

NEWS RELEASE

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SECOEnergy.com

SECO Energy Offering Drive-thru and Kiosk Service Only

March 23, 2020 – (Sumterville, FL) The reliability of SECO's electric service plays a critical role in SECO members' health and wellbeing. To keep its employees healthy and ready to serve its members, the cooperative has made changes to mitigate health risks related to member and public interaction.

In response to the COVID-19 situation and a need to reallocate resources to call center operations, SECO Energy is temporarily closing its five Member Service Center walk-in services effective 8 a.m. Tuesday, March 24. Each location is equipped with a drive-thru that will remain open and an outside automated kiosk is also available at each location for bill payment 24/7. The drive-thrus in Eustis, Inverness, Ocala and Sumterville will operate 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The drive-thru in Groveland is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The cooperative offers members 12 ways to pay bills, most that avoid face-to-face contact. Members can pay online, by phone, by mail, enroll in bank draft and more. SECO's online account platform called SmartHub is the place to start for convenient self-serve options. Log in or create an account profile today. View past bills, usage history, request a payment arrangement and more.

During SECO's Emergency Response Plan activation, it is offering members who request a payment arrangement an extended period of time over and above normal payment arrangement parameters. Members requesting a payment arrangement can do so by visiting with SECO's virtual assistant on the automated telephone system or by logging into SmartHub at SECOEnergy.com. Both platforms have been programmed to automatically allow additional time for payment arrangements. Members are encouraged to utilize the phone system and SmartHub as call volume has been high amid COVID-19 concerns.

SECO Energy's Sumterville headquarters and adjacent campus remain closed to public access for any vendor or delivery without an approved appointment or scheduled delivery. SECO field personnel are practicing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended social distancing standard of maintaining a six-foot barrier with members. Employees and members are asked to use email, phone and web conferencing communication in lieu of in-person meetings whenever possible and to practice social distancing when in-person meetings are unavoidable.

CEO Jim Duncan stated, “In order to adhere to the CDC’s social distancing guidelines, SECO has opted to temporarily discontinue its walk-in services at our Member Service Center locations. This additional step will help reduce member and employee contact which is necessary to ensure a healthy workforce needed to provide reliable electric service to our members. Drive-thru windows and kiosks remain available.”

Duncan continued, “SECO offers members 12 ways to pay monthly bills. Members can continue to practice social distancing and pay bills online through SmartHub, by phone or enroll in bank draft. We have proactively waived late payment fees, and have automatically extended the time period for payment arrangements so that members can use both SmartHub and the virtual phone assistant as hold times are longer due to COVID-19 concerns.”

SECO has other ways to help members in need through a corporate citizenship initiative called Pennies from Heaven. The program helps fund local United Way chapters managed through [Florida 211](#) for bill payment assistance for SECO members. Members who need assistance with utilities, food, and other household expenses are encouraged to contact 211.

“Like” SECO’s page on Facebook page and “follow” @SECOEnergy on Twitter for news releases and cooperative updates.



Photo caption: SECO Energy CEO Jim Duncan

SECO Energy is a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving more than 200,000 homes and businesses across the Florida counties of Sumter, Citrus, Marion, Lake, Levy, Pasco and Hernando. SECO is the third largest electric co-op in Florida and the seventh largest in the nation. SECO's wholesale power provider is Seminole Electric, one of the largest generation and transmission cooperatives in the nation, serving 1.6 million consumers in Florida. Seminole is owned by nine electric distribution cooperatives, and SECO is one of those nine member-owners. In addition to ranking highest in customer satisfaction in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 J.D. Power study, SECO's 2019 ACSI rating is 90. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.