

November 12, 2012

In This Issue

[How to Keep the Green Momentum In A Recovering Economy](#)

[Gainesville, Miami-Dade & Osceola Certified](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Federal Trade Commission Revises Green Guides](#)

[Green Building Driven by Cost Reductions and Indoor Air Quality Survey Reveals](#)

[Green Power RFP Issued by Progress Energy](#)

[FDEP Offers Waiver on Title V Air Emission Fees](#)

[Gainesville Added to Improving Housing Markets](#)

[Halloween Drew Attention to Cutting 'Vampire' Energy](#)

[PowerUp Energy Expo Seeks Session Experts](#)

Articles of Interest

How To Keep the Green Momentum In A Recovering Economy
[\[More\]](#)

Solar Among Fastest Growing Job Markets in America
[\[More\]](#)

Quick Links

[Join FGBC](#)

Federal Trade Commission Revises Green Guides

The Federal Trade Commission issued revised "Green Guides" that are designed to help marketers ensure that the claims they make about the environmental attributes of their products are truthful and non-deceptive. The revisions to the FTC's Green Guides reflect a wide range of public input, including hundreds of consumer and industry comments on previously proposed revisions. They include updates to the existing Guides, as well as new sections on the use of carbon offsets, "green" certifications and seals, and renewable energy and renewable materials claims.

Among other modifications, the Guides caution marketers not to make broad, unqualified claims that a product is "environmentally friendly" or "eco-friendly" because the FTC's consumer perception study confirms that such claims are likely to suggest that the product has specific and far-reaching environmental benefits. Very few products, if any, have all the attributes consumers seem to perceive from such claims, making these claims nearly impossible to substantiate.

The Guides also:

- Advise marketers not to make an unqualified degradable claim for a solid waste product unless they can prove that the entire product or package will completely break down and return to nature within one year after customary disposal;
- Caution that items destined for landfills, incinerators, or recycling facilities will not degrade within a year, so marketers should not make unqualified degradable claims for these items; and
- Clarify guidance on compostable, ozone, recyclable, recycled content, and source reduction claims.
- Contain guidance on the use of "hosting" claims. For marketers who generate renewable energy but sell the renewable energy certificates, the FTC found that using the term "host" is deceptive because customers assume that the marketer is using the renewable energy being generated. Instead, the guides recommend a marketer clearly disclose that the renewable benefits are being transferred and sold to others.

New Sections. The Guides contain new sections on: 1)

[Linkedin Group](#)

[Facebook Blog](#)

Certification News

Local Government

City of Gainesville

Certified: 10/31/12
Score: 36%
Level: Silver

Miami-Dade County

Certified: 10/30/12
Score: 57%
Level: Gold

Osceola County

Certified: 10/17/12
Score: 32%
Level: Silver

Certification Counts

"Florida Green" Certifications To Date

Homes

1,136 Homes in 2012
5,237 total as of 10/5/12

Commercial Buildings

Registered: 15
Certified: 7

Hi-Rise

Registered: 4
Certified: 1

Land Development

Registered: 61
Certified: 12

Local Government

Registered: 56
Certified: 44

Multi-Family

In 2012
26 Buildings
302 Units

Florida Water Star Certifications NFWFMD and SRWMD Areas

3 Homes in 2012

Education Opportunities

December 7, 2012
Certifying Agent
Annual Active Status

certifications and seals of approval, 2) carbon offsets, 3) free-of claims, 4) non-toxic claims, 5) made with renewable energy claims, and 6) made with renewable materials claims.

The new section on certifications and seals of approval, for example, emphasizes that certifications and seals may be considered endorsements that are covered by the FTC's Endorsement Guides, and includes examples that illustrate how marketers could disclose a "material connection" that might affect the weight or credibility of an endorsement. In addition, the Guides caution marketers not to use environmental certifications or seals that don't clearly convey the basis for the certification, because such seals or certifications are likely to convey general environmental benefits. [[Summary guide on Environmental Benefits](#)]

Finally, either because the FTC lacks a sufficient basis to provide meaningful guidance or wants to avoid proposing guidance that duplicates or contradicts rules or guidance of other agencies, the Guides do not address use of the terms "sustainable," "natural," and "organic." Organic claims made for textiles and other products derived from agricultural products are covered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program. [[More](#)]

Green Building Driven by Cost Reductions And Indoor Air Quality Survey Reveals

Turner Construction Company, recognized as the leading general builder and the largest green builder in the United States, has announced the results of a new Market Barometer survey that focused on environmentally-sustainable or "Green" building, and on sustainable practices in general. Key findings revealed that companies remain committed to constructing green buildings. While executives remained committed to incorporating sustainable building practices into their building programs, fewer said their companies were likely to seek LEED certification from the US Green Building Council when constructing a green building.

Executives were most likely to cite financial factors as being important to their companies' decisions on whether to incorporate green features in a construction project. Respondents indicated that energy efficiency (84 percent) and ongoing operations and maintenance costs (84 percent) were extremely or very important to their decisions.

