

THE POWER SOURCE

IGNITING THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA



January 2024

Power Profile: Nicole Albers

Director of Public Affairs & Strategic
Communications

Florida Municipal Electric Association

The Florida municipal industry is a large asset to energy delivery in our state and your association ably represents the municipals providing electricity. Describe your role in that regard.

As the Director of Public Affairs & Strategic Communications for the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA), I take immense pride in being associated with an organization that represents 33 municipal electric utilities across the state. Florida's 33 public power utilities are owned and operated by the communities they serve, delivering reliable, efficient, and clean electricity to more than three million Floridians and businesses..... [Read More](#)

As the Florida Legislature has officially opened the 60-day session, what are the issues most pressing within the energy industry from your perspective?

As a public servant at heart myself, my gratitude runs deep for the women and men with the distinct honor of legislating and for the professional staff who so ably support them. Our state legislature is exploring a host of issues related to energy, from the state's vast energy resources, electric vehicle charging stations..... [Read More](#)

In your role, communication and ability to form trust and credibility are critical. What advice do you give to young professionals about networking and collegiality?

Building strong relationships is essential for success in any professional role, and at the foundation of any relationship are credibility and trust. Remember that your word is golden – it can take months to years to build your credibility, while trust can be shattered in just seconds. [Read More](#)

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FWELF 2024

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Full Interview**



Duke Energy Completes its First Floating Solar Project in Florida



Duke Energy's Vision Florida program, aimed at testing innovative projects for a cleaner energy future, has successfully implemented its first floating solar project in Florida. The nearly 1-megawatt floating solar array, located at the Duke Energy Hines Energy Complex in Bartow, features over 1,800 solar panels floating on a 2-acre water surface. The bifacial solar panels, designed to absorb light from both sides, can produce 10%-20% more power than single-sided counterparts.

The project, assembled on land in segments before being secured in the water with anchors, took about six months to complete and connect to the grid. As part of the Vision Florida program, Duke Energy aims to explore innovative projects, including green hydrogen and battery energy storage technologies, to prepare the power grid for a cleaner energy future. Recently, the company announced plans for a unique green hydrogen production and storage system connected to its solar site in Volusia County.

Melissa Seixas, Duke Energy Florida state president, emphasized the company's commitment to building a smarter, cleaner energy future by exploring emission-free technologies on a smaller scale. Duke Energy has been involved in harnessing solar power and advancing solar technologies in Florida since the late 1980s. The company plans to have 25 grid-tied solar power plants operational in 2024, providing about 1,500 MW of emission-free generation for its 1.9 million Florida customers. [Read more](#)

Bentina C. Terry Named President and CEO of Southern Company Telecom Subsidiaries.



Bentina C. Terry, who was a speaker at last year's Florida Women Energy Leadership Forum, has been appointed as the President and CEO of Southern Communications, overseeing Southern Linc and Southern Telecom, Inc. Terry, assuming her role from January 1, 2024, will lead these subsidiaries, providing LTE wireless and dark-fiber networks to electric utilities and various businesses. Her focus will be on enhancing grid resilience and delivering increased value for Southern Company system customers. With over 20 years of experience in the utility sector, Terry brings proven leadership skills and industry knowledge to her new position, having most recently served as senior vice president of Customer Strategy and Solutions at Georgia Power, a Southern Company subsidiary. [Read more](#)



PSC Presents Triple E Award to Veterans Ford in Tampa

Veterans Ford, based in Tampa, has been awarded the Florida Public Service Commission's Triple E Award for Energy Efficiency Efforts in recognition of its commitment to innovation and energy conservation. The company underwent an energy audit and utilized Tampa Electric's (TECO) free Energy Audit and Lighting Rebate Programs. By upgrading its lighting fixtures to LED technology, Veterans Ford achieved a notable 19 percent reduction in energy usage, equivalent to 212,000 kWh annually. This initiative results in an annual cost savings of \$20,352 and contributes to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. The company received \$10,135 in rebates for the lighting project, and the reduced energy demand was a significant 49 kW. The energy-saving efforts align with Veterans Ford's sustainability goals, particularly as it shifts focus towards electric vehicles. [Read more](#)

DOE Announces Next Steps to Build Domestic Uranium Supply for Advanced Nuclear Reactors



The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recently issued a request for proposal (RFP) for uranium enrichment services to help establish a reliable domestic supply of fuels using high-assay low-enriched uranium (HALEU)—a crucial material needed to deploy advanced nuclear reactors, which will help reach the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, increase energy security, create good-paying jobs, and strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness. Currently, HALEU is not commercially available from U.S.-based suppliers, and boosting domestic supply could spur the development and deployment of advanced reactors in the United States.

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Nuclear power is America's largest source of clean energy and provides firm, reliable, and safe power. Advanced nuclear power designs using HALEU fuels represent a critical set of technologies that can help to reach U.S. emissions targets and contribute to America's recent pledge with 21 other countries to triple nuclear power globally by 2050.

The existing U.S. fleet of reactors runs on uranium fuel that is enriched up to five percent with uranium-235—the main fissile isotope that produces energy during a chain reaction. However, most U.S. advanced reactors require HALEU, which is enriched between 5% to 20%, to achieve smaller and more versatile designs with the highest standards of safety, security, and nonproliferation. HALEU will also allow developers to optimize their systems for longer life cores, increased efficiencies and better fuel utilization. [Read more](#)



EDP is the World's Number 1 among Electric Utilities in the Dow Jones Global Sustainability Indices

EDP group, of which EDPR is part, has once again been recognized as the world's most sustainable electric utility company by ranking first in the S&P Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) World. With a score of 88 out of 100, EDP has outperformed all other electric utility companies and has achieved a rating higher than the industry average. Among a total of 3,500 eligible companies, EDP has been evaluated alongside eight other electric companies and has emerged as the best. EDP has been included in the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index, which features 321 companies from various industries, including 15 utilities.

