

THE POWER SOURCE

IGNITING THE FUTURE OF FLORIDA

A New Chapter: Introducing The Energy Leadership Forum



Twelve years ago, I had an idea. It wasn't particularly complicated. I wanted to bring people together—women and men, energy executives and students, regulators and utilities—for a common purpose: to inform, inspire, motivate, and help prepare the next generation of energy leaders.

I envisioned a place where relationships could begin, candid conversations could happen, opportunities could be discovered, and the best talent in the industry could be seen, heard, and celebrated for their leadership, contributions, and legacies.

And what an industry it is—one that powers our homes and businesses, strengthens our communities, drives innovation, and creates economic opportunity for generations of employees and families.

From that vision, Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum was born. I could not have fully imagined then how meaningful—or how widely embraced—this initiative would become. Over eleven years, the Forum has grown into something far greater than an annual gathering. It has become a community of leaders, innovators, mentors, and emerging talent, united by a shared commitment to strengthening our industry and investing in its future.

And perhaps that is one of leadership's most important lessons: What we build with purpose must also have the opportunity to grow, adapt, and evolve.

Our 2026 theme was EVOLVE. And now, we are embracing that very message. I am thrilled to announce that Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum is becoming:

THE ENERGY LEADERSHIP FORUM

This evolution is about more than a new name. It reflects the Forum's expanding reach, all of the voices and perspectives that have enriched our conversations, and our commitment to addressing the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of energy. Importantly, this change does not diminish where we began. It honors the foundation we built and the countless individuals and organizations who have helped transform an idea into a thriving leadership community.



I am deeply grateful to our presenting sponsor, Gunster; our title sponsors, FPL, Duke Energy, Southern Company, and TECO; and the many companies, municipal utilities, electric cooperatives, industry leaders, speakers, students, volunteers, and participants who have invested their time, resources, expertise, and enthusiasm in the Forum year after year.

None of this gets built alone. And none of it moves forward without the power of connection.

As Sarah Sims and I begin preparing for 2027, we are excited to introduce a theme that captures both our history and our future:

CONNECT: People. Customers. Community

Because the future of energy leadership will be defined not only by how we innovate, invest, and deliver essential services, but also by how effectively we connect with the people we serve, earn the trust of our customers, strengthen our communities, and develop the leaders who will follow us.

After eleven years, I believe more strongly than ever that leadership isn't simply about the positions we hold or the organizations we lead. It's about the people we bring together, the opportunities we create for others, the communities we strengthen, and the connections that endure long after we leave the room.

Here's to the next chapter—and to the connections that will shape it. Welcome to The Energy Leadership Forum. Please stay tuned as we make the transition, important updates will be added to our rebranded website in the coming months,

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

#CONNECT #EnergyLeadershipForum #PeopleCustomersCommunity



Energy Department Announces Over \$230 Million Funding Opportunity to Strengthen America's Grid Supply Chain

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced a \$237 million funding opportunity to boost American manufacturing and strengthen supply chains for critical electric grid components. The investment is expected to deliver an estimated \$125 million in annual utility savings and keep an estimated \$50 million per year in the U.S. economy that would otherwise go to foreign suppliers.

The investments will help facilitate the reliable flow of electricity for American families and businesses and position the U.S. as a global leader in foundational technologies, by incentivizing the refurbishment and reuse of critical equipment and encouraging the adoption of alternative materials and subcomponents that are sourced and made in America.

"The Energy Department is investing in American-made technologies and modernizing our grid to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers and deliver affordable, reliable, electricity." Said U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

This funding opportunity will support projects in two key areas:

- Up to \$50 million will be provided to projects that promote greater refurbishment and reuse of existing grid equipment and materials;
- Up to \$187 million will be provided to projects that will increase the use of alternative materials and subcomponents sourced and made in the U.S, reducing dependence on imports.

