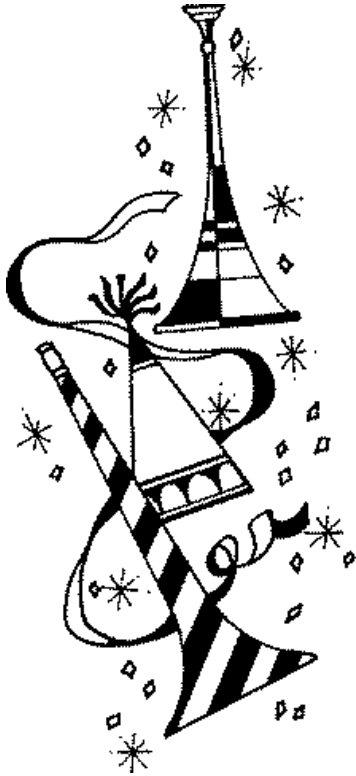


Y2K arrives without incident



Happy New Millennium!

In the wake of Y2K predictions and preparations, West Florida Electric Cooperative bid an outage-free welcome to the year 2000. WFEC personnel were on hand at all three of the Co-op's district offices in case problems arose New Year's Eve, but the midnight hour passed without loss of power to any of the Co-op's approximately 20,000 customers.

Although a Y2K-related glitch seemed unlikely, a vehicle striking one of the Co-op's poles or an animal on a powerline could have created an outage, causing consumers to panic. WFEC employees were available to answer questions and ensure customers continued to receive reliable electric service throughout the evening.

For more than a year, WFEC had been following a comprehensive checklist for Y2K readiness, coordinating with its power supplier, Alabama Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Andalusia, Ala.. Much of WFEC's distribution system is mechanical, with few digital controls and relatively few embedded computer chips that would be susceptible to Y2K anomalies. Still, because the nature of electric supply and delivery is interconnected, AEC participated in a series of simulations and nationwide drills to make certain it could continue to transmit power to the distribution co-ops it serves, including WFEC.

"A time of potentially serious problems forces you to do a self-assessment," said Gary Clark, WFEC Vice President of Member Services. "The whole Y2K experience proved WFEC has the ability to handle any situation, but it also taught us some valuable lessons."

"We can't assume all systems will always operate reliably," he continued. "We at WFEC are now more conscious than ever how small decisions we make every day, especially regarding technology and equipment, can have long-term impacts for our consumers. Y2K has taught us to be more cautious as we make these decisions for the future."



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