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Certification News

Water Management Districts Move Ahead with Layoffs

Florida's water management districts, which were ordered to slash property taxes by Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature, are being forced to eliminate jobs. The *Palm Beach Post* reported that the South Florida Water Management District plans to layoff as many as 100 employees between now and Aug. 17 in order to meet a cost-cutting plan. This is in addition to 123 workers who had already left the district after accepting a buyout. Additionally, the district is cutting salaries of employees earning more than \$90,000 and reducing benefits of the roughly 1,700 remaining district employees.

This is the second water management district to announce cuts. The *Florida Times Union* reported that the St. Johns River Water Management District expects to shed 130 of its 718 jobs - or 18 percent of the staff - in order to cut the district's budget from \$255 million to \$209 million. Governor Scott in May signed SB 2142, which directs the districts to reduce property taxes by \$210 million, or an average of 30 percent.

Environmentalists opposed that bill and asked for a veto but Scott said the bill would provide property tax relief for a majority of Floridians. In June the Florida Department of Environmental Protection directed all five of the state's water management districts to cut their regulatory staffs, reduce staff salaries and to stop buying land.

PACE Funding Gets New Lifeline

An innovative energy program that has sputtered since the Legislature approved it in 2010 could receive a boost under a new local government initiative. Kissimmee and Flagler counties have signed an agreement to create a public agency to administer their Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs.

The Legislature in 2010 approved HB 7129 establishing in Florida the PACE program, which allows local governments to

Local Governments

Town of Davie

Certified: 6/29/11
Level: Silver
Points: 22%

Charlotte County

Certified: 5/24/11
Level: Silver
Points: 26%

Manatee County

Certified: 4/19/11
Level: Silver
Points: 28%

Commercial Buildings

Pahokee Middle School
Certified: 5/16/11

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Calendar

August 11 - 13, 2011 Florida League of Cities

Annual Conference
Marriott World Center
Orlando, FL
PH: (850) 222-9684

August 23-24, 2011 FGBC Certifying Agent Designation Course

Cocoa, FL
[Register](#)

Aug. 23-28, 2011
FL Association of Realtors
Annual Convention & Trade
Show
Rosen Shingle Creek Resort
Orlando, FL

August 26, 2011
FGBC Certifying Agent
Annual Verification Course
Tallahassee, FL
[Register](#)

September 26-28, 2011
Florida Housing Coalition
Affordable Housing
Conference
Rosen Shingle Creek
Orlando, FL
www.flhousing.org

October 5, 2011

finance renewable energy, energy conservation and storm-resistance improvements. Loans would be repaid as assessments on property tax bills so homeowners who move could pass along the cost to future homeowners as liens on the property. Florida, with bipartisan support in 2010, followed 16 other states in establishing the PACE program. The bill is one of the few pieces of energy legislation to have passed both chambers since 2008. Supporters said the bill would help create jobs while encouraging the use of renewable energy with the state solar energy rebate program ending in June 2010.

But the program sputtered nationally after Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in 2010 sent letters to lenders reminding them their agreements do not allow them to purchase loans that have a senior lien. The letters implied that borrowers with a PACE loan won't be allowed to refinance or sell unless the liens are paid off. The letters and the administrative hurdles have caused local governments who supported PACE to balk at starting their own initiatives, said Bob Reid, an attorney with the Bryant Miller Olive law firm in Tallahassee. But the new Florida PACE Funding Agency established by Kissimmee and Flagler counties on June 23 should make it easier for them to participate, said Reid, whose firm has been retained to represent the new agency as its special counsel.

The Florida PACE Funding Agency allows local governments to participate without having to establish their own programs or seek financing. The agency has filed a request in Leon County Circuit Court for approval to issue \$2 billion in bonds for PACE improvements. While some observers say the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac letters continue to dampen involvement PACE nationally, Reid says the federal lenders play a smaller role in Florida than in other states and are not involved in commercial mortgages. With 3.1 million properties in Florida with buildings more than 20 years old that could use storm-resistance improvements, Reid said the \$2 billion could go quickly once the bonds are approved by the courts. Loans could be available in the late fall at the earliest if there isn't a legal challenge.

Energy Star Creates 'Most Efficient' Products List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced for the first time products recognized as the most energy-efficient in their categories among those that have earned the Energy Star label. The "Most Efficient" initiative continues Energy Star's work to provide consumers with the best efficiency information so they can make investments that will lower

Charlotte County Energy Options Conference
Charlotte Harbor Event Center
75 Taylor Street
Punta Gorda, FL 33950
FloridaEDO@charlottefl.com

**November 10, 2011
FGBC Certifying Agent
Annual Verification Course**
Miami, FL
[Register](#)

FGBC Committee Meetings

Affordable Housing
3rd Thursday-monthly
10 a.m.

Board of Directors
3rd Wednesday-monthly
3 p.m.

