



CHAMPION IN ENERGY

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Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) is not the same company today compared to when you began your service. In your opinion, what are some of the most instrumental changes that resulted in greater opportunity for women in the workforce, and in leadership?

Over the past several years, we have encouraged employees to look at how we do things, and then disrupt ourselves. And by doing that, we are developing better energy solutions for our customers. Our 30-by-30 plan to install more than 30 million solar panels by 2030, our use of drones and substation rovers to help diagnose issues faster and provide greater reliability for customers, are just a few examples of that.

To be able to come up with such innovative ideas and continue to be so competitive in the industry takes a very diverse group of people. We are fortunate to have many accomplished women in executive positions here at FPL. But overall, the greatest changes at FPL have come from greater diversity of thought, and through that comes more opportunities for women, minorities, men, younger employees, and on and on. Our company leadership features women and men of all backgrounds and strengths because they earned their roles and it is the right thing to do.

Throughout your career you have been a champion for women, including being a strong supporter of the Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum since its inaugural year. Why do you believe it is important to embrace diversity of thought?

Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum has done a fantastic job of highlighting such successful women in the energy industry, and I've really enjoyed learning about each one. Each person has something different they want to say or an important message they want to get across.

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It is great to see that there's a real focus in the world right now on diversity and inclusion, but it's important to me that people understand it is about more than simply meeting a quota. To constantly better yourself, or your work product, or your team, it's necessary to bring a group of people to the table with a variety of backgrounds, skill sets, life experiences and viewpoints. And by truly embracing what each person is able to provide makes for a healthy, productive work environment that enables an organization to better connect with customers and stakeholders while avoiding blind spots.

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The annual Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum aims to promote opportunities in the energy industry by recognizing the success that women leaders in the industry have demonstrated in growing Florida's economy and diversifying an already tremendous workforce.

Are there best practices to share in empowering women to rise in the ranks of leadership within the energy industry?

It's such an exciting time to be working in the energy industry. We're using technology like never before – we see ourselves as a technology company, not just an electric company – and I'm so proud of that. When I first started my career, I was an attorney and I learned a huge lesson that not only applies to women within the energy industry, but to everyone. That lesson is what you know is only part of the road to success and achievement. It also takes network, accountability and a willingness to follow through.

Another piece of that is when you're a woman, for some reason, people want to ask you about work/life balance. Balance is a great goal to have, but it is also as individual as each one of us. I think the awareness of what balance means to you is important. Each person has to decide what a balanced life looks like for them and then have the courage to pursue it.

Florida Power & Light has been a civic champion as well and has been very supportive of your civic engagement. This month you will be completing your term as President of Leadership Florida. As you reflect on your leadership role, what advice do you have for women in energy and the importance of civic engagement?

Having the opportunity to be a leader of Leadership Florida has really underscored for me that energy is a big part of the overall fabric of our communities.

A lot of what we do in the energy industry drives the economy here in Florida and this role has reminded me of just how much we are intertwined with our partners, businesses, environmental organizations and nonprofits. It has really hit home for me just how much we all work together.

At FPL, we believe whole-heartedly that it's important to partner with the communities we serve to make Florida an even better place to raise a family and do business. Civic engagement ensures you are at the table to help create positive impacts.

Our customers may know us as the electric company, but we are not just the electric company in our communities. We are a neighbor and a partner. I think that's a really important value that our company has.

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As you look through the crystal ball reflecting the next decade, why should today's students consider a job in the energy industry?

At FPL, we invest in four key areas: our power generation, our infrastructure, our people and our communities. Education – especially those programs that can help spark interest in STEM careers – is a big part of our communities. We sponsor robotics clubs, programs like “introduce a girl to engineering” and STEM scholarships, to name a few.

Robotics has proven to be a successful driver of interest in STEM studies that lead to high-paying jobs and a more highly-skilled technical workforce.

These are fascinating jobs, and I encourage today's students to take advantage of internships.

I know of one engineer at FPL in particular who was first introduced to science and technology through an FPL-sponsored robotics team at his high school. Today, he works in our IT organization. During Hurricane Irma, he was part of the team that coordinated our drone flights to support restoration.

The future is all about technology and sustainability. And with our technological advancements, emissions-free solar fields, batteries, clean energy and artificial intelligence, the energy industry is only going to keep expanding.