

**City of Ocala Electric Utility
Report to the Florida Public Service Commission Pursuant to
Rule 25-6.0343, F.A.C.
Calendar Year 2024**

1. Introduction

- b) Name of city/utility:
City of Ocala Electric Utility
- c) Address, street, city, zip:
**1805 NE 30th Ave, Bldg. 400
Ocala, FL 34470**
- d) Contact information: Name, title, phone, fax, email:
**Randy Hahn
Electric Engineering Manager
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(352) 401-6961 (fax)
rhahn@ocalafl.gov**

2. Number of meters served in the calendar year 2024:

The City of Ocala Electric Utility has a total electric service territory of 162 sq. miles and serves a total of 57,250 active billing electric customer meters.

Customer Breakdown:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| • Residential Customers: | 47,610 |
| • General Service Customers: | 6,000 |
| • General Service Demand Customers: | 889 |
| • Other: | 393 |

3. Facility Inspections

- a) **Describe the utility's policies, guidelines, practices, and procedures for inspecting transmission and distribution lines, poles, and structures including, but not limited to, pole inspection cycles and pole selection process.**

Our policy and primary purpose are to be consistent with the Florida Public Service Commission's rules for wood pole inspections and to provide pole restoration where it is economically feasible. Currently, we support an eight-year inspection cycle of our system. Our guidelines are selected on geographical areas based on the age of our poles. Practices and procedures include above-ground inspection, excavation, sounding, boring, chipping,

internal treatment, and evaluation of each pole to determine the remaining strength and reject criteria along with pole loading estimates.

b) Describe the number and percentage of transmission and distribution inspections planned and completed for 2024.

2024 represents the third year in Ocala’s third 8-year inspection cycle. The following two tables show the distribution and transmission poles inspected by year for the current 8-year inspection cycle. 100% of the transmission poles have been inspected, thus the transmission poles will not be inspected again until the start of our next 8-year inspection cycle (2030).

Distribution level poles include all poles that have only electric-purpose attachments of less than 35kV phase-to-ground voltage (i.e. distribution primary, secondary, service drops, lighting, and guying). Any pole with attachments above 35kV is classified as a transmission pole.

Ocala Electric Utility has distribution-level poles made of wood, concrete, steel, and composite materials. However, distribution inspections are conducted only for wood poles.

2022 OEU completed no inspection on wood poles due to a contract issue between the City and the contractor selected to perform inspection and remediation services (“Osmose”).

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF WOOD DISTRIBUTION POLES ¹	WOOD POLES INSPECTED	% OF TOTAL WOOD DISTRIBUTION POLES INSPECTED	TOTAL NUMBER OF <i>Non-WOOD</i> DISTRIBUTION POLES IN SYSTEM
2022 ²	31,461	0	0	6,223
2023	31,893	3,591	11.26%	7,445
2024	31,909	3,507	9.10%	7,503

¹ The total number of poles and inspection percentages change each year based on system growth and shrinkage.

²2022 OEU completed no inspection on wood poles due to a contract issue between the City and Osmose. 2022 starts the next 8-year inspection cycle.

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF WOOD TRANSMISSION POLES	WOOD TRANSMISSION POLES INSPECTED	% OF TOTAL WOOD TRANSMISSION POLES INSPECTED	TOTAL NUMBER OF <i>Non-WOOD</i> TRANSMISSION POLES IN SYSTEM
2023	358	14	100%	923
2024	354	0	N/A (Complete)	931

All wood transmission poles have now been inspected in the first year of this cycle. Many of the transmission poles requiring replacement, were replaced with other pole-type materials (concrete, composite, or steel).

c) Describe the number and percentage of transmission poles and structures and distribution poles failing inspection in 2024 and the reason for the failure.

2022 OEU completed no inspection on wood poles for 2022. This was due to a contract issue between the City and Osmose. The following two tables show rejection rates and the reason for the failure of distribution and transmission poles.

YEAR	NUMBER OF DISTRIBUTION WOOD POLES REJECTED ³	REJECT ⁴ % (Reject ÷ Total Yr. Insp.)	REASON FOR FAILURE
2022	0	0	0
2023	21	0.58%	Shell Rot
2023	1	0.03%	Decayed Top
2024	5	0.14%	Decayed Top
2024	6	0.17%	Exposed Pocket
2024	26	0.75%	Shell Rot
2024	4	0.11%	Split Top
2024	1	0.03%	Termites
2024	16	0.46%	Woodpecker Holes

³ Rejected poles include poles identified for mitigation by bracing, pole replacement, or other field actions as necessary to assure pole integrity sufficient with storm hardening standards.

