

## SLECA implements state-of-the-art outage management system

In our ongoing effort to provide better service at the lowest possible cost, SLECA is implementing a state-of-the-art outage management and interactive voice response system.

The new system is set to become operational later this summer.

According to SLECA General Manager Joe Ticheli, "With this new system, we can better detect, manage and respond to service outages, whether for a single member or for system-wide disturbances."

The new system will enable SLECA employees to detect, evaluate, diagnose and respond to service interruptions through automated collection, organization, analysis and display of relevant system and customer information. This will enable speedy, accurate response and restoration and ensures timely and accurate communications with employees and customers.

Ticheli said the new system will prove especially valuable during large outages and emergency conditions when call volumes are high and no customer will be turned away by a busy signal.

Ticheli emphasized that members who call will still have the option to speak to a customer service representative or choose to leave a recorded message. Recorded messages will prompt the system to automatically display the member's address and account information for dispatchers, which will pinpoint the location of the trouble area and reduce response time.

"We always do our homework when investing in new technology and we have found that this system has proven very valuable to those electric utilities that have implemented it across the country," Ticheli said.

## SLECA employees receive training

Four SLECA employees recently participated in advanced safety training administered by the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives in Baton Rouge.

Shown below, Drake Rollins, Gabriel Mustiful, Corey Davis and Jesse Fanguy completed Module 4, Levels 1-5 of the Louisiana Lineman Training Program. (Acct. No. 203346001)



## SLECA SWEEPSTAKES

Did you know that each month SLECA gives away CASH just for reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY? It's true. Every month, SLECA account numbers are randomly selected by computer. Four account numbers are hidden in the articles in the SLECA News section of LOUISIANA COUNTRY. Then it's up to you. If you see your account number, call SLECA and win \$25.00 in cash or have your winnings applied to your bill. It's that simple. So, if you are not reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY you're missing out on great local articles and the possibility of winning extra money.

## SLECA News



Joe Ticheli, General Manager  
Alexander Doyle, President  
South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Assn.  
P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 (876-6880)



## Annual Meeting: SLECA works hard to keep rates low

Many folks might be offended if they were called "miserly," or "cheap."

At SLECA, those words are considered terms of endearment.

General Manager Joe Ticheli told the roughly 2,000 members and guests gathered at the cooperative's Annual Meeting held at the Houma-Terrebonne Civic Center on April 11 that SLECA strives each day to keep its rates as low as possible.

But, he said, it's not always easy. Ticheli noted that just as commodity prices continue to rise for consumers, the price of equipment needed to build and maintain SLECA's extensive power delivery infrastructure has risen from 80 to 200 percent over the past two decades.

"Whether it's a gallon of milk or a loaf of bread for you, for us it's a 35-foot pole or a transformer or a roll of wire, and we're subject to the same rising costs," he said. "We go through the same range of emotions when we have to pay these costs as you do when it comes to paying bills or meeting financial obligations."

But Ticheli said there's no need for a sense of "sticker shock" when receiving a power bill from SLECA because members can be assured they're receiving a real bargain compared to other ratepayers across the community and the state.

He said in order to keep a proper perspective, it's important to know just how favorable SLECA's rates compare to the competition, particularly how much SLECA members have saved over the past five years.

For example, over the past five years SLECA members averaged \$75.74 for 1,000 kWh. By comparison, Entergy customers paid \$92, City of Houma customers paid \$94, Morgan City customers paid \$95 and Cleco customers paid \$111. Consequently, Ticheli said SLECA members saved an average of \$1,300 over that time frame. He commended the board and staff for working hard on behalf of SLECA members.



Clockwise from top, left: members were treated to an evening meal as a gesture of appreciation for their support; General Manager Joe Ticheli addressed members and their guests; Judge David Arceneaux swears in SLECA directors Tracy Duval, Eroy Acosta and Terry Trahan.

"We're not insulted when anyone calls us 'cheap' because when it comes to spending your money, we're as cautious as we can possibly be," he said. "We spend your money very wisely and we spend it only on what we need to do the job you need us to do. Everything we do is for you. Your board and employees can be trusted to do the right thing and keep the lights on while keeping your rates as low as possible."

In other developments, Ticheli said a series of circumstances and events will cause slight variations in SLECA's rates.

He noted that rates will decrease slightly this summer at the conclusion of a three-year Formula Rate Plan approved by the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Conversely, rates are expected to temporarily rise a bit as the non-profit

could increase the cost of retail power for U.S. ratepayers from 50 to 60 percent.

"Everybody wants to have clean air and water. That's certainly true here in the Sportsman's Paradise," he said. "But there has to be some balance, and there has to be some consideration for our members who will have to ultimately foot the bill for any decisions that are made in Washington. There are other ways to protect our environment that won't cause our families to bear such a heavy financial burden."

Ticheli encouraged SLECA members to fill out comment cards that the co-op would deliver to the Obama Administration and the EPA to appeal for fairness and balance in crafting energy policy.

Complicating the situation, he said, is the fact that the technology the EPA is promoting has never proven to be viable on a commercial scale and is "not ready for prime time."

"I encourage you to get involved and tell the EPA how you feel," he urged. "Otherwise, these mandates by the federal government are going to have an impact on your financial future. Imagine what would happen if your power bill went up 50-60 percent overnight. That's a real hit in the pocketbook."

