

Amendment 1 promotes solar, protects consumers

Solar power is an emerging energy option in Florida and we want to make sure that it's developed the right way in our state. Unfortunately, big, for-profit, out-of-state companies have come to Florida looking to make big bucks by leasing rooftop panels using contracts that may be misleading or even fraudulent.

Thankfully, standards are in place to protect you and your family from businesses driven only by high profit margins. These protections help ensure the safety of your family, our linemen, and first responders. However, big solar companies are lobbying the legislature and are working on a constitutional amendment for the 2018 ballot that would prevent the government from protecting you from shady solar business practices. One way to stop them is proposed amendment 1 to Florida's Constitution.

This November, you have the opportunity to guarantee these protections will survive big solar's attempts to bypass consumer protections.

Amendment 1 will establish three different protective rights in Florida's Constitution:

Protection 1: Your right to own, rent, and use solar generation and solar electricity.

Currently, your right to have and use solar is not in Florida's Constitution. Amendment 1 fixes this problem by cementing into Florida's Constitution your right to have solar generators and to use solar power. Amendment 1 would guarantee your ability to purchase solar equipment for your home or office, or

Co-ops Vote

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send the message that candidates will need to put our concerns front and center in order to earn our vote. The Co-ops Vote website also provides a wealth of voter resources, including information on the candidates, the voter registration process, election locations, and background on some of the issues we want our elected leaders to understand.

rent it if you prefer, and to use the electricity it generates.

Protection 2: The right to be protected from fraudulent or unsafe solar providers.

Solar power is a great resource, but unfortunately, there are some bad actors in the solar industry, and as with all electric generation there is a safety risk. Amendment 1 ensures that necessary standards can protect you and your family from substandard installations and unsafe solar equipment. It also allows the government to protect you from predatory solar companies that are only focused on their profits.

Protection 3: Treat all Floridians fairly.

Even when a home has solar panels, it almost always has to be connected to the grid – because electricity can't be stored affordably. If solar users expect reliable power even when the sun doesn't shine, they will have to rely on their electric utility every day. Amendment 1 ensures that those who do not have solar generators are not required to pay more than their fair share of the cost of maintaining the electric grid, and will not be forced to subsidize the electric rates of those who choose to use solar.

Here at Clay Electric, we believe in providing safe, affordable, and reliable electricity. Amendment 1 will help solar meet those criteria, and that's good news for all of our consumer-owners. As always, if you'd like to know more about Amendment 1 or solar power in general, please contact us.

Power Line is an informational publication distributed monthly with billing statements. If you have questions or comments about the Power Line publication, contact Editor Kathy Richardson at P. O. Box 308, Keystone Heights, FL 32656; email: KRichardson@clayelectric.com.

Clay Electric's Board of Trustees will meet on October 20 and November 21 beginning at 12:30 p.m. in Keystone Heights.

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Power Line

October 2016

Co-ops Vote: Take the pledge & cast your ballot

In the 2012 national elections, voter turnout dropped by 9 percent overall, but the decline in rural counties was 18 percent—twice that of the nation as a whole.

Clay Electric has joined a national program to help turn this around by encouraging our members to register to vote and go to the polls in November.

Called "Co-ops Vote," this nonpartisan campaign also strives to inform both our members and the candidates about issues important to America's electric co-ops and the communities they serve, from the continued need for affordable and reliable electricity to broadband access and other rural economic development issues.

"As an organization with very deep roots here in north Florida, we want to be sure that our voice is heard on Election Day," said General Manager Ricky Davis. "Participating in Co-ops Vote will amplify our voice and send the message to those seeking office that the issues facing our community and all of rural America cannot be ignored."

One of the key elements of the Co-ops Vote campaign is a quick and easy member pledge drive. Clay Electric is urging our members to take the pledge to become a "Co-op Voter" by signing up at www.vote.coop to help

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News Notes

Co-op's vehicle & equipment auction Oct. 27-Nov. 14

Clay Electric will offer its annual vehicle and equipment auction from Oct. 27 at 6 p.m. through Nov. 14 at 6 p.m. There will be about 50 vehicles or pieces of equipment up for auction.

During the auction, information about the items will be posted at www.ggauctions.com. The phone number for the auctioneer is 407-886-2211.

Photos and information on each vehicle and other auction items will be posted. The inspection day for the vehicles and equipment is Nov. 9 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Clay Electric in Keystone Heights. Title work will be done on Nov. 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Co-op Connections program has saved members \$150k

Clay Electric members have saved \$150,000 on prescription drugs with the Co-op Connections Card since we launched the program in 2012.

Members have been enjoying this money-saving tool that connects them with discounts on everything from hotel stays to prescriptions. Be sure to present the card at the register to receive your discount! Clay Electric encourages its members to visit local businesses that participate in the Co-op Connections program.

More than 200 area businesses are participating in the Co-op Connections discount program.

As a Touchstone Energy co-op, Clay Electric strives to serve its members according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The cooperative's Co-op Connections Card is one of the ways that Clay lives up to those values.

Report from the manager

Ricky Davis

General Manager/CEO



Our Cooperative principles guide us

We all have a code that we use to understand right from wrong, and to help us make decisions about how to act. The best of these rules, like the Ten Commandments or the Bill of Rights, have been preserved and passed down to us by previous generations.

Unlike other utilities that are owned by investors and run for profit, Clay Electric is driven by a set of principles that we have inherited. These guideposts, called the Seven Cooperative Principles, are:

- **Voluntary and Open Membership:** All who want to use our services and accept Member responsibilities are welcome to join us.
- **Democratic Member Control:** Our cooperative is governed by a board of trustees, which is elected by Members like you. This board supervises me, your general manager, and works

with me to ensure that the cooperative is run for the benefit of all members.

- **Members' Economic Participation:** All members share in the economic costs and benefits of Clay Electric's business decisions and plans for the future.

- **Autonomy and Independence:** Together we control our own future—and if we join with any other organizations, we maintain our own democratic decision-making processes.

- **Education, Training, and Information:** We provide opportunities for education and training for employees and Members. We strive to keep members informed about issues that are important to them and important to other electric cooperatives across the country.

- **Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** We work together with other electric co-ops, across Florida and the nation, on issues where we have shared interests and common goals.

- **Concern for Community:** We strive to assist and care for the community in which we all live. We work to attract new jobs and employers to our service territory, and through programs like Operation Round Up, we provide local assistance to worthwhile organizations.

These Seven Cooperative Principles are what separate us from other, for-profit utilities. They guide us daily in our mission to provide safe, affordable, reliable electricity to our members.

Operation Round Up begins this month for participating members

In an effort to improve the lives of members and to live our Cooperative Principles, Clay Electric is implementing Operation Round Up this month. Operation Round Up is a program that will generate and collect charitable donations that will be used to benefit organizations in the community. The program "rounds up" a member's bill to the nearest dollar, and that tax-deductible amount will go directly to the Clay Electric Foundation.

All funds stay in the community to benefit Clay Electric members.

Each month, the electric bills of participating

members are rounded up – increased to the next dollar amount. The average amount any given member donates is just \$0.50 per month, with the maximum being \$11.88 per year.

Please visit ClayElectric.com to read more about Operation Round Up and the Foundation Board.

If you would like to opt out, it's easy. Have your account number and the last four digits of the primary account holder's social security number handy and go to optout.clayelectric.com or call 1-888-595-2655.