⁴ Based on total Rejections to date in this 8-year cycle and total Inspections to date in this 8-year cycle. (TOTAL % REJECT = Total wood poles rejected ÷ Total wood poles inspected)

YEAR	NUMBER OF TRANSMISSION WOOD POLES REJECTED ³	REJECT % (Reject ÷ Total Yr. Insp.)	REASON FOR FAILURE
2023	0	0%	N/A
2024	0	0%	N/A (Complete for this cycle)

- d) Describe the number and percentage of transmission poles and structures and distribution poles, by pole type and class of structure, replaced or for which remediation was taken after inspection in 2024, including a description of the remediation taken.

OEU completed no inspection on wood poles for 2022 as stated above due to a contract issue between the City and Osmose. The following tables show distribution poles braced and replaced, and transmission poles braced and replaced. Poles remediated by bracing are not counted in the rejection numbers, since they still meet the standards with the immediate bracing applied.

DISTRIBUTION WOOD POLES				
YEAR	# BRACED ⁶	% BRACED ⁶ (% = Braced ÷ Wood pole Insp that Year)	# REPLACED ⁷ # Wood Rejected that Yr.	% REPLACED ⁷ (% = # Wood Rejected that Yr. ÷ Wood pole Insp that Yr.)
2022	0	0	0	0
2023	16	0.45%	0	0%
2024	23	0.66%	21	0.60%
TOTALS	39	0.55%	21	0.30%

⁶ Bracing occurs at the time of inspection if required. (TOTAL % = Total # Braced ÷ Total Wood pole inspected)

⁷ The replacement data represents poles identified for replacement in that inspection year, actual engineering and construction work may be completed in the following year.

	TRANSMISSION WOOD POLES	
YEAR	# / % BRACED ⁶ (% = Braced ÷ Total Yr. Insp.)	# / % REPLACED ⁷ (% = Total Yr. Repl. ÷ Total Yr. Insp.)
2022	0	0
2023	0	0
2024	0	0
TOTALS	0 / 0.0 %	0 / 0.0 %

The rejection data represents poles identified in a given inspection year. In order to complete inspection work ahead of the 8-year cycle, and to allow for needed remediation time, Ocala Electric Utility may complete inspections ahead of the 8-year cycle end date.

Poles that have been identified for replacement are then engineered as work orders. Work order engineering may span calendar years and may not occur in the same year as the inspection. Ocala Electric Utility is reporting total engineered pole replacement work orders released for construction, within the calendar year. NOTE – Some work orders may include multiple identified pole replacements if they are adjacent to each other. So total work order numbers likely will not equal the actual total number of poles identified for replacement.

YEAR	OVERALL POLE REPLACEMENT WORK ORDERS ENGINEERING COMPLETED
2022	0
<u>2023</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2024</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	0

Work order construction for a given replacement pole(s), may occur in the following year, after inspection, and may depend on other operational factors. Transmission pole replacements are given the highest priority.

YEAR	OVERALL POLE REPLACEMENT WORK ORDERS CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED ⁷
2022	0
2023	0
2024	0
TOTALS	0

Construction completion may represent work engineered and started in a previous calendar year. This may be due to material acquisition time, access limitations, coordination with other communication attachées or utilities, customer needs, or in some cases line outage scheduling.

4. Vegetation Management

- a) **Describe the utility’s policies, guidelines, practices, and procedures for vegetation management, including programs addressing appropriate planting, landscaping, and problem tree removal practices for vegetation management outside of road right-of-ways or easements, and an explanation as to why the utility believes its vegetation management practices are sufficient.**

The City of Ocala Electric Utility maintains an annual Transmission Vegetation Management Plan (TMVP), which provides specific allowable distances, work methods, practices, and an annual work schedule for all vegetation adjacent to transmission conductors operating over 100kV phase-to-phase.

A certified Utility Arborist plans and coordinates the work schedule and makes contact with adjacent property owners when problem and hazard trees are identified along the 13-mile 230kV Transmission easement corridor, the 69kV Transmission System, and across the Distribution System.

The work outlined in the work schedule is completed using a combination of manual, machinery, and chemical control methods performed by professional contractors and/or the City of Ocala’s three (3) man in-house Tree crew.

The Utility’s in-house Tree Crew performs most new-construction clearing and tree-related emergency response work required by the Utility. Additionally, they perform demand work including pruning or removal of problem and hazard trees, customer requests, hotspot work, and routine vegetation maintenance, including emergency call-outs.

A professional tree company is contracted primarily to perform routine vegetation maintenance over approximately one-fourth of the entire distribution system annually. The contract contains specifications set forth to ensure quality tree work and designated

clearances as discussed during FMEA Storm Hardening research meetings.

