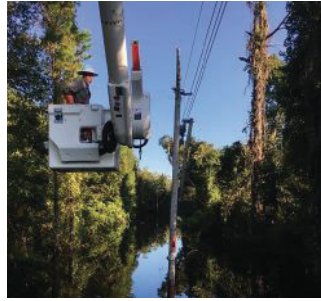


NEWBERRY: WHERE VALUE AND SERVICE MEET

When it comes to serving the City of Newberry Electric Utility's more than 2,100 customers, it's a small team of 10 that makes it happen, bringing value and service to each encounter and ensuring Newberry's residents never have to wonder if the lights will come on. For this utility, value is more than just a platitude. Because it doesn't operate its electricity plant, but instead purchases its power because of a joint ownership in the Florida Municipal Power Agency, as well as an interest in the St. Lucie Nuclear Power Plant (owned and operated by Florida Power and Light), the city has been able to return millions of dollars back into the community to enhance recreation, fire and police services while maintaining a reliable and efficient electrical system.

"We believe our customers deserve to receive services at the lowest rate possible and that, when dealing with the staff, they feel valued," said City of Newberry Electric Utility Customer Service Supervisor Tammy Snyder. "We are constantly looking for efficiencies to maximize the dollars we receive, thereby allowing us to keep our rates low, whether it's our call center, ENCO, our SCADA system or metering technology, such as AMI. Because all of our staff live, work and play in our community, they strive to make each customer contact a positive contact and to go the extra mile. Customer service is not a department with the City of Newberry, it is truly an attitude that starts with our city commission and flows throughout the organization. Each time a decision is being considered, it is fully vetted by staff, who look at the impacts both long term and short term, for the citizens as well as the rate payers. Discussions occur in an open forum, so our customers have an opportunity to voice their opinions, thoughts and ideas."

The utility is the first of its size to implement AMI. In 2018, it partnered with the Florida Municipal Power Agency to look at the advantages of AMI for Newberry's customers and to the utility. Once the value for the utility and residents was confirmed, the city commission approved moving forward with finding an AMI



provider with technical knowledge and whose philosophy aligns with the City of Newberry's customer focus business model. The utility hopes to begin rolling out the service by the end of 2020.

Their commitment to customers doesn't end there. The utility's aggressive tree trimming and maintenance programs ensure customers receive reliable electricity. In addition, they recently signed a contract to purchase more than 10 percent of their load from solar power, so that all city facilities will be powered by renewable energy. Additionally, the utility is emphasizing working smarter by utilizing technology in its call center, its SCADA system and the upcoming automated metering technology.

One of the things that helps Newberry's utility deliver on its promise of value and service is its experience. Established in 1910, the utility was governed by a city utility Board until the 1970s, when governorship was moved to the city commission. It's not all about experience though; shared knowledge comes into play as well.

"Because the City of Newberry is a small utility, all staff is cross-trained," Snyder said. "In any given situation when it is in the best interest of

our customers, all staff respond. For instance, if a tree falls on a utility line, you will find street crews, facility crews as well as water/wastewater crews. On the flip side, if a water main breaks you will find street crews, facility crews and line crews working side-by-side to resolve the issue as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Part of the reason they can do that is that the City of Newberry Electric Utility is locally owned and operated. That allows the utility to look at its bottom line with an eye on efficiency and reliability for the benefit of its customers. The decisions are made by people who live and work in Newberry, who are accessible to customers and are committed to continuing to offer the lowest rates in the area.

The utility's emphasis on providing value and service has paid off in terms of providing reliable electrical power but also in loyalty and trust from its customers.

"We are fortunate to have a progressive customer base," Snyder said. "Our customers have responded very well to the initiative taken by our city leadership at both the elected level as well as city staff level. We believe this is in large part due to the transparency of being a local utility provider."