

January 20, 2012

ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

It's Easy Being Green – Without Costing More

Building consultant shows how you can be energy-efficient without spending more money. [\[More\]](#)

Coastal Tidal Action Could Produce 15 Percent of Energy Needs

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today released two nationwide resource assessments showing that waves and tidal currents off the nation's coasts could contribute significantly to the United States' total annual electricity production, further diversify the nation's energy portfolio, and provide clean, renewable energy to coastal cities and communities. [\[More\]](#)

HUD Sets Home Income & Rent Limits

HUD continues to use the 2005-2009, 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) income data as the basis of FY 2012 Income Limits. [\[More\]](#)

Project of the Week

Cantin Builders Walks the Talk

Cantin Builders in Port Charlotte took an existing home to FGBC Gold and followed a path that we all should try more often: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – Go Green. The home is our featured project this week on the FGBC website. [\[More\]](#)

FEATURES:

Remembering Subrato Chandra

Subrato Chandra, Ph.D., retired project manager for the Building America Industrialized Housing Partnership (BAIHP) and one of the pioneers of the building research division of the Florida Solar Energy Center, died Jan 13 following complications from surgery.

Subrato was one of the nine members of the original organizing committee of the Florida Green Building Coalition and spoke at the FGBC GreenTrends conference several times.

“When I first accepted the position as FGBC Executive Director, Subrato was a life saver,” said Suzanne Cook. “FGBC receives tons of technical questions each week and when I needed his help, he was always available,” Cook continued. “His upbeat personality, gentle character and willingness to help is what I will remember about Subrato” Cook concluded.



Subrato, who worked for FSEC for 34 years, retired from there in 2010 and joined the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) to manage a large and complex Building America residential retrofit research project. He was passionate about integrating energy efficiency into home design and, long before most people had ever heard the term photovoltaics, he helped develop the concept of a PV powered house in Cape Canaveral in 1979.

One of his proudest achievements was highlighted in an email he recently sent a colleague in which several FSEC initiatives were touched upon in a listing of the most transformative homebuilding trends in the last 75 years.

Subrato's compassion can be seen in the types of projects he championed: As director of FSEC's research and development division in 1995 he helped the Environmental Protection Agency launch the Energy Star Homes

project that has become the most widely accepted energy-efficient green homes projects in the country. The Building America project he led still works directly with Habitat for Humanity home builders throughout the country to help make housing more affordable for needy families and helps make manufactured or HUD-code homes more efficient.

"He was a great teacher, a respected scientist, and a classy gentleman," said Craig V. Muccio, a colleague from Florida Power and Light who first met Subrato in a solar engineering class Subrato was teaching in 1980.

Subrato was able to succeed because he always championed the personal relationship over the pure technical work. He communicated equally well with a housing subcontractor and a renowned scientist. His loss will be felt nationwide in the building research community.

There will be a memorial service to celebrate his life, held in Orlando, tentatively set for the afternoon of Jan. 29, 2012.

Putnam Proposes Energy Policy

It's time Florida put a premium on energy diversity, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam told state lawmakers last week. Putnam, whose agency now houses the state's Energy Office, outlined a comprehensive energy policy that includes redirecting incentives, regulation and opening the door slightly to a renewable requirement for utility companies.

The goals he outlined included developing a balanced, comprehensive energy policy that advances renewable energy, increases energy diversity, promotes energy efficiency, and encourages the development of new technologies, while being sensitive to Florida's consumers, economy and environment.

