I  
am available at: (239) 656-2433.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

*Amanda Smelker*

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/s/ Amanda Smelker

Director, Administrative Services  
Lee County Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
PO Box 3455  
N Ft Myers, FL 33918-3455

cc: Clark Hawkins  
Bill Piland  
Rusty Snider  
Frank Sherkus

**Annual Report on Lee County Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s (LCEC)  
Standards of Construction, Facility Inspections, and Vegetation Management  
for calendar year 2023**

**Standards of Construction:**

- a) LCEC's construction standards comply with the National Electrical Safety Code (ANSI C-2) [NESC]. Electrical facilities constructed through December 31, 2023 comply with the edition of the code in effect at the time of the facility's initial construction.
- b) LCEC has construction standards, for required facilities, that meet the extreme wind loading standards specified by the 2017 edition of the NESC.
- c) Although not waterproof, LCEC's equipment and constructed facilities are designed to be water resistant. The majority of our underground facilities (excluding conduits and cables) are at or above existing/surrounding grade.
- d) Although often at odds with the desires of customers and governmental entities, LCEC's current practice is to place the majority of new and replacement distribution facilities in the front of lots. This does provide in most cases the safest and most efficient access for installation and maintenance. If necessary, easements for placement of distribution facilities are requested from customers.
- e) LCEC's standards for joint use provide clearances (distances) for conductors, equipment, and risers. The joint use agreements that are entered into with pole attachment parties detail the process for evaluating pole-loading capacity. Additionally, the agreements define the responsibilities for pole reliability and upgrading. Currently, LCEC does not permit attachments to transmission poles.

**Facility Inspections:**

- a) Transmission inspection 2-year cycle (138 kV): Inspect all poles and structures by either climbing or with the use of a bucket truck. Inspect poles, structures, guys, anchors, insulators, crossarms, conductors, shield wires, right-of-way, for any structural deficiency or any situation that may impact the structural integrity of the facility. Inspections are conducted by either climbing the pole/structure or with the use of a bucket truck.

In 2023, LCEC inspected 1,206 out of a total of 2,501 transmission poles and structures. This included 45% of the 138 kV facilities. This was 100 % of scheduled.

During the 2023 inspection of the transmission poles, 0 poles (0% of inspected) failed inspection criteria.

In 2023, LCEC replaced 14 transmission wood poles due to rot. The replacement poles are concrete and steel; the majority being concrete.

- b) Distribution inspection: 2-year cycle visual inspection: Inspect all poles for splitting, cracking, visual decal, twisting, and bird damage.  
10-year cycle physical pole inspection: Physically inspect all two & three-phase poles for splitting, cracking, visual decay, twisting, and bird damage by either climbing or bucket truck. Patch minor woodpecker holes. Digging around ground line of poles for ground rod checks, check pole for ground rot. Sounding and assessing each pole for deteriorating by probing with a screwdriver. Examine concrete poles for evidence of cracks and physical damage. Plumb poles if they are (1+) pole top out of plumb.  
In 2015, LCEC implemented a multi-year Targeted Pole Change Out initiative, a proactive step towards replacing poles nearing the end of their life expectancy.

In 2023, LCEC completed inspections on 107,800 distribution poles. 107,800 were planned. 103,801 were Hurricane Ian follow up inspection. This was 100% of inspections scheduled and 64% of total poles.

During the 2023 inspection of the distribution poles, 1805 poles (1.7% of inspected) failed inspection criteria. Of these, 1394 failed due to rot/decay/split top/out of plumb, 401 were due to damage hurricane or other. 10 failed due to woodpecker damage.

In 2023, LCEC repaired through re-plumbing 222 poles; through patching 4 (12.5% of total that failed inspection). Pole replacement consisted of twenty (20) Class-1; six (6) Class-2; seventy-four (74) Class-3; four hundred ninety-two (492) Class-4; two hundred sixty-five (265) Class-5; forty-three (43) Class-6. Total replacement 900