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Duke Energy Site Readiness Program Drives \$773 Million in Florida Investment

Duke Energy selected five high-potential business and industrial sites in Florida to participate in its 2026 Site Readiness Program. The program prepares high-potential business and industrial sites for investment, then markets them nationwide to companies looking to expand or relocate their operations. Since 2013, Duke Energy's Site Readiness Program has evaluated 66 sites with an additional 13 companies committed to growing on sites that have been through the program. Those companies delivered over \$773 million in new capital investment and 2,875 new jobs for Florida.

Melissa Seixas, president, Duke Energy Florida: "The Site Readiness program has seen incredible growth year-over-year as our team has worked hard to attract in-demand businesses to Florida. Many of these organizations are new to the region and invest heavily in our state. The Site Readiness program is just one of the many ways that we work with communities to help infuse new growth and long-term stability into the state we all call home."

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FERC Takes Historic Action Launching First LNG Authorization Program

In a historic, unanimous vote, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) proposed accelerating liquefied natural gas (LNG) infrastructure development through a landmark blanket authorization program. The proposal would streamline permitting, speed energy infrastructure development, and deliver unprecedented regulatory certainty for project developers.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR), FERC proposes to establish an LNG blanket authorization program to allow eligible activities at LNG facilities to proceed without case-specific authorization orders under Sections 3 and 7 of the Natural Gas Act. The program is modeled on the Commission's successful 40-year blanket certificate program for interstate natural gas pipelines.

"American energy dominance requires us to build and maintain the energy infrastructure our country needs without unnecessary delay. I am immensely proud of FERC's historic proposal. It shows what can be possible when we combine regulatory excellence, robust safeguards, and a firm commitment to the nation's energy future. Consumers benefit when more energy infrastructure is online, dependable, and affordable, and FERC is helping make that future a reality."—FERC Chairman Laura V. Swett

FERC is proposing a three-tiered authorization framework under which certain activities could proceed automatically, with periodic reporting, while others would require advance notice to the Commission. [Read More](#)

Southern Company Aligns Leadership, Operations to Serve Growth, Develop Talent and Prepare for the Future

Southern Company announced a significant leadership restructuring, effective January 1, 2027, designed to position the company for growing energy demand, infrastructure expansion, technological innovation, and workforce development. The changes aim to strengthen operational efficiency, improve coordination across its utilities, and ensure the company is prepared to meet the evolving needs of the energy industry.

Kim Greene, currently Chairman, President and CEO of Georgia Power, will transition to President of Southern Company Operations, overseeing systemwide generation, transmission, planning, safety, research and development, and sustainability. Notably, nuclear generation will be consolidated under her operational leadership alongside other generation resources. Stan Connally, currently Southern Company's Executive Vice President and COO, will succeed Greene as Chairman, President and CEO of Georgia Power, with a focus on managing significant electricity demand growth while maintaining reliability, affordability, and responsible infrastructure investment.

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FWELF 2026 Recap

The 2026 Florida's Women in Energy Leadership Forum (FWELF) took place August 31-September 2 in Orlando, Florida, bringing together approximately 400 energy executives, policymakers, regulators, industry professionals, and emerging leaders. Centered around the theme EVOLVE, the Forum focused on the changing energy landscape, leadership development, innovation, and preparing the next generation of energy leaders.

The three-day event featured high-level discussions with senior executives from Duke Energy, Florida Power & Light, Southern Company, Chesapeake Utilities, TECO, Liberty, among many others. With regulatory perspectives from NRC Commissioner David Wright. Conversations explored growing electricity demand, infrastructure investment, grid reliability and resilience, advanced nuclear energy, emerging technologies, customer affordability, and workforce readiness.

A cornerstone of the Forum was its commitment to mentorship, professional development, and creating opportunities for students and young professionals. Through scholarship initiatives, dedicated student programming, and meaningful engagement with industry leaders, FWELF continued its mission of connecting established executives with the next generation of energy talent.

Founded by former Florida Public Service Commission Chair Lila A. Jaber in 2015, FWELF has grown into a premier gathering for energy leadership, fostering collaboration, recognizing industry achievements, and building lasting professional relationships. The 2026 Forum reinforced its longstanding mission to inform, inspire, and motivate, while helping shape the future of the energy industry.



