

# THE POWER SOURCE

IGNITING THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA



**March 2025**  
**Ning Zhang**  
**Director, Quantitative Analytics**  
*SouthStar Energy Services*

***Ning, can you describe your responsibilities at Southstar Energy and how your role contributes to the overall success of the company?***

At SouthStar Energy Services, one of the largest retail natural gas providers in the U.S., I serve as the Director of Quantitative Analytics. My primary responsibilities include overseeing quantitative analysis and data-driven decision-making processes. ....[Read More](#)

***What inspired you to use your expertise in the energy industry?***

My inspiration to use my expertise in the energy industry stems from my deep passion for economics and data analysis. With a Ph.D. in Economics and a dissertation focused on the energy industry, I have published research in leading energy journals. This academic foundation equipped me with the knowledge and skills to tackle the unique challenges and opportunities in the energy sector. ....[Read More](#)

***You came to the United States as an immigrant and English is your second language. How has Southstar helped you adjust and find success within the company?***

As a first-generation immigrant from China, adapting to a new culture and language was challenging. However, SouthStar Energy has been incredibly supportive in helping me find success within the company. The encouragement and advice from my managers, mentors, and colleagues have been instrumental in my growth.....[Read More](#)

Included in this issue:

**Power Profile: March 2025 Ning Zhang**

**FPL Files Details of New Rate Plan**

**PSC Approves DSM Plans for DEF, TECO, FPUC, JEA & OUC**

**PSC Approves New Rates for Florida Public Utilities Company**

**FMEA Announces 2024 Safety Awards Winners**

**Women's Energy Network FL Chapter Data on Demand Event**

**Pedro Cherry Named President of Mississippi Power**

**Electric Power Engineers Named USA TODAY's list of Top Workplaces USA.**

**Early Bird Tickets On Sale for FWELF 2025: IMPACT!**

**[Read Full Interview](#)**



## FPL Files Details of New Rate Plan

Florida Power & Light Company recently submitted a comprehensive four-year request to the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) to set new rates once its current base rate agreement concludes at the end of this year.

The proposal, covering 2026 through 2029, would enable FPL to continue to deliver some of the nation's most reliable electricity, provide excellent customer service, diversify its generation resources to reduce fuel costs, and keep bills as low as possible.

A word from FPL President and CEO Armando Pimentel: *"At FPL, we're focused on our customers every single day. The balanced plan we submitted to the PSC would enable FPL to continue to make smart investments in the grid and in new generation resources to benefit our customers and to power our fast-growing state. No other utility in the U.S. provides a better combination of reliability, resiliency and low bills than FPL."*

Key priorities: Among the ways FPL's proposed rate plan would benefit customers:

- **Delivering reliable service:** FPL's plan supports continued investments in the critical infrastructure and technologies that have helped make FPL's distribution service reliability 59% better than the national average and the best among major utilities in Florida. FPL's technology investments have benefitted customers, with smart-grid devices helping speed restoration and avoid 2.7 million customer outages in 2024 alone. This includes more than 800,000 avoided outages during Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton last year.
- **Diversifying the ways FPL generates electricity:** To continue to meet customer growth and increasing demand, FPL will make investments in low-cost solar and battery storage technology to complement its existing power plant fleet, which includes one of the nation's largest natural gas fleets and safe, reliable nuclear power. Continuing to diversify the power generation fleet helps protect FPL customers from fuel price volatility.
- **Keeping bills as low as possible:** FPL continuously leverages the latest technology and relentlessly drives down costs to improve efficiency. Modernizing FPL's power plant fleet has saved customers more than \$16 billion in fuel costs, including \$1.1 billion through investments in low-cost solar energy centers. FPL's non-fuel operations and maintenance costs per customer are the lowest among peer utilities, saving customers about \$2.9 billion per year compared to an average-performing utility – or more than \$24 per month on a typical 1,000-kWh residential customer bill.

