



# The Power Source

## Igniting the Future of Florida



July 2020

**Power Profile: LaQuitta Ghent**  
Vice President, Customer Delivery  
Region Support  
Duke Energy, Florida

**LaQuitta, your position with Duke Energy Florida is one of leadership in engineering. Would you provide a brief synopsis of your career path leading to this professional mark?**

I am currently Vice President of Region Support for Duke Energy Florida. Region Support is responsible for 7 Departments.....Read more

**What inspired you to join the energy industry?**

While in college, I had the opportunity to have several summer internships that helped to steer me toward the energy industry. I love that throughout my career.....Read more

**We have repeatedly heard that female students entering the engineering field is on a decline. What do you attribute that to and what do you want to share with young students today about the opportunities in the industry?**

The key is exposure! Many times, students gravitate to what they see. Female students need to see women like myself and others in the energy industry.....Read more

[Read LaQuitta's Full Power Profile Here](#)

Volume 1 Issue 7



**Lila Jaber**  
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Congratulations Corner: Gunster's Beth Keating named  
Lawyer of the Year 2020 for Energy Law

Beth Keating, a shareholder in Gunster's Tallahassee office, was named Lawyer of the Year in 2020 for Energy Law. Beth provides legal counsel pertaining to federal and state regulatory laws, particularly as such regulation is applied to utility companies. Beth's experience includes the legal representation of and policy consultation for competitive telecommunications, cable and technology companies, as well as electric and natural gas utilities before state and federal agencies and the Florida Legislature. Congratulations Beth!



## ***Governor DeSantis Announces Next Steps to Strengthen Florida's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure***



Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis recently announced an \$8.6 million investment that will protect air quality and expand the state's charging stations by 50 percent along most traveled corridors. This funding will immensely expand electric vehicle infrastructure throughout the state.

"This long-term investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure is a win for our state on multiple levels," said Governor DeSantis. "Not only will these charging stations promote reduced emissions and better air quality, they will also improve mobility and safety for the ever-increasing number of Floridians that drive electric cars. I look forward to building on this investment and continuing our work to improve Florida's environment and transportation infrastructure.

Florida was allotted \$166 million to improve air quality under the Volkswagen Settlement. Last October, Florida's Beneficiary Mitigation Plan was finalized, outlining how the state will spend the full award under this settlement. According to the Governor's press release, "The plan focuses on Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) projects, the construction of new electric vehicle charging stations, and the procurement of electric buses for select school districts and transit agencies.

The press release continues that "DEP has reviewed the applications received for the electric vehicle charging stations and has selected the projects to receive the awarded funding."

Included in the funding are:

- 74 additional DC fast chargers installed statewide
- Combined with chargers that FDOT is installing along the Florida Turnpike, a total of 104 DC fast chargers will be installed over 1,200 miles of highway
- The 34 locations will have a minimum of 2 chargers each

[Read the full press release here](#)

[For more information on Florida's Mitigation Plan click here](#)

## ***Duke Energy Florida Proposes New Solar Program , Lowering Customer Bills***

Duke Energy Florida recently filed a proposed new Clean Energy Connection (CEC) Program with the Florida Public Service Commission. If approved by the PSC, the program will provide Duke Energy Florida customers with about 750 megawatts (MW) of new, cost-effective solar power. According to the press release, "Duke Energy plans to invest an estimated \$1 billion in its new solar power plants across Florida in the next three years. The first plants will go online in 2022 and more will follow through 2024.

How the program works:

- Customers can subscribe to kilowatt blocks of solar power from the company's CEC solar portfolio, this monthly subscription fee will pay for construction and operation of the solar power plants
- Participating customers will receive bill credits based on their subscription size and the solar energy that is produced by the CEC solar facilities each month
- The bill credit rate for the first 36 months will be 4 cents per kilowatt-hour, then the bill credit rate increases by 1.5% every year. It is designed to provide customers with a 7-year full payback
- If approved by the PSC, the program will open for enrollment in 2021 with the program beginning to generate power in 2022. Learn more at: [Clean Energy Connection](#)

[Read Duke Energy Florida's full press release](#)



## ***FPL, JEA to Retire 848 Megawatt Unit of Largest U.S. Coal Plant***

Plant Scherer, the highest capacity coal fired plant in the United States, is retiring one of four units, reducing its capacity to 2,673 MW. This closure comes from a recent decision by the board of directors for Jacksonville's municipal utility JEA, agreeing to a 20-year purchase agreement with Florida Power & Light, that will replace the capacity the municipal utility receives from unit 4 and lead to its closure January 1st, 2021.

According to a recent article by [Utility Dive](#), "The falling costs of competitive energy sources like renewables and natural gas, combined with new emissions regulations, have caused coal-fired generation to fall from producing 44% of U.S. electricity in 2009 to about 23% in 2019." In the article JEA says that closing the unit will, "lower operating costs and provide a pathway to significant expansion of solar energy in the near future."

Adverse to the trend of closing coal plants is President and CEO of America's Power, Michelle Bloodworth, who argues that, "Coal-fueled power plants are one of the nation's most-fuel secure sources of electricity, which means they are more reliable and resilient than almost any other source of electricity."

However, the renewable energy industry holds firm that there are no issues of reliability, and a report from the Congressional Research Report in 2019 found, "generation from wind and solar source does not appear to be causing electric reliability issues at the national level over this period."

[Read the full article](#)

### ***Dominion Energy Agrees to Sell Gas Transmission Assets***

Dominion Energy recently announced it has reached an agreement to sell all of its Gas Transmission & Storage segment assets to an affiliate of Berkshire Hathaway Inc. in a \$9.7 billion transaction. President of Dominion Energy said, "the announcement further reflects Dominion Energy's focus on its premier state-regulated, sustainability-focused utilities that operate in some of the most attractive regions in the country."

[Read the full press release](#)

### ***Women in Florida Public Power***

FMEA is developing a new interest group for women in Florida public power and for anyone in a leadership position whose role includes supporting and promoting women in energy. At this point FMEA is amassing a distribution list of FMEA members that would like to be a part of this group, and plan to develop additional information, including virtual (and eventually) in-person events. If interested, [please send FMEA an email](#).

#### **WEBINAR**

**Legislative Update with Florida State Senators Kathleen Passidomo and Audrey Gibson**

**Monday, July 27 | 9:30 AM- 10:30 AM**

[Register Now](#)

As Florida continues to wage the impacts of COVID-19, state agencies and lawmakers are working together to determine the safest and most efficient ways to keep the state operating. Join us for a moderated discussion on education and the reopening of schools, statewide agency response to COVID-19, the newly signed state budget, and what implications it has on the 2021 legislative session, and an overview of Florida's road to recovery. Register Today

Moderated by: **Ronald Brisé**, *Chair of Gunster's Government Affairs Practice*

**Joanna Bonfanti**, *Gunster Government Affairs Consultant*

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FLORIDA'S LAW FIRM FOR BUSINESS



## **DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER**

Florida's Women in Energy  
Leadership Forum 2020  
November 11-13, 2020  
JW Marriott, Grande Lakes  
[flwomeninenergy.com](http://flwomeninenergy.com)