

October 1, 2020

Lee County Electric Cooperative
Denise Vidal, Chief Executive Officer
Post Office Box 3455
North Fort Myers, Florida 33918
Electronic copy sent to: Denise.Vidal@LCEC.net

Ms. Vidal,

After serving as a City of Sanibel elected official since 2007, including more than a decade as Mayor, I have gained significant experience in the operation and delivery of utilities on a barrier Island. This includes the challenges of providing and restoring electrical service during and following hurricanes and tropical storms.

I am writing to you today to bring to your attention the frustration of the Sanibel citizens and businesses regarding the issues related to the outages we have experienced through the summer and through last evening on days where no winds nor adverse weather is occurring and yet we experience a major power outage for hours. This unreliability of electrical service is having a major negative economic impact on our business community, particularly the restaurants of the Island, which are among our top employers.

At this time there seem to be three major issues:

- The need for a detailed report on the condition of the system infrastructure on the Island, including the frequency of inspections, the current life versus the expected life, the upcoming maintenance, replacement and upgrade schedule for the next 5 years. (For example, the broken pole which appears to be the source of yesterday's outage, when was the pole originally installed, when was it last inspected, was the pole carrying the proper weight of appurtenances, when was the pole scheduled for replacement, are there similar poles of age and/or condition on Island that should be inspected prior to similar failures)
- Deployment of Best Available Technology for trouble-shooting outages, reporting the cause and system failures and repair updates to customers. (For example, what is the status of installing technology which could continuously monitor the system so that repair crews could be deployed directly to the area of the system failure, rather than relying upon visual identification by the Sanibel Police Department, citizens or LCEC crews driving the area of the outage)



City of Sanibel

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www.mysanibel.com

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- Economic Impacts on the Island businesses. It is generally accepted that during catastrophic weather events in our environment electrical service is at risk. However, for businesses, such as restaurants, which require electrical power to operate at the most minimal level, the current unreliability makes it impossible for them to determine if they should close for the remainder of the day, cancel reservations, release their staff and dispose of foods. When the waitstaff is released they lose the primary portion of their earnings--their tips

To be certain we have an opportunity for you to address these concerns, we are requesting you appear at the next Sanibel City Council meeting, 9 a.m., Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at Sanibel City Hall. You will be early on the agenda. Please coordinate the details with the City Manager, Judie Zimomra, j.zimomra@mysanibel.com or via text at 239-770-0013.

It is important to the citizens and businesses of Sanibel that these critical issues be addressed.

Respectfully,



Kevin Ruane
Mayor

CC: Sanibel City Council
Tricia Dorn, Key Account Executive
Judith Zimomra, City Manager
John Agnew, City Attorney
Pamela Smith, City Clerk