All pruning is required to conform to the guidelines outlined in the ISA's Best Management Practices "Utility Pruning of Trees" and the ANSI A300 Standards and is overseen by an ISA Certified Arborist/ Utility Specialist on staff who provides information and guidance to Utility personnel, plans and participates in the Arbor Day Festival, and oversees line clearance operations as well as providing education and training to utility tree crews.

The City's Tree Ordinance (included in the City of Ocala Land Development Regulations) contains wording requiring specific planting distances from utility lines that depend on species' natural growth habits. The City Planning Department uses these as a guide when approving site development plans.

In 2006 the Utility renewed its affiliation with the American Public Power Association and committed to budget for a "Remove and Replace" tree voucher program. The program addresses problem and hazard trees on property adjacent to utility easements by providing removal services and rewarding customers who cooperate with replacement vouchers and educational materials as an incentive.

In 2011 it was noted that many tree-related outages were caused by overhanging limbs, which had clearance but broke off onto the lines. In response, contract tree crews were instructed to reduce or remove all accessible overhanging limbs, and wording to that end was added to the Tree Trimming Contract. That contract was most recently rebid in April 2023.

As overhang is reduced and problem and hazard trees mitigated, tree-related outages will inevitably become less problematic during afternoon storms and high wind events; as new plantings are thoughtfully planned, and proper pruning practices applied the overall health of the tree canopy near the lines will gradually improve so that damage during future major storms should be greatly reduced.

In 2013, Ocala Electric Utility launched a plan to reclaim the utility's easements in areas that had become problematic for a variety of reasons, from access issues to canopy road designation. The new plan continues to be executed with the cooperation of local authorities in the interest of improving the reliability of electrical service system-wide.

In 2017, Hurricane Irma tested the effectiveness of the City of Ocala Electric Utility's enhanced vegetation management efforts with noticeable improvements in areas trimmed out.

Most recently in 2024, Hurricanes Helene and Milton tested the effectiveness of OEU's enhanced efforts. The overwhelming percentage of damage and outages were directly related to vegetation issues. Specifically, trees falling on conductors from outside of the right-of-way or the utility's trimming easement, or from falling limbs located within "Shady Road" designations, or tree-friendly neighborhoods, where trimming is heavily

restricted. Where comprehensive vegetation management was fully applied, the wind and tree-related outages were much less severe. For that reason, the City of Ocala Electric Utility will continue to encourage private property owners to allow increased levels of responsible vegetation management within proximity to the 69kV and 12.5kV distribution lines.

In 2024, approximately one-fourth (1/4) of Ocala's system was trimmed. Ocala's trimming cycle for vegetation management is a four-year cycle for distribution and a three-year cycle for transmission. In 2024 100% of the 230 KV transmission line was controlled by herbicide, in addition there was maintenance trimming completed such as dead, dying, diseased trees and trees that needed trimming. The annual work plan for 2024 included continued clearing of distribution and the transmission system. Ocala Electric Utility vegetation maintenance was performed by certified tree trimming contractors. In addition, Ocala Electric staffs a 3-man in-house tree crew that has access to an assortment of specialized equipment to perform vegetation line clearing using best management practices. We have a team of contractors that are dedicated to maintenance trimming cycles as well as three crews dedicated to reactive work. We also have a tree replacement program by giving tree vouchers to our residents who may have had trees removed from their property. We also give away three hundred trees between our annual Earth Day event in April and online options, giving energy-saving trees to our residents in addition we have a hazard tree removal program removing trees on private property that are dead, dying, or diseased that pose a threat to our powerlines.

b) Describe the quantity, level, and scope of vegetation management planned and completed for transmission and distribution facilities in 2024.

The Utility consists of approximately 1000 miles of lines; 766 miles are overhead primary, The 84 miles of transmission lines include 69kV which is mostly contiguous with under-built primary, and 13 miles of designated 230kV easement.

In the past, the normal annual vegetation management plan included 1/3rd of the 230kV transmission system each year. However, in 2023, 100% (all 13 miles) of the 230kV transmission easement was cleared to the full extent of easement/right-of-way limits. This included removal of all floor-level vegetation regardless of expected mature growth height, as well as ground-to-sky side trimming. In 2024, the Utility again fully inspected 100% of the transmission easement.

In 2025 we have and will continue to allocate resources towards a well-defined preventive maintenance program. We hold in reserve three contract crews along with our in-house tree crew for reactive projects such as new construction, reconductoring, pole change-outs, and trouble tickets. We also have a team dedicated to our preventative maintenance program. Our in-house tree crew as well as our tree contractors will continue to perform preventive maintenance for transmission and distribution facilities and to ensure all work is accomplished in accordance with our specifications.