More than two-thirds of executives also said that non-financial factors were extremely or very important including:

- 74% indoor air quality
- 74% health and well-being of occupants
- 69% satisfaction of employees/occupants

Verification Course

Gainesville, FL

[\[Register\]](#)

April 24-25, 2013 FGBC Certifying Agent Designation Course

Florida Solar Energy

Center

Cocoa, FL

[\[Register\]](#)

August 21-22, 2013 FGBC Certifying Agent Designation Course

Florida Solar Energy

Center

Cocoa, FL

[\[Register\]](#)

Calendar of Events

Nov. 14-16, 2012 USGBC -GreenBuild Int'l Conference and Expo

Moscone Center

San Francisco, CA

[Register](#)

Nov. 15, 2012 HVAC Design & Installation

UNF University Center

12000 Alumni Drive

Jacksonville, FL

[\[More\]](#)

Dec. 10-12, 2012 Habitat for Humanity- Florida

State Conference

Mission Inn

Howey-in-the-Hills, FL

[\[More\]](#)

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FGBC Committee Meetings

Affordable Housing

3rd Thursday

Monthly

10 a.m.

Board of Directors

2nd Wednesday Monthly

3 p.m.

Commercial

1st Tuesday

Monthly

3 p.m.

- 67% employee productivity

Among real estate owners, developers, and corporate owner-occupants, 64% said they expect to undertake new construction projects over the next 12 months (up from 46% in the 2010 survey), and 71% said they expect to undertake renovation projects over the same period (up from 58% in the 2010 survey).

Eighty-four percent of respondents said their companies were committed to environmentally-sustainable practices. Of that percentage, 56% of executives said their companies were extremely or very committed to following environmentally-sustainable practices in their operations, while an additional 34% said they were somewhat committed. In addition to citing financial reasons for this commitment, executives were most likely to cite broader considerations as extremely or very important including belief that it's the 'right thing to do,' (68%), impact on brand/reputation (67%), and customer requirements (61%), along with cost savings (66%).

This suggests that the decision to incorporate green features is driven by a desire to reduce cost followed by an interest to improve the indoor environment for building occupants, rather than broader concerns about the impact of buildings on the global environment.

The executives participating in the survey were from the following principal types of companies: architecture (49%), construction (19%), real estate consulting (11%), corporate owner-occupant (9%), developer (9%), engineering (9%), real estate owners (7%), corporate tenant (3%), and broker/real estate service provider (2%), (These percentages total to more than 100% since some companies were involved in more than one industry segment.) [\[More\]](#) [\[Turner Report\]](#)

Green Power RFP Issued by Progress Energy

Progress Energy Florida is seeking to purchase renewable energy from qualifying generation facilities, which will help Progress offset the need for new power plants. Preference is granted to projects larger than 1 MW in generation capacity, projects must be reliable, and located in Florida. [\[More\]](#)

FDEP Offers Waiver on Title V Air Emission Fees

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is offering a one-time "fee holiday" for businesses that fall below a \$5,000 annual air emissions fee threshold. About 300 Florida small businesses are eligible to benefit from this regulatory cost savings by minimizing pollution. Small businesses such as print shops, painting operations, bakeries, and manufacturers of fiberglass boats typically fall into the category eligible for the fee waiver. For more information,

Education
1st Thursday
Monthly
2 p.m.

Hi-Rise
3rd Tuesday
Monthly
11 a.m.

Homes
2nd Tuesday
Monthly
2 p.m.

Land Development
4th Wednesday
Quarterly
4 p.m.

Local Government
1st Tuesday
Monthly
10:30 a.m.

Membership and Programs & Promotions
(Joint Meeting)
3rd Thursday
Monthly
4 p.m.

visit the [FDEP website](#).

Gainesville Added to Improving Housing Markets

The number of U.S. housing markets showing consistent improvement in three key measures of strength expanded by 22 in November to a total of 125, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/First American Improving Markets Index (IMI). This marks a third consecutive monthly gain for the index, which now includes representatives from across 38 states as well as the District of Columbia.

The index identifies metropolitan areas that have shown improvement from their respective troughs in housing permits, employment and house prices for at least six consecutive months. Markets added to the list in November include such geographically diverse locations as San Diego, Calif.; Gainesville, Fla.; Omaha, Neb.; Louisville, Ky.; and Charlotte, N.C.

"This shows that a housing recovery is firmly taking root and helping generate needed jobs and economic growth across much of the country -- though we know that this expansion could be even stronger were it not for ongoing challenges that include overly tight lending conditions and difficult appraisals," noted NAHB Chief Economist David Crowe.

[\[More\]](#)

Cutting 'Vampire' Energy was Halloween Spotlight

Vampire energy - also known as phantom load, standby power, or idle current - is the electricity that outlets greedily suck from what plugs into them, even if that plugged-in device is off or on sleep mode.

Today's most notorious vampires are TVs and their accessories. With set-top boxes, DVRs, DVD players, speakers, and game consoles, your turned-off TV can draw significant power. Such big energy vampires likely are sucking nearly a month's worth of electricity annually for your household. But you can cut the vast majority of that wasted energy through some techie tips.

[\[Learn more\]](#)

PowerUp Energy Expo Seeks Session Experts

The PowerUp Energy Expo scheduled for March 18-20, 2013 in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. has announced its Call for Abstracts. Industry experts are invited to submit presentation proposals on any of the following topics. For more information, go to www.PowerUpEnergyExpo.com.

Energy Security
Economic Development

High Performance Green Building
Sustainable Design & Development
Alternative Transportation
Financing Energy Projects
Energy Policy Technology
Renewable Energy
Water Technology
Building Information Modeling (BIM)
Building Automation Systems
Biofuels & Bioenergy
Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Carbon Storage & Sequestration
Energy Management