

THE POWER SOURCE

IGNITING THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA



April 2024

Power Profile: Katie Hall

General Manager & CEO

Florida Gas Utility

Katie, one of the goals of Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum (FWELF), is to describe the many opportunities and segments of the energy industry. To further help with this education effort, describe the role of Florida Gas Utility (FGU) in the energy marketplace.

Florida Gas Utility (FGU) is a non-profit municipal joint action agency that provides a variety of natural gas related services to both municipal-owned local distribution companies (LDCs) and electric generation units across Florida. We specialize in muni's. We specialize in natural gas. And maybe most... [Read More](#)

As the General Manager & CEO of FGU, what priorities have you outlined for your organization?

Our main priority is to provide value to our 25 Members. That said, there are thousands of ways to achieve that. Sometimes it's creating all new services, sometimes it's building a better mousetrap, and sometimes it's investing in our staff. I encourage employees to think creatively and bring new ideas to the table. We want to build depth... [Read More](#)

At FWELF, we say we "inform, inspire, motivate" the next generation of workforce talent by sharing personal stories of career growth. Would you share a little about your path to FGU and how purposeful you might have been to get there.

Originally, my plan was to be a large animal veterinarian. Shortly before my senior year of college, however, I did an internship at a vet school and quickly realized the flaw in my plan – if I became a vet, my career, hobby, and passion would all blend together and I would own too many lame horses, three-legged dogs, and one-eyed cats. Scratched that plan. I decided to graduate with an... [Read More](#)

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Duke Energy to Implement New PowerPair Pilot Program for Pairing Home Solar Installations with Battery Energy Storage

Duke Energy is launching PowerPairSM, an incentive-based pilot program aimed at promoting the installation of home solar generation coupled with battery energy storage in North Carolina's Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress service areas. The program, approved by the North Carolina Utility Commission, offers residential customers up to \$9,000 in one-time incentives based on the type of solar array and battery installed.

Designed to enhance the reliability of solar energy and support the state's clean energy goals, PowerPair is a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders. Participants may also join Duke Energy's expanded demand response programs, such as Power Manager[®] and EnergyWise[®] Home, which will now include a battery control option. By enrolling, customers allow Duke Energy to temporarily adjust their system's operating settings to provide stored electricity back to the grid, receiving bill credits in return.

Customers can choose between two enrollment options: a residential solar choice rider or a net metering bridge rider, both offering the one-time incentive. Additionally, to ensure fairness, participants will be initially selected through a random selection process, with applications opening in May. Customers must work with Duke Energy Trade Allies for installation, and they can find approved installers through the Find It Duke program.

North Carolina ranks fourth in the nation for solar power, with approximately 45,000 customers generating power through solar panels. The expanded demand response offerings aim to further support the state's clean energy initiatives, adding to the existing residential flexible winter capacity. [Read More](#)

EDP Renewables North America and Volt Energy Utility Announce Solar Project with Microsoft

The partnership between EDP Renewables North America (EDPR NA), Volt Energy Utility, and Microsoft aims to drive environmental justice and resilience through the development of the Hickory Solar Park, a 110 MWac photovoltaic project in Illinois. Microsoft has committed to purchasing electricity and renewable energy credits from the project for fifteen years, aligning with the companies' shared goal of a just transition in the energy sector. The agreement utilizes an Environmental Justice Power Purchase Agreement (EJ PPA) to prioritize investments in communities disproportionately affected by environmental injustices.

Proceeds from the Hickory project will support the Sharing the Power Foundation (SPF), funding mission-aligned programs. The project also pledges carbon neutrality by purchasing and retiring carbon offsets and promotes diversity by ensuring women and minority-owned businesses have leadership roles in project management and construction.

Leaders from EDPR NA, Volt Energy, and Microsoft emphasize the importance of community growth, job creation, and inclusivity in driving a clean energy future. The partnership builds upon previous collaborations between EDPR NA and Microsoft, expanding their efforts to include additional solar projects in Illinois and Texas, with operational timelines set for the end of 2024. [Read More](#)



OUC Announces New Alternative Water Supply Project to Address Increased Demand from Population Surge

OUC's Board of Commissioners recently approved a new alternative water supply project to address the increasing water demand in Central Florida due to population growth. The project involves the construction of the Southeast Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant on 15 acres in Lake Nona, estimated to be a \$125 million to \$155 million investment upon completion, with an initial design phase cost of \$8.1 million. Construction is scheduled to commence in November 2025 and conclude by 2033.

