THE POWER SOURCE

IGNITING THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA

March 2026

Kim Estrada

Assistant Vice President, Customer Operations

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation

Kim, with the complexities of energy delivery, what are the priorities for you in managing the customer experience?

In an industry as complex and essential as energy, my priorities in managing customer operations center on trust, consistency and clarity. These principles ensure a seamless, genuine, transparent and easy to navigate customer experience. Customers want clear communication, timely information and confidence that their utility understands their needs, especially during critical moments.....Read More

With over 30 years of utility experience, elaborate on the changes you have seen over the years that result in more customer awareness and participation.

Over the course of my career, I've witnessed a meaningful evolution in the relationship between utilities and customers. Today's customers are far more informed, engaged and empowered. They expect transparency, timely and proactive communication and opportunities to actively participate in decisions that impact their service.....Read More

In your role with Chesapeake Utilities, how have you ensured consistency in the customer experience among all the subsidiaries and customers?

Consistency is foundational to trust, especially in a growing organization like Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. As we have expanded our footprint and customer base, it has become even more important that customers experience us as a unified company.....Read More

Included In This Issue:

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Duke Energy Partners With Colleges to Train Next Generation of Lineworkers

Duke Energy Foundation is strengthening Florida's energy workforce by awarding $50,000 grants to five colleges—Lake-Sumter State College, Seminole State College of Florida, Valencia College, St. Petersburg College, and South Florida State College—to support their electrical lineworker training programs. These programs offer industry-recognized, hands-on training that can be completed in as little as seven weeks up to 18 months, preparing students for entry-level roles in electric utilities.

The investment helps expand access to high-demand, high-wage career pathways while addressing a growing workforce need, as lineworker employment is projected to increase 7% over the next decade. Duke Energy has already hired more than 100 graduates from similar programs since 2022, highlighting their impact. By partnering with these colleges, Duke Energy is helping build a reliable pipeline of skilled professionals to support Florida's communities and energy infrastructure.

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NextEra Energy Receives Approval From President Donald J. Trump To Develop Up To 10 GW Of Natural Gas-Powered Generation To Meet Nation's Historic Power Demand

NextEra Energy announced it has received approval from President Donald J. Trump to develop up to 10 gigawatts of natural gas-powered generation in Texas and Pennsylvania, as part of a broader U.S.-Japan trade agreement tied to a $550 billion investment commitment. The projects would be jointly owned by U.S. and Japanese stakeholders and built and operated by NextEra Energy, pending final agreements and project execution.

The new generation is intended to support rapidly growing electricity demand, particularly from energy-intensive sectors like data centers and advanced manufacturing, while strengthening the U.S. industrial base and energy security. The company emphasized that the projects are structured so new demand is met with new supply, helping avoid upward pressure on electricity costs for consumers.

The initiative builds on NextEra Energy's "hub strategy," which focuses on developing large-scale energy sites that can be deployed efficiently to reduce timelines, lower risk and keep costs competitive. The selected projects include a previously announced Texas hub developed with Comstock Resources, and are part of a broader pipeline of nearly 30 hubs, with a long-term goal of around 40.

NextEra Energy will now move forward with development activities, including negotiating final agreements, engaging potential customers and coordinating with federal, state and local stakeholders to advance the projects. **Read More**

City of Tallahassee Electric Utility Receives Safety Award

The City of Tallahassee Electric Utility earned a 2025 Safety Award from the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA), recognizing its strong commitment to protecting workers in one of the nation's most hazardous professions. The award is based on incident-free performance and reflects the utility's emphasis on safety training, reliable operations and minimizing workplace injuries.
That commitment was also evident at the 2026 Florida Lineman Competition in Tallahassee, where city lineworkers demonstrated their skills in real-world scenarios focused on safety, technical ability and problem-solving. The team won both the Overall Journeyman Team Winners' Cup and the Overall Apprentice Award.

Together, these achievements highlight Tallahassee's ongoing investment in a highly trained, safety-focused workforce dedicated to delivering reliable electric service to more than 125,000 customers. **Read More**

Chesapeake Utilities CFO Beth Cooper Announces Retirement, COO Jeff Sylvester Named Successor

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation announced that Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Beth Cooper will retire on June 30, 2026, after a 36-year career with the company. She will be succeeded by Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Jeff Sylvester, effective July 1, 2026.

Cooper, who joined the company in 1990 and has served as CFO since 2008, played a pivotal role in shaping Chesapeake Utilities' financial and strategic direction. During her tenure, she helped drive strong earnings, growth, maintain financial discipline and support long-term expansion. CEO Jeff Householder praised her impact, stating, "Her passion for the Company, unmatched work ethic and strength in building relationships have had an outsized impact on who we are today and what we've achieved over the last few decades." Reflecting on her career, Cooper said, "It has been a joy and privilege to spend my career at Chesapeake Utilities… I'm confident the Company is well-positioned for continued long-term growth."

Sylvester, who joined the company in 2004 and has held leadership roles across finance, operations and business development, brings deep experience to the role. As COO since 2022, he has overseen operations, customer care and project development. Householder expressed confidence in the transition, noting, "Jeff brings deep financial and operational knowledge… I am confident in his leadership and ability to drive continued success."