Putnam's proposal includes:

- Tax incentives that encourage renewable energy production
- Energy diversity, including nuclear
- A comprehensive biomass inventory
- Place a value on renewable energy when making decisions; require utilities report renewable resources proposed, produced or purchased in Florida as part of their 10-year site plans
- Require the PSC to place a value on diversity and consider that value in decision making
- Require the PSC to consider the unique characteristics of renewable energy facilities when evaluating proposed facilities or negotiated power purchase agreements; create consistent evaluation measures
- Allow utilities to enter into PSC-approved financing projects for renewable energy facilities (P3-type agreements similar to what local governments have with solid waste facilities.)
- Require the PSC to set a cap of 1 percent or 75 megawatts, whichever is less, of its generation capacity portfolio of approved renewable energy investments, and allow something other than what it costs. Create incentives for utilities to build renewable up to 1% of their portfolio, or 75 megawatts, whichever is less.
- Improve conservation; Lead by example. Require all government buildings over 5,000 square feet of conditioned space report energy consumption. The Department of Management Services would develop consistent reporting framework.
- Evaluate specific methods of conservation and efficiency, working through the Florida Energy Systems Consortium to provide better evaluation information to consumers.
- Examine feed in (tariff)
- Encourage the development and use of new technologies and provide incentives for these technologies; eliminate the burdens and regulatory barriers that currently block entrance into this industry.
- Streamline the permitting process for new feedstocks, particularly biofuels.
- PSC needs to evaluate the current status and gaps on interconnection and net metering.

Putnam said the state has effectively abandoned the renewable portfolio standard adopted in 2006 under then-Gov. Charlie Crist and should repeal it. However, the new regulatory approach should embed renewables into Florida's future regulatory scheme. [View his speech](#) to the House Energy and Utilities Subcommittee.

ARCSA and FGBC Sign MOU

The American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (ARCSA) and the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) intended to strengthen efforts to protect Florida's natural resources and advance green building practices. The tenets of the partnership include: Promotion of affordable, climate-specific green building practices; recognition that rainwater catchment is a significant aspect of green building; and, recognition that rainwater is a valuable, underutilized resource and that its capture and use can alleviate challenges related to the limited supply of potable water.

Under the MOU, the organizations agree to:

- A. Advocate the use of the FGBC Green Building Standards in Florida
- B. Advocate the use of the ARCSA guidelines and standards for operating and regulating rainwater catchment systems;
- C. Develop resources that educate industry professionals and the public about green building and rainwater catchment systems.
- D. Advocate incentives for builders and developers whose projects are certified under FGBC Standards and who incorporate rainwater harvesting into their projects;
- E. Promote the professional designations and training programs offered by FGBC and ARCSA.

NSF Sets Standard for Water Reuse Systems

NSF International, a global public health and environmental organization, has published the first American national standard for commercial and residential onsite water reuse treatment systems. *NSF/ANSI 350: Onsite Residential and Commercial Reuse Treatment Systems* establishes criteria to improve awareness and acceptance of water reuse technologies that reduce impacts on the environment, municipal water and wastewater treatment facilities, and energy costs. According to the American Water Works Association, 84 percent of residential water is used in non-drinking (non-potable) water applications such as lawn irrigation, laundry and toilet flushing. Residential and commercial builders, architects and regulators are turning to onsite wastewater reuse systems as a solution to increasing water scarcity and energy costs associated with the treatment and distribution of municipal water and wastewater. Certifying a water reuse system to NSF/ANSI 350 also satisfies requirements for leading green building programs and should help with acceptance by building officials. [\[More\]](#)

Bill Proposes \$26 Million in Solar Rebate Funding

Bills filed in early January would steer \$26 million toward the solar energy rebate program that ended in June 2010. The Solar Energy System Incentives Program provided homeowners with grants of up to \$20,000 to put solar panels on their homes. The program ended in 2010 with 8,720 approved applications totaling \$47.9 million, said Sterling Ivey, spokesman for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The department now administers the program.

The Legislature in a November 2010 special session appropriated nearly \$25 million to pay for 52 percent of the approved rebates, Ivey said. That would leave almost \$23 million in rebate requests that were not paid.

HB 1283 by Rep. Jason Brodeur, R-Sanford, would provide \$26 million in non-recurring general revenue toward the rebate program.

Brodeur did not return telephone calls to explain why the amount was chosen. Sen. Mike Bennett, R-Bradenton and sponsor of the Senate version of the bill, said he thought the amount was close to the rebate requests that remained unpaid.

