



# SECONEWS

## WYNN'S WIRE

LAKE COUNTY POWER/POPULATION BOOM

### DEAR MEMBERS,

Every day Florida welcomes new residents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between April 2020 and July 2022, Florida's population increased to over 22,200,000, which is a 3.3% increase in just over two years. The four largest counties served by SECO (Citrus, Lake, Marion and Sumter) increased their population during this timeframe between 5.5% and 11.7%. Lake County's growth increased by 6.8% specifically.

To keep pace with the increasing demand for energy to power the growing number of residences and businesses (both commercial and industrial), SECO Energy maintains its massive electric grid infrastructure regularly for our existing members. It builds new infrastructure where needed for new members.

In Lake County, SECO completed the design and construction of a multi-year new substation (named Sawgrass) to meet demand in the County's increasing population. Much of the population growth has occurred in Clermont, Fruitland Park, Groveland and Minneola.

The increasing number of residential new construction and commercial and industrial developments underway in southern Lake County will require a substantial increase in electrical service. SECO Energy has responded with its development of the Sawgrass substation, which is the 49th SECO Energy substation – soon to be 50 with the addition of the new Landstone substation in Sumter

County – built to supply members in that area with safe, affordable, reliable energy.

Sawgrass will help manage the growing load along Lake County's southern area in conjunction with our current Clermont substation. SECO's new substation houses the latest technology to provide redundant power sources.

Sawgrass utilizes two Duke Energy transmission lines in a looped configuration, creating redundancy that increases reliability for members served from both the Clermont and Sawgrass substations. This design allows crews to restore service to members served by both substations through distribution backfeeding. This redundancy minimizes the impact and length of outages. It supports a new level of robust demand while helping to maintain a resilient grid.

As your local not-for-profit electric cooperative, SECO and its hometown team are committed to reducing the number and duration of outages our members experience yearly and keeping pace with a rapidly expanding population. Our investment in state-of-the-art infrastructure is one vital action taken to improve member satisfaction.

Best regards,

**Curtis Wynn**  
Chief Executive Officer



**SAWGRASS SUBSTATION**

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# BEAT THE HEAT HVAC TUNE-UP

A MESSAGE FROM VICE PRESIDENT BOYATT



**SUMMER'S HEAT IS BEARING DOWN ON CENTRAL FLORIDA.** Leading up to the Independence Day holiday weekend, SECO Energy's SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system reported the highest peak loads measured on SECO's system. On July 4, the record-high system peak load reached 949 MW. To beat the heat, ensuring your HVAC system is operating at maximum efficiency is crucial as summer temperatures rise.

Proactive routine HVAC maintenance significantly enhances the performance and efficiency of your HVAC system and extends its lifespan. Schedule an HVAC tune-up seasonally to ensure the efficient running of your home's highest energy consumer (per the Department of Energy).

## HVAC Technician Service Items:

- Check and adjust the blower motor and belts
- Review and test thermostat settings
- Lubricate moving parts
- Check and straighten bent fins on the compressor
- Tighten electrical connections
- Clean the condensate drain/pipe
- Measuring refrigerant levels and charging if needed
- Check controls
- Coil cleaning



By scheduling a professional HVAC tune-up, you can ensure that your HVAC system is operating at its peak performance level, providing optimal comfort for you and your family all summer. Your part in this process is changing your HVAC air filter monthly to help the unit operate efficiently.

For more energy-saving tips and ideas, visit [SECOEnergy.com](https://SECOEnergy.com) > Energy Solutions > Energy-Saving Tips.



# SHUT DOWN SOLAR SCAMS

The solar industry is particularly robust in Florida. Unfortunately, solar contractors make false claims regarding potential savings, energy production, installation timing, and even SECO Energy's role in connecting a home solar system to the electrical grid. Don't believe everything you hear. Scammers will make big promises so they can close the deal.

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS SOLAR SCAM TRAPS TO AVOID

**1. HIGH-PRESSURE SALES TACTICS:** Don't believe claims that the price quoted is good for one day only. This high-pressure tactic aims to create a sense of urgency where you'll sign a contract now and possibly regret it later.

**2. INCENTIVES:** There is currently a 30% federal tax credit called an Investment Tax Credit (ITC), which reduces the tax amount owed to the federal government. It is not a rebate! Not everyone will benefit nor qualify. A financial advisor or accountant can help determine eligibility – don't allow a salesperson to mislead you.