The leadership change marks a planned transition aimed at maintaining Chesapeake Utilities' growth trajectory and continued focus on delivering value to customers and communities. **Read More**

FPSC to Host Consumer Education Events in Marion County for National Consumer Protection Week

In recognition of National Consumer Protection Week (March 1-7), the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) will host a series of educational community outreach events in Marion County. This annual observance empowers consumers by helping them understand their rights, make informed decisions, and avoid scams.

During the events, FPSC staff will provide information on utility scam awareness and prevention, including tips to identify and avoid common scams targeting utility customers. Attendees will also learn about energy efficiency and water conservation strategies that can help lower utility bills. Additionally, information will be available about the Lifeline Assistance Program, which offers discounts on telephone and broadband services. **Read More**

Williams Breaks Ground on 74.8 MW Solar Facility in Partnership with Lakeland Electric

Williams joined with Lakeland Electric and City of Lakeland leaders to break ground on a new 74.8-megawatt solar facility that will significantly expand renewable power capacity for the growing Lakeland region. Under a long-term agreement, Williams, an energy infrastructure leader, will design and construct the large-scale solar installation, and Lakeland Electric will purchase the power to help meet rising energy demand with dependable, renewable power. The project expands solar generation within the utility's portfolio and reflects continued collaboration between the two organizations to deliver reliable service to one of Florida's fastest-growing communities.

"More than a century ago, Thomas Edison talked about the promise of harnessing the power of the sun," said Lakeland City Commissioner Stephanie Madden. "Today we are taking another step toward that future through strong partnerships and thoughtful infrastructure that will help serve Lakeland's growth."

Lakeland Electric General Manager Mike Beckham emphasized the importance of infrastructure planning for our growing community. "Partnering with Williams allows us to add additional generation capacity through a long-term agreement that supports dependable service for our customers," Beckham said. "This project strengthens our energy portfolio and reflects thoughtful planning for the future."

The facility will be built on historically mined land, supporting responsible land reuse while delivering 74.8 megawatts of new solar energy capacity. Williams leaders noted that the project marks another milestone in the company's continued investment in innovative clean-energy solutions. "We're energized to break ground on a project that reflects Williams' continued investment in innovative energy solutions," said Jaclyn Presnal, vice president of New Energy Ventures at Williams. "This solar facility will provide meaningful clean energy generation for the region and underscores the value of strong utility partnerships in building the energy systems of the future."

Construction will begin immediately, with the facility expected to be operational in December 2026. **Read More**

ERCOT Proposes New Dynamic Model Submission and Review Requirements for Large Loads

ERCOT is moving to significantly strengthen dynamic modeling requirements for large electrical loads, driven by the rapid growth of power-electronics-heavy facilities such as data centers and recent grid events involving unexpected load tripping. Under a proposed Planning Guide Revision Request (PGRR), ERCOT would require all large loads to submit detailed dynamic models across multiple platforms, including PSCAD, PSS®E, and TSAT—expanding beyond current rules where PSCAD is only required in limited scenarios.

The proposal also introduces mandatory Model Quality Testing (MQT) for all large loads, with enhanced validation requirements for Large Electronic Loads (LELs). These include hardware-based testing of converter systems, such as uninterruptible power supplies, to ensure models accurately reflect real-world performance and meet evolving ride-through standards. ERCOT emphasized that simplified load representations are no longer sufficient for modern, power-electronics-dominated facilities. Instead, developers will be expected to use more detailed modeling approaches to support transmission stability and weak grid studies.

The new framework would embed dynamic modeling requirements throughout the interconnection process, including prior to stability studies, during quarterly assessments, and before energization. It also introduces potential re-evaluation requirements for existing facilities undergoing significant operational changes. The proposal is expected to be submitted to ERCOT's Reliability and Operations Subcommittee, with stakeholder feedback ongoing. Final requirements remain under development. For developers, the changes signal earlier, more rigorous modeling expectations and increased scrutiny throughout the project lifecycle. **Read More**

EPE Joins Harvard SEAS Power and AI Initiative to Advance AI-Driven Grid Innovation

Electric Power Engineers (EPE), a global engineering advisory firm providing full-spectrum consulting and innovative software solutions, recently announced its participation in the Power and AI Initiative (PAI) at the John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) at Harvard University. PAI is a research program dedicated to advancing solutions at the intersection of power systems and artificial intelligence.

The initiative brings together leading academic researchers and industry partners to explore how AI can transform the planning and operation of modern power systems. By applying advanced computing and AI capabilities to challenges such as grid management, predictive maintenance, energy distribution optimization, and renewable integration, the program aims to accelerate innovation toward a more resilient and sustainable energy future.

"Engagement with industry partners like EPE is central to advancing the academic mission of Harvard SEAS and the Power and AI Initiative," said Professor Minlan Yu, co-leader of the initiative at Harvard SEAS. "By collaborating closely with practitioners, we ensure our research is both intellectually rigorous and grounded in real-world challenges." **Read More**