Septic Tank Inspection Rule on Chopping Block

A bill that would eliminate a statewide requirement for septic tank inspections passed a House committee after Audubon of Florida, one of the state's largest environmental groups, offered qualified support. Scientists say Florida's springs and waterways have become choked with weeds and algae fed by nitrogen and phosphorus compounds from a variety of sources including fertilizer, stormwater runoff, sewage treatment plants and septic tanks.

In 2010, the Legislature passed SB 550 requiring septic tanks to be inspected every five years. The requirement, though, created a backlash among rural property owners, tea party members and Panhandle legislators.

In the 2012 Legislative session HB 999 would repeal the 2010 statewide requirement. Instead, 19 counties with the 33 largest "first-magnitude" springs would be required to conduct inspections unless county commissions vote to not do them.

Proposal Would Extend Water Permits to 30 Years

A House committee this week voted unanimously to file a bill that would extend permits from 20 to 30 years for alternative water supply projects. With Florida facing population growth and increasing competition for groundwater, utility and business groups say new reservoirs and aquifer storage projects are needed to store water during rainy periods. But some environmentalists are concerned about expanding the rights of utilities to use water without public review.

The bill would require 30-year permits if there is "sufficient data to provide reasonable assurance" that permit conditions will be met. If a utility receives bonding for the project within seven years, the permit would be extended for 30 years beyond that time.

Congress Halts Military Spending on LEED

The U.S. Congress is calling a halt to certain military spending on green building in a newly passed defense authorization bill (H.R. 1540). The bill prohibits use of Department of Defense funds to achieve LEED Gold or Platinum, with waivers possible if a cost-benefit analysis for the project can demonstrate payback. Exceptions may also be made without a special waiver if achieving Gold or Platinum "imposes no additional cost."

DOE Releases Advanced Energy Design Guides for Retail

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has released the third installment in a series of four 50% Advanced Energy Design Guides (AEDGs). The 50% AEDG series provides a practical approach for designers and builders of retail stores, and other major commercial building types, to achieve 50% energy savings compared to the building energy code used in many parts of the nation. The AEDGs also provide climate-specific recommendations to incorporate today's off-the-shelf energy efficient building products. [[More](#)]

Study Shows Urban Trees Provide \$4 Million Benefit

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) recently released a technical report indicating urban trees provide a variety of "ecosystem services" or direct environmental benefits for people. This study used computer models developed by the USDA Forest Service to quantify these ecosystem benefits in both physical and economic terms. The annual benefits include:

- energy savings and avoided air pollutant emissions due to shading of buildings
- sequestration (storage) of carbon dioxide, the principal atmospheric greenhouse gas
- absorption of air pollutants

- reduction in stormwater runoff and required infrastructure
- increases in private real estate market values

The annual benefits were estimated at \$4,000,000, which corresponds to an average of \$9 per tree and \$75 per capita. In terms of fixed asset values, the total amount of carbon dioxide stored was valued at \$1.45 million and the total replacement value of the trees was estimated at \$450 million. Enumeration of these benefits can raise citizen awareness of the value of their public tree resources, as well as provide a basis for management to maximize benefits while controlling costs. The data was based on public lands within the Urban Growth Boundary of Corvallis, Oregon. [\[Full Report\]](#)

EPA Offers Water Quality Scorecard for Communities

Many communities across the United States face the challenge of balancing water quality protection with the desire to accommodate new growth and development. These cities and counties are finding that a review of local ordinances beyond just stormwater regulations is necessary to remove barriers and ensure coordination across all development codes for better stormwater management and watershed protection.

EPA’s Water Quality Scorecard was developed to help local governments identify opportunities to remove barriers, and revise and create codes, ordinances and incentives for better water quality protection. It guides municipal staff through a review of relevant local codes and ordinances, across multiple municipal departments and at the three scales within the jurisdiction of a local government (municipality, neighborhood, and site).