### **Vegetation Management:**

- (a) LCEC has developed the following Vegetation Management Program for the control of vegetation on its distribution facilities. This Program covers the maintenance of vegetation for the 4002 miles of single, double and three-phase overhead distribution lines. Goals and strategies of the program are:
- 1) Maintain reliability of the distribution lines by controlling vegetation to meet the requirements of NESC and ANSI.
  - 2) Strategies for control include cultural, mechanical, manual, and chemical treatments.
  - 3) LCEC's practices planned circuit clearing on a three to five-year cycle for single phase and a three-year cycle for double and three-phase distribution.
  - 4) Approved procedures include directional pruning techniques per ANSI A300 standards, maintaining radial clearances of 8-10 feet from primary lines, or employing the use of the directional pruning technique of taking the cut to the next lateral beyond the standard clearance point. Standard ground/horizontal clearance is one foot below the lowest communications attachment, or 12 feet from the primary, whichever is greater. Palm fronds are cut back to the trunk or tipped to avoid contact with primary. Overhanging branches less than 15 feet above the primary are removed. All vines are cut and treated.

The LCEC Tree Wise program is aimed at educating customers, contractors, and tree care professionals about the importance of safety around trees and power lines. In addition, the program emphasizes planting the right tree in the right place. Key messages are incorporated into the customer newsletter at least twice a year, on bill inserts and bill messages, and through the LCEC SmartHub online and mobile app. In addition, digital messages are included on two local news station apps and on local billboards. A brochure is available on lcec.net in English and Spanish and also distributed to landscapers, government, builders, and local agencies throughout the year.

LCEC maintains a biannual ground inspection of ROW Restriction Vegetation with maintenance performed as required.

- (b) 2023's Planned Vegetation Management for transmission and distribution was completed as follows:

<b>2023 Vegetation Management Schedule</b>			
	YE Actual	YE Goal	% YE
Three-phase trimming*	410	410	100%
Single-phase trimming*	644	644	100%
Transmission mowing and Trimming*	28.5	28.5	100%
138 kV inspection	Jan thru Dec	Annual	100.0%
ROW Restriction Inspection/Maintenance	Q2, Q4	Bi-Annually	100.0%

\* Miles

Summary of Rural Electric Cooperative Utility Reports Pursuant to Rule 25-6.0343, F.A.C. – Calendar Year 2023													
Utility	The extent to which Standards of Construction address:						Transmission & Distribution Facility Inspections:				Vegetation Management:		
	Comply with the 2017 NESC	Guided by Extreme Wind Loading per NESC 2017			Effects of flooding & storm surges on UG & OH distribution facilities	Placement of distribution facilities to facilitates safe and efficient access	Written safety, pole reliability, pole loading capacity, and engineering stds for Attachments	Description of policies, guidelines, practices, procedures, cycles	No. & Pct. of poles & structures planned & completed	No. & Pct. of poles & structures failing inspection w/ reasons	No. & Pct. of poles & structures, by class, replaced or remediated w/ description	Description of policies, guidelines, practices, procedures, tree removals, w/ sufficiency	Quantify, level, & scope planned and completed for transmission and distribution.
		New Const.	Major Planned Work, Expansion, Rebuild, or Relocation	Targeted Critical Infrastructure and major thoroughfares									
Lee County Electric Cooperative Inc.	Yes.	Guided by 2017 NESC			Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Transmission:2-Yr  Distribution:10-Yr	Transmission: Planned 1206 (45% of all 138 kV poles) Completed 100%.  Distribution: Planned <b>107,800</b> (64% of Total population) <b>103,801</b> were Hurricane Ian inspection generated Completed <b>107,800</b> (100% of Planned)	Transmission: Failed 0 0 decay; 0 woodpecker,  Distribution: Failed <b>1805</b> (1.7% of total inspected) <b>1394</b> were rot/decay/split/top/out of plumb <b>401</b> were damage hurricane or other <b>10</b> woodpecker damage	<u>Transmission:</u> 14 replaced in 2023. 14 wood due to rot, 0 concrete due to life expectancy. 0 poles were repaired by rust remediation and structural strengthening. <u>Distribution:</u> 222 Re-plumb; 4 Patch; 0 Trussed; Replaced (900 total) 20 Class 1; 6 Class 2; 74 Class 3; 492 Class 4; 265 Class 5; 43 Class 6;	Transmission: 138KV - Annual inspection and maintenance, including mowing and herbicide.  Distribution: 2&3Phase Cir Maintenance is a 3-Yr Cycle 1 Phase Cir Maintenance is a 5-Yr Cycle or less based on reliability and/or budget.	Transmission: Inspection and Maintenance - 100% of plan  Distribution: Circuit Maintenance – 100% of plan