Commercial
1st Tuesday-monthly
3 p.m.

Hi-Rise Residential
3rd Wednesday-monthly
11 a.m.

Homes
2nd Thursday-monthly
2 p.m.

Land Development
4th Wednesday-monthly
4 p.m.

Local Government
1st Tuesday-monthly
10:30 a.m.

Membership Committee
3rd Thursday-monthly

Programs & Promotions
3rd Thursday-monthly
1 p.m.

their energy bills and environmental impact. The new designation of Most Efficient aims to provide all manufacturers with an incentive for greater product energy efficiency while providing consumers new information about the products that comprise the top tier in the categories. [\[More\]](#)

Gulf County Biomass Project Wins Approval

A proposed biomass plant in Gulf County is the first to receive a permit under a little-noticed state law change made by the Legislature in 2010 that allows for expedited approval for renewable energy projects. Supporters say biomass energy, which involves burning wood or heating it to produce gas, is a cleaner alternative to burning coal and pays Florida landowners to grow trees for fuel. Environmental groups are split on the issue, with some opposing biomass with claims that it is neither clean nor renewable energy.

Several biomass electric projects have been proposed around the state but some have stalled because of challenges acquiring financing, finding utility customers or overcoming local opposition. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection on June 9 issued a permit to the Northwest Florida Renewable Energy Center LLC for a 55-megawatt biomass gas electric plant in Port St. Joe. That's enough electricity to power about 50,000 homes.

PSC to Consider FPL & Progress Energy DMS Plans

Florida Public Service Commission staff is recommending approval of a conservation plan submitted by Progress Energy even though it fails to meet energy conservation goals established by the PSC in 2009. The state's seven largest investor-owned and municipal utilities have submitted "demand side management" plans as required by the Legislature in 2008 under the Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (FEECA).

Aides to Gov. Rick Scott raised concerns about energy costs and conservation during a June 23 meeting with about 40 energy issue stakeholders, according to some who attended the meeting. The governor's office, with former PSC Executive Director Mary Bane serving as an energy advisor, is coming up with a packet of legislation by September.

The PSC on July 26 will consider revised plans submitted by Florida Power & Light Co. and Progress Energy after the commission rejected their plans earlier because they failed to

meet the conservation goals. PSC staff is recommending approval of an alternative plan submitted by Progress Energy because of concerns about the cost to the utility's 1.6 million customers.

DOE Report Highlights Innovative Breakthroughs in Energy-Efficient Technologies for Buildings

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) released a new report showcasing numerous energy-saving products and technologies, made possible through DOE research and development, which are currently available in the market or projected to enter the marketplace in the future. Because buildings consume roughly 40% of the nation's energy, more than transportation or the industrial sector, improving buildings with energy-saving products is one of the most beneficial ways to reduce energy waste and greenhouse gas emissions. The report, titled Buildings R&D Breakthroughs: Technologies and Products Supported by the Building Technologies Program (BTP), informs government professionals, architects, designers, manufacturers, and energy efficiency advocates about DOE project successes and next-generation innovations. [\[More.\]](#)

DOE and The Appraisal Foundation Announce New Partnership to Focus on Energy Performance and Building Appraisals

As part of the Obama Administration's efforts to improve commercial building efficiency 20 percent by 2020, the US Dept of Energy (DOE) announced a partnership with The Appraisal Foundation that will help expand access to energy efficiency and building performance information for commercial buildings and help American businesses to reduce energy waste.

Under the new partnership, the DOE and The Appraisal Foundation will work to ensure that appraisers nationwide have the information, practical guidelines, and professional resources they need to evaluate energy performance when conducting commercial building appraisals. This will help enable investors, building owners and operators, and others to accurately assess the value of energy efficiency as part of the building's overall appraisal. [\[More.\]](#)

NAHB Honors Languell as Green Advocate of the Year

Dr. Jennifer Languell, president and owner of Fort Myers-

based Trifecta Construction Solutions, has been named the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) 2011 Green Advocate of the Year. She becomes the first person to win the individual advocacy award twice since its inception in 1997. The award was presented at the National Green Building Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Languell, one of the leading green building consultants in Florida, received the award for her work in educating industry professionals, local governments, facility managers, and consumers about the benefits of building in a more sustainable manner. The award recognized Languell's continuing efforts to promote green building practices through more than 150 public appearances, presentations, seminars and workshops in 2010.

"This award recognizes and celebrates the most forward-thinking builders and individuals in green building," said Bob Jones, immediate past chairman of NAHB. "These award winners are pushing the envelope of what we can achieve with energy and resource efficiency."

Languell is a past president of the Florida Green Building Coalition, LEED Accredited Professional for the United States Green Building Council, Class 1 Certified Energy Rater, NAHB Verifier and Certified Green Professional, and a Certifying Agent with the Florida Green Building Coalition.

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