Sales Tax Holiday Begins May 31 For Hurricane Preparedness Items

Between May 31 and June 8, qualifying items related to hurricane preparedness are exempt from sales tax. The list includes portable generators, batteries, radios (self- or battery-powered), coolers (non-electrical), tarps, tie-down kits, flashlights, fuel containers, and even Tiki-type torches and candles. For a complete rundown of qualifying items, visit www.myflorida.com/dor

IgCC Committee Votes to Approve Outcome-Based Compliance Path

Owners and design teams working toward high energy performance buildings have a potential new ally in the International Green Construction Code (IgCC). The development committee reviewing new proposals for enhancing the IgCC voted 8-5 to approve a proposal that would add the first-ever outcome-based compliance path in a model energy code.

The IgCC, which is updated every three years, defines the requirements that a building needs to meet to be considered green. Local governments can then adopt the IgCC for new construction and deep renovation projects in their jurisdictional area.

Building energy codes by nature are prescriptive, but architects and engineers are finding that prescriptive requirements can