The scorecard is intended for municipalities of various sizes in rural, suburban and urban settings, including those that have combined sewers, municipal separate storm sewers and those with limited or no existing stormwater infrastructure. It can help municipal staff, stormwater managers, planners, and other stakeholders better understand where a municipality’s land development regulations and other ordinances may present barriers or opportunities to implementing a comprehensive water quality protection approach. The scorecard provides policy options, resources and case studies to help communities develop a comprehensive water quality program. [\[Interactive Scorecard\]](#)

Permit Activity Shows Increase

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) released a building permit report recently indicating that nationwide, multi-family projects are up 32 percent over 2010 year-to-date numbers, but single-family still lags by 8 percent. Florida activity paints a slightly better picture with single-family permits up 4 percent and multi-family up 31 percent. The Florida Panhandle is the hot spot for single-family, with Fort Walton up 45 percent and Panama City just behind at 34 percent. With a 28 percent reduction in activity, Ocala is struggling.

Building Permits YTD, (in thousands)						
	SINGLE-FAMILY			MULTIFAMILY		
	YTD Nov-11	YTD Nov-10	YTD % CHG	YTD Nov-11	YTD Nov-10	YTD % CHG
UNITED STATES	384.3	416.2	-8%	176.9	134.3	32%
FLORIDA	30.02	28.84	4%	10.05	7.68	31%
Cape Coral-Fort Myers	1.20	1.11	8%	0.42	0.09	367%
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach	0.50	0.60	-17%	0.50	0.07	606%
Fort Walton Beach-Crestview -Destin	0.50	0.34	45%	-	-	-
Gainesville	0.25	0.29	-13%	0.15	0.11	36%
Jacksonville	3.02	3.22	-6%	0.65	0.22	196%
Lakeland	0.99	1.09	-8%	0.01	0.12	-91%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach	3.81	2.96	29%	3.00	2.60	15%
Naples-Marco Island	0.84	0.70	20%	0.30	0.47	-36%
Ocala	0.32	0.45	-28%	0.00	-	-
Orlando	4.27	3.89	10%	1.03	0.95	9%
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville	0.80	0.90	-10%	0.04	0.20	-81%
Panama City-Lynn Haven	0.24	0.18	34%	0.08	0.11	-29%
Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent	1.11	1.26	-11%	0.00	0.42	-100%
Port St. Lucie-Fort Pierce	0.43	0.41	5%	0.06	0.04	42%
Punta Gorda	0.28	0.25	9%	0.02	0.14	-82%
Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice	1.67	1.61	4%	0.51	0.25	105%
Tallahassee	0.50	0.52	-3%	0.12	0.22	-48%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	4.12	4.06	2%	1.86	1.38	35%
Vero Beach	0.31	0.28	9%	0.05	-	-

Wind Turbine Farm Considered for Belle Glade

Towering turbines that spin to provide electricity from wind aren't what turbines used to be. They're a whole lot better, which is why Robin Saiz is still banking on building what could be the first wind farm in Florida. Saiz is the project director for Wind Capital Group, the company behind the Sugarland Wind project, planned for 13,000 acres 7 miles east of Belle Glade.

In mid-December, the St. Louis-based Wind Capital Group submitted its application for the Sugarland Wind project to Palm Beach County. The county commission could vote on the project as soon as March. Plans call for the \$300 million to \$350 million wind farm to produce 200 megawatts of power - enough electricity for 55,000 to 65,000 homes, Saiz said. It could be completed by late 2013, providing approximately 250 jobs during construction and 15 to 20 permanent jobs. [\[More\]](#)

Report Shows Energy Conservation Best Approach

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) has released a report that outlines three scenarios under which the U.S. could either continue on its current path or cut energy consumption by the year 2050 almost 60 percent, add nearly two million net jobs in 2050, and save energy consumers as much as \$400 billion per year (the equivalent of \$2600 per household annually). [\[More\]](#)