**3. OVERSTATED BENEFITS:** It is utterly false that adding a solar array to your home will eliminate your electric bill. It is false that SECO Energy will send you a check. Another fallacy in most solar scenarios is that your home will have power during a utility outage; without battery storage and a complicated and costly system design, that is not the case. The inverter on a solar system is designed to prevent solar-generated electricity from backfeeding onto the utility grid and injuring a utility worker.

**4.** We cannot emphasize this point often enough. **INVESTING IN A SOLAR SYSTEM WILL NOT ELIMINATE YOUR MONTHLY ENERGY BILL** – solar systems are often not powerful enough to generate the energy needed to power a residence without purchasing energy from the utility. Most members who have invested in a solar array will require utility-supplied power after the sun goes down, on cloudy days, during storms

and early mornings before the sun comes up. Solar systems generate the most power from 9 am to 3 pm. Peak HVAC use falls between 3 pm and 7 pm. The disparity can't be bridged without battery storage.

**5. SOLAR IMPERSONATORS:** SECO Energy has not contracted with any solar installers – do not fall for sales representatives who misrepresent their relationship with SECO Energy or state that we sent them to your home. Research the company and verify credentials, not just logos. Check websites and call to confirm the installer is a licensed solar contractor. Payment should not be made to individuals, only to a verified solar or finance company. Note that financing a solar system also significantly reduces and may eliminate any return on investment.

**6. UNREALISTIC PRICES:** Compare at least three quotes from solar energy companies. Focus on product value, credibility of the company and other features – not just cost.

**READ THE CONTRACT BEFORE SIGNING ANYTHING.** Contact SECO before signing for an unbiased opinion and the requirements of our Interconnection Agreement. Only sign a contract after thoroughly reading and understanding the terms, including promises made by the contractor for system production, buyback, finance terms and more. Pay attention to the terms and conditions and make sure that verbal promises are stated in writing. Beware of “free” solar panel offers; this indicates that the contractor is most likely a scam – solar equipment is not free and is often very expensive.

If you're considering an investment in solar, SECO can help. To learn more or contact us for assistance, visit [SECOEnergy.com](https://www.secoenergy.com) > Energy Solutions. Find out if solar is right for you before committing to a sizeable investment that may have a different payback than you envision



# AMI Systemwide Deployment Update

SECO Energy has launched a systemwide AMI (advanced metering infrastructure) project expected to span three to four years for full deployment. The AMI meter will provide detailed usage data and other energy-saving tools in SmartHub to help reduce energy consumption and costs for you and SECO Energy.

Our AMI vendor, Honeywell, began upgrading residential meters in July. Contractors carry Honeywell and SECO badges, and vehicles are clearly marked with SECO Authorized Contractor signage.

In preparation, SECO conducted two pilot projects and has completed system acceptance testing.

The Honeywell AMI meter is certified by Underwriter Laboratories – a leader in safety science, security, quality and regulatory compliance. The meter is highly accurate and offers many benefits, including outage reporting, 15-minute interval readings, bill projection and energy disaggregation to help estimate the energy costs for your appliances and electronics. Once the meter upgrade is complete, you can access energy-usage data through your online SmartHub account. Register today if you don't already have an account.

Contrary to outdated advanced meter myths, the meter can't view your actual in-home behavior. Its software assesses your home's load profile. It estimates the usage of electricity items based on average consumer usage and behavior. The meter emits a minuscule amount of cellular/radio frequency and falls well within Federal Communications Commission limitations. Read more about the AMI project at [SECOEnergy.com](http://SECOEnergy.com). View our Meter Deployment Map for an estimate of when your area is expected to receive an updated meter. You'll receive a notification before the meter exchange, and the technician will leave a door hanger with more information about your new benefits.

## WINNING ACCOUNT NUMBERS!

Are the last six digits of your account number below? Email [customerservice@secoenergy.com](mailto:customerservice@secoenergy.com) if your number appears. Winners receive a \$25 gift card.

<b>360010</b>	<b>481206</b>	<b>975001</b>
<b>562702</b>	<b>461102</b>	<b>394801</b>

## BOARD MEETING DATES

The Board of Trustees will meet on **Monday, August 28, 2023**, at 2:30 p.m. in the Corporate Offices at 330 South US HWY 301 in Sumterville.

A Trustees' meeting will also be held on **Monday, September 25, 2023**.

**Report an Outage:**  
[stormcenter.secoenergy.com](http://stormcenter.secoenergy.com)

**24/7 Job Hotline:**  
[secoenergyjobs.com](http://secoenergyjobs.com)