The Southeast Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant will utilize advanced technology to access an untapped source of brackish groundwater from the Lower Floridan Aquifer. By drilling up to 2,000 feet into the ground, OUC aims to extract water with higher mineral concentration, which will then undergo a rigorous microfiltration process under high pressure. After meeting OUC's strict treatment and testing standards, the water will become potable and ready for consumption.

Clint Bullock, OUC's General Manager & CEO, emphasizes the importance of preparing for future water needs as Florida's population grows. The utility is dedicated to promoting water conservation and implementing sustainable solutions to ensure the community's access to safe, high-quality water for years to come.

The Southeast Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant is part of OUC's comprehensive approach to addressing increased water demand, which includes promoting water conservation among customers through various initiatives such as conservation audits, educational programs, and leak detection technology. OUC also encourages participation in the City of Orlando's reclaimed water program and implements measures like a block rate approach and upgrading water meters to enhance efficiency and sustainability in water management. [Read More](#)

Kim Wheeler Named JEA Vice President, Operations Support



JEA has appointed Kim Wheeler, a seasoned utility veteran with 34 years of experience, to the newly created position of vice president of operations support. Reporting to Chief Operating Officer Raynetta Curry Marshall, Wheeler will oversee the systems and processes supporting JEA's electric, water, and wastewater operations, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and fostering future sustainability. Her responsibilities encompass various areas such as customer meters, air and laboratory testing, preventative maintenance, vegetation management, utility locates, and asset management.

Having previously served as director of preventative maintenance and contract management, Wheeler brings a wealth of experience to her new role. She has held multiple positions within JEA, including manager of transmission and distribution, account executive, professional engineer in operations control center, and distribution engineer. Wheeler holds a professional engineer license from the State of Florida and earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Florida. [Read More.](#)



Florida Power & Light Enhances Energy Grid with Planned Upgrades in Miami-Dade & Fort Lauderdale



Florida Power & Light (FPL) is undertaking comprehensive grid enhancements across Miami-Dade and Fort Lauderdale in 2024, aiming to fortify the energy infrastructure and improve service reliability. In Coral Gables, Doral, Miami, Pinecrest, and Fort Lauderdale, FPL's upgrades involve strengthening main power lines, maintaining trees along power corridors, and inspecting power poles to meet rigorous industry standards.

Since 2006, FPL's cumulative efforts include bolstering numerous main power lines, inspecting extensive miles of vegetation, and integrating smart grid technology to mitigate outages and enhance operational efficiency. FPL's commitment extends beyond infrastructure upgrades, with the implementation of cutting-edge technologies like automated underground switches and "smart trimming" to proactively address potential issues and minimize service disruptions. Javier Palma, FPL's local area manager, underscores the company's dedication to delivering safe and reliable electricity to its customers. Notably, FPL's reliability performance, as evidenced by its annual report to the Florida Public Service Commission, significantly surpasses the national average, underscoring its steadfast focus on customer satisfaction and resilience in the face of evolving challenges. [Read More](#)

Lakeland Electric Shines at the APPA Lineworkers Rodeo



Lakeland Electric recently participated in the 22nd Annual Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo in Lafayette, Louisiana, showcasing the talent and teamwork of electric lineworkers nationwide. Among 64 journeyman teams and 134 apprentices, Lakeland Electric's lineworkers excelled, bringing home prestigious awards. Lakeland Electric recently participated in the 22nd Annual Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo in Lafayette, Louisiana, showcasing the talent and teamwork of electric lineworkers nationwide

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FWELF 2024: Announcing Keynote Speaker

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. 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 at www.flwomeninenergy.com

We are also honored and excited to announce the President of Peoples Gas, Helen Wesley, will join us as a Keynote Speaker.

FWELF 2024

The Power of Collaboration

October 21-23, 2024 | JW Marriott Tampa

Keynote Speaker



HELEN WESLEY
PRESIDENT
PEOPLES GAS

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