SLECA attorney James Funderburk announced that 509 registered members were present at the Annual Meeting. The Rev. Wayne Hunt delivered an invocation, while the Houma-Terrebonne Community Band provided musical entertainment and vocalist Shelayne Carter sang the national anthem.

Cajun humorist Kent Gonsulin also entertained the audience while children were treated to a magic show and face-painting. Local health care providers performed medical screenings and other health and safety information was available to members and guests.

Board members Tracy Duval, Eroy Acosta and Terry Trahan were sworn in, as they returned to the board unopposed.

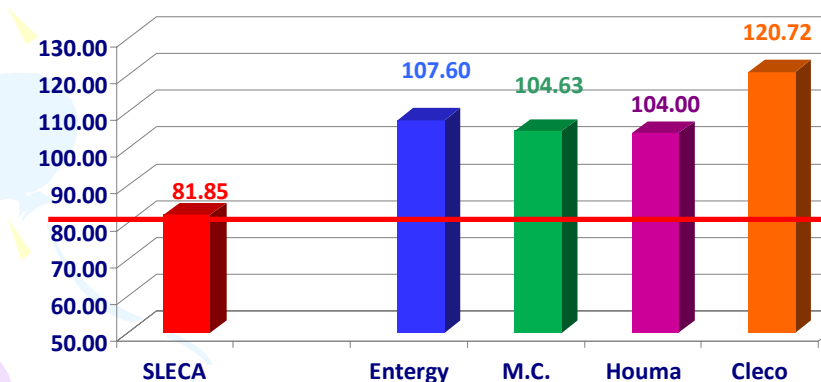
cooperative endeavors to recover the costs associated with battling five destructive hurricanes over the past nine years. (Acct. No. 61328003)

Ticheli said dealing with those storms cost SLECA approximately \$20 million, while only a portion of those costs were reimbursed by the federal government. This small adjustment will be effective for just 24 months and then it goes away.

Ticheli said even with this temporary adjustment, SLECA's rates will still remain considerably lower than the competition.

Of greater concern to SLECA's management and board, Ticheli said, is an effort by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to impose additional environmental regulations on coal-fired power plants, which independent sources say

## Rate Comparison for 1,000 KWH for April 2014



## Statement of Non-discrimination

South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association (SLECA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## Across the Board

February 3, 2014

Present were directors Alexander Doyle, president; David Luke, vice-president; Brian Rivet, secretary; Terry Trahan, treasurer; Tracy Duval, J. D. Boudreaux, Eroy Acosta, Roger Dale DeHart, Larry J. Daigle, and Advisor to the Board, Lloyd Gibson. Also attending were Joseph Ticheli, general manager, James Funderburk, attorney and Yolanda George, member services supervisor.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved minutes and summary of the January 6, 2014, meeting, the ALEC minutes and 110 new members.

The financial report, approved by the board, highlighted interest earnings, cash on hand, rate comparison showing SLECA having the lowest rates compared to other area utilities, line loss, kilowatt hour sales for the month, cumulative sales to date, cost of service, equity, TIER, and electric and total revenue versus cost per kilowatt hour. (Acct. No. 36480001)

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Ticheli reported on the following: (1) On June 14, EPA is scheduled to announce regulations governing carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants such as Louisiana Generating. NRECA has started an email campaign directed at EPA opposing these regulations. If EPA does indeed issue these new rules, it could take years for them to be enforced because of multiple lawsuits that will undoubtedly be filed. 2) Louisiana's new NRECA director, Mark Brown, from Claiborne Electric, will take his place on the NRECA Board of Directors at the NRECA Annual Meeting in Nashville. 3) Senator David Vitter announced that he plans to run for governor in 2015. At the present time, his main opponent is LT. Governor Jay Dardenne. State Treasurer John Kennedy has said he is considering entering the race and Commissioner Scott Angelle is rumored to also be interested. 4) The annual Legislative Cookout at the Louisiana State Capitol is planned for Tuesday, May 20. SLECA will prepare boiled shrimp and oysters on the half shell as we do every year. 5) Commissioner Eric Skrmetta was re-elected Chairman of the Commission for 2014. 6) The Alliance for Affordable Energy, a non-profit organization that advocates affordable, environmentally responsible energy and is based in New Orleans, has asked to meet with ALEC to learn more about electric cooperatives. The ALEC Board thought it was a good idea and the Alliance will be invited to attend the February board meeting.

The board then approved the manager's report and the safety report showing employees have worked 2,666,973 hours without a lost time accident since December 1996. The board then approved the attorney's report and fees.

Following executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

You may obtain copies of the minutes by contacting SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 or by calling (985) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

## In Honor of the Men and Women Who Have Protected Our Freedom...

SLECA will be closed Monday, May 26 in observance of Memorial Day.

A dispatcher and crews will be on duty for emergencies or interruption of service.

Have a safe and happy Memorial Day!



Your Cooperative Connection

# LOUISIANA COUNTRY

**SLECA NEWS**  
Pages 6-7 • May 2014  
Vol. 31, No. 2



## Congratulations to SLECA's 2014 Scholarship Winners



**Marilyn Bailey**  
Morgan City  
High School



**Megan Boudreaux**  
Houma  
Christian School



**Tyler Lusco**  
Central Lafourche  
High School



**Blake Prosperie**  
Vandebilt Catholic  
High School