Recognition in this global index reinforces the results of the S&P Global ESG Score evaluation that was released in November. This was expected due to EDP's global leadership in good ESG practices. Besides, EDP's performance has also earned it a place in the DJSI Europe. In this index, the company is the most sustainable among six electricity companies in a group of nine utilities. Additionally, EDP is among 150 companies selected to be part of the European index.

According to the evaluation of 26 criteria that earned EDP leadership in the DJSI world index, the company obtained the maximum score ('Best in Class') in four of them: climate strategy, innovation management, market opportunities and business ethics. [Read more](#)

FERC Commissioners Tout Extreme Weather Need for New Transmission

According to an article by Utility Dive, recent winter storms have reinforced the need to add transmission capacity in the country, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission agrees. The Southwest Power Pool, which runs the grid from North Dakota to north Texas, imported a record 6.8 GW to help keep power flowing in its footprint, Phillips said Thursday at FERC's monthly meeting.

Chairman of FERC, Willie Phillips, said he expects in the "coming months" that the agency will revamp its requirements for transmission planning and cost allocation. A new transmission planning rule would build on FERC's updated interconnection requirements — issued in July — for connecting generator and energy storage projects to the grid, he said. "I'm confident that the collective expertise and commitment of FERC will lead us to equitable and forward-thinking transmission solutions that will stand the test of time," he said. FERC is also exploring the possibility of taking steps to bolster transmission capacity between regions, Phillips said. Those efforts are running alongside a North American Electric Reliability Corp. study on the issue, he said, noting the study has started and may not take 18 months, the amount of time Congress gave NERC to do it.

"We are working on these two projects in parallel so that when NERC concludes its study, FERC is ready to act immediately," he said. [Read more on UtilityDive](#)



Legislative Snapshot: A Look at the Top Industry Bills for 2024



Florida's sixty-day legislative session began on Tuesday, January 9th. While there are a variety of issues on the table, emphasis will be placed on the Governor's Focus on Florida's Budget totaling \$114.4 billion, Artificial Intelligence Regulation, Cybersecurity, Health Care, Labor, Education, and Taxes. There are also a variety of energy industry bills and important legislation moving through the process. Below is a snapshot of some of the top industry-related bills. Please note this is a condensed and non-exhaustive list. For more information, on any of the below, please contact Sarah Sims at sarahsims@lilajaber.com.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: The below has been filed regarding Artificial Intelligence, these bills provide definitions regarding AI and would establish the Government Technology Modernization Council within DMS, the intent is to provide a framework for the regulation of the use of AI in the state of Florida. Additionally there are bills filed to restrict the use of AI in political advertisements.

- a. [SB 972 - Artificial Intelligence - 2024](#)
- b. [HB 1459 Artificial Intelligence Transparency](#)

CYBERSECURITY: The legislature is continuing its push to regulate cybersecurity with the introduction of multiple bills aimed at cracking down on perpetrators and protections for businesses victim of cybersecurity incidents.

- a. [HB 275 - Intentional Damage to Critical Infrastructure](#)
- b. [HB 473 - Cybersecurity Incident Liability](#)

ENERGY: Multiple bills have been filed regarding energy policy, including a robust energy package, a bill that would cap municipal utility revenue transfers, changes to PSC authority, and cost recovery mechanisms for Renewable Natural Gas.

- a. [SB 480 - Renewable Natural Gas – 2024](#): Relating to cost recovery mechanisms for RNG
- b. [HB 1277- Municipal Utilities](#): Revises the amount of revenue that can be transferred to a municipality, requires reporting to the PSC, requires public meetings for areas outside of a municipal boundary, etc.
- c. [HB 1645 Energy Resources](#): Outlines changes to the state energy policy, directs the PSC to adopt customer owned generation rules, provides for the creation of resiliency facilities, the EV deposit program, etc.
- d. [HB 1493 - Wind Energy Facility Siting](#): Prohibits construction, operation, or expansion of wind energy facilities & offshore wind energy facilities in state

BROADBAND: [SB 1218](#) and [HB 1147](#) have been filed to extend the date through which a promotional rate and related terms for certain wireline attachments of broadband facilities to municipal electric utility poles are effective. This legislation is aimed to build upon legislation passed last session to expand broadband access to unserved or underserved areas.



Celebrating Sarah Sims and the Accomplished Forty Under 40 Honorees



Congratulations are in order for Sarah Sims, Director of Government Affairs & Client Relations at LilaJaber Consulting, for earning a well-deserved spot on News Service Florida's Forty under 40 list. This recognition is a testament to her exceptional contributions to the field. Sarah embarked on her political journey as a legislative aide to state Rep. Bob Rommel while still a senior in college, a decision she reflects upon as the best she ever made. Overcoming doubts and skeptics, especially regarding a young woman's expertise in energy policy, Sarah has risen to the challenge. At 27, she directs government affairs and client relations for LilaJaber Consulting, showcasing her Capitol insight and passion for state policy.

Sarah's main focus lies in the energy industry, where she oversees Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum, a three-day annual event hosting 300 industry leaders. Sarah's confidence in her abilities and determination to keep moving forward are truly commendable. Congratulations to all the other deserving honorees as well. [Read more](#)



Don't miss the opportunity to secure your spot at the 2024 Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum, taking place from October 21-23, 2024, at the JW Marriott, Tampa Waterstreet. This year's theme, "The Power of Collaboration," promises engaging discussions by industry leaders. Join us for a dynamic agenda that blends critical insights with enjoyable conversations, shaping a unique and empowering experience in the energy sector. Reserve your spot today to be part of this inspiring event.

[Register Today](#)