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## PSC Approves DSM Plans for DEF, TECO, FPUC, JEA & OUC

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) has approved demand side management (DSM) plans for several utilities, including Duke Energy Florida (DEF), Tampa Electric Company (TECO), Florida Public Utilities Company (FPUC), JEA, and Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC). These plans aim to meet DSM goals for 2025-2034, which were previously approved by the PSC in 2024. The plans include a variety of programs designed to increase energy efficiency, and each is evaluated based on its alignment with state energy goals, measurability, and cost-effectiveness.

Key details include:

- DEF: 14 programs, with projected costs of \$1.4 billion over 10 years. Monthly rate impacts range from \$3.70 to \$4.49.
- TECO: 29 programs, with projected costs of \$552.2 million over 10 years. Monthly rate impacts start at \$3.61 and rise to \$4.04.
- FPUC: 7 programs, with projected costs of \$8.3 million. Monthly rate impacts are consistent at \$1.45.
- JEA: 4 programs, with monthly rate impacts ranging from \$0.26 to \$0.37.
- OUC: 6 programs, with monthly rate impacts ranging from \$0.42 to \$0.48.

Investor-owned utilities (DEF, TECO, FPUC) must annually demonstrate the reasonableness of their costs to the PSC, while municipal utilities (JEA, OUC) will be evaluated by their local governing bodies.

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## PSC Approves New Rates for Florida Public Utilities Company

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) has approved a rate increase for Florida Public Utilities Company (FPUC) following its rate case request. The last rate case for FPUC was approved in 2014, and inflation has since raised the costs of materials, labor, and capital investments needed to modernize its facilities and improve customer service, including enhancing cybersecurity.

The PSC approved an interim \$1.8 million revenue increase in October 2024, resulting in a \$3.00 increase to the monthly base rate. On March 4, 2025, the Commission approved a \$9.8 million annual revenue increase, which is \$3 million less than FPUC's original request.

As a result, the monthly residential bill for 1,000 kWh will rise by \$11.42, from \$146.37 to \$157.79, which includes purchased power, energy conservation, and storm recovery charges. The Hurricane Michael storm cost recovery charge will end in December 2025.

FPUC's rate increase petition was filed in August 2024, and two customer service hearings were held in December 2024 and January 2025, allowing customers to provide input. FPUC serves about 15,000 customers in its Northwest Division and around 18,100 customers in its Northeast Division.

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## FMEA Announces 2024 Safety Awards Winners

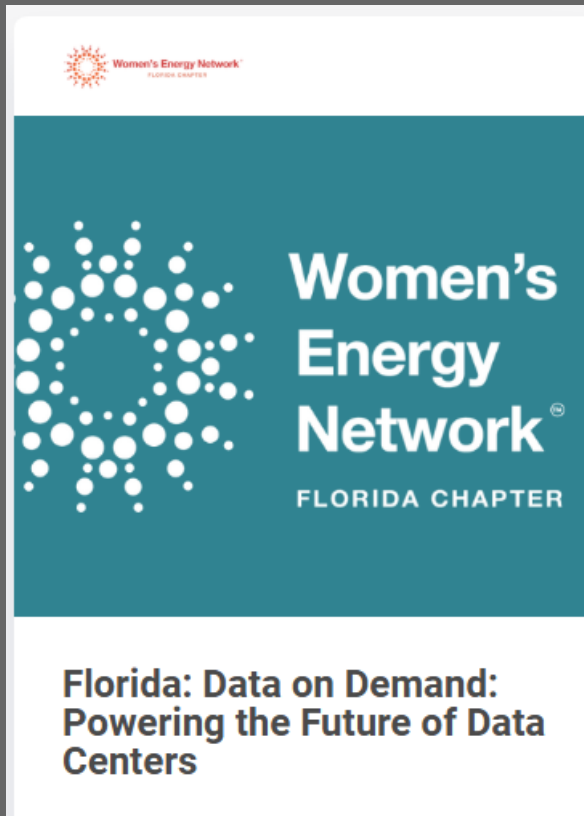
On March 3rd, the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA) recognized excellence in Florida public power at an awards banquet where the winners of the FMEA Safety Awards were announced.

