

Cape Coral Citizens Looking for the Best Electric Services

Citizen Survey showed wide support for variety of service enhancements

With the City's 30-year franchise agreement with LCEC expiring, the City is evaluating options for electric service for Cape Coral customers. The expiration of the contract provides a unique opportunity for the City to look at the options available for our citizens. One of the options is to develop a Municipal Electric Utility specifically serving Cape Coral.

To help determine what Cape Coral citizens want from their electric service, the City solicited input from the community through its recent biennial Citizen Survey. Custom questions were added that specifically addressed the importance of (1) service enhancements, (2) aspects of electric service and (3) customer service.

Electric Service Enhancements Ranked High

All the options for electric service enhancements were rated as "essential" or "very important" by more than half of respondents. "Investing in new technology" and "Use of LED technology for streetlights and energy efficiency" received the highest support of 67 percent and 64 percent respectively. Installing streetlights was supported by 58 percent; creating community solar was 57 percent; and, moving electric lines underground was 55 percent.

Customers Want Input, More Transparency and Revenues Invested in Cape Coral

For aspects of electric services considered "essential" or "very important," it was not surprising that "reliability" was at 99 percent, while "low rates" was 93 percent. What was equally important is 92 percent of the respondents said "transparency of rates" was "essential" or "very important," with "resident input" into decisions about Cape Coral services scoring 82 percent. "Investing revenues" in Cape Coral projects also rated high with 77 percent saying this was "essential" or "very important."

Cape Customers Looking for Quick Response, Communication and More Convenience

In customer service, a fast response to power outages ranked the highest with 96 percent rating this "essential" or "very important," while "communication" during the outage was at 93 percent. About two-thirds of customers also would like a variety of bill payment options and a customer service center in Cape Coral.

The information from the Citizen Survey provides the City with clear direction from our residents. All of the services our Cape Coral residents consider high priority can be provided through a municipal electric utility likely with no rate increase or possibly lower rates. Can these services also be provided within a franchise agreement with LCEC, also at no additional cost to our citizens? Cape Coral customers should know that the proposed franchise agreement LCEC presented to the City contains none of these services. LCEC even proposes eliminating its responsibility to charge "reasonable" rates to City residents and businesses.

We will continue to update our citizens on the electric service options. Visit our website at www.capecoral.net and check the "Cape Coral Electric Services Update" page for updates. ■

Citizen's Action Center Have a City-related question or issue?

Contact us via phone: **(239) 574-0425**

Or online: **cac.capecoral.net**

LCEC Stalls City Effort for LED Street Lighting Demonstration Project

City asked LCEC for side-by-side display on energy-saving options that could save \$1 million annually

The City of Cape Coral has been on the cutting edge of saving electricity and reducing costs to our citizens. Our ongoing energy initiatives generated savings of \$388,000 just in 2014. Cape Coral's efforts were recognized at the 83rd Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting this year when Cape Coral received "Honorable Mention" for the 2015 Mayors' Climate Protection Award. (see article on page 12).

We continue to look for opportunities save energy and reduce costs, and another area for savings would be the City's 14,000 streetlights. Orlando Utilities Commission (a municipally owned utility) began switching their streetlights to LED lighting a few years ago. Based on OUC's costs for LED lights vs. LCEC's charge to Cape Coral for standard HSP lights, the City potentially could save our citizens almost \$1 million a year in electric charges levied by LCEC.

Several months ago, City staff began asking LCEC to set up a public demonstration for street lighting where citizens could compare LED lighting with



Contrast in Orlando with LED lighting.

current "high pressure sodium" lighting. The request was to install four LED lights on a residential street in Cape Coral where the bank of LED lights would be contrasted with the regular lights on the street. We would ask our residents to drive by, observe the difference in the lighting and provide feedback.

While LCEC eventually agreed to install a few LED lights, they declined City staff's request to place the lights in a public location. LCEC chose to install three LED lights inside the fence of the City's Water Reclamation Plant, which is not accessible to the public. The lights also are in the same vicinity of the plant's security lighting, which overpowers the streetlights. The option chosen by LCEC provides no opportunity for public feedback.

We are certain our residents would appreciate the opportunity to view the LED technology available for our streetlights as this was a high priority from our Citizen Survey. We hope LCEC will reconsider and collaborate with the City of Cape Coral in this effort. ■