FMEA recognizes and rewards safe operations through its annual Safety Awards. Utilities are placed into categories based on their total worker hours and rewarded for the most incident-free records. The incidence rate used to judge utilities was based on the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses compared to the total number of worker hours during 2024, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

*“Each of these winners embodies the safety culture deeply inherent in public power. Their continuous efforts throughout the year to maintain safe workplaces and cultivate a culture of safety ensure employees can work both securely and efficiently,”* said Amy Zubaly, FMEA Executive Director. *“We applaud these utilities for their commitment to safety.”*

[Click to View FMEA’s list of Awardees](#)

## Women’s Energy Network FL Chapter Data on Demand Event



### Event Details

Join WEN Florida for a morning networking and panel discussion event where industry experts will delve into the latest trends in infrastructure, demand, and the transformative power data centers are having on the power generation industry.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and network with top professionals in the field. Women and men within the industry are welcome to join!

Date: Friday, April 11th

Time: 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Location: UCF FAIRWINDS Alumni Center (12676 Gemini Blvd N, Orlando, FL 32816)

Cost: \$5 for Members | \$15 for Non-Members | \$20 at the door

[Register HERE](#)



## Pedro Cherry Named President of Mississippi Power



Mississippi Power recently announced that Pedro Cherry has been named president of the company with Anthony Wilson continuing in his roles of chairman and CEO until summer.

Cherry has worked in the energy industry for 30 years and been a part of the Southern Company system for nearly 25 years. He previously served as president and CEO of both Atlanta Gas Light and Chattanooga Gas, two southern region natural gas utilities that serve approximately 1.8 million customers in two states.

"I am excited to join Mississippi Power during the company's centennial year and during a period of unprecedented growth," Cherry said. "Mississippi Power is known throughout the industry for its unparalleled commitment to safety and reliably providing its customers with excellent service, so I'm very honored to have this opportunity."

Prior to his roles at Atlanta Gas Light and Chattanooga Gas, Cherry was the executive vice president of Customer Service and Operations (CSO) at Georgia Power. He led a team of 5,000-plus employees in the CSO organization and oversaw the company's customer service efforts, power delivery, sales, pricing and planning, regional external affairs, renewable development and corporate services. Cherry was responsible for operating and maintaining Georgia Power's electric system serving 2.6 million customers.

"Pedro is a tremendous leader with a broad base of knowledge and experience across Southern Company," Wilson said. "He shares our values and the things that are important to us, so I know he will be a perfect fit for our company, our communities and our state through this leadership transition."

In other roles at Georgia Power, Cherry served as senior vice president of the Metro Atlanta Region with responsibility for the company's operations, sales, customer service, economic and community development, and external affairs for 1.2 million customers across metro Atlanta. He also served as vice president of community and economic development.

## Electric Power Engineers Included in USA TODAY's list of Top Workplaces



# Early Bird Tickets On Sale and Hotel Block OPEN for FWELF 2025: IMPACT!

We are proud to announce this year's Forum, themed IMPACT! will be held on August 25th-27th at the Four Seasons Orlando Resort. Join us for a three-day event that will include c-suite level keynote speakers and panelists discussing the industry's commitment to infrastructure investment, employees, and customers. Working with you, we are committed to using Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum to inform, inspire, and motivate. Come and celebrate with us 10 years of Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum. **Register and reserve rooms HERE.**

## ANNOUNCING:

**FWELF 2025**  
**10 YEAR**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
**FOUR SEASONS**  
**ORLANDO**

**AUGUST 25-27, 2025**



FLORIDA'S WOMEN IN ENERGY  
LEADERSHIP FORUM<sup>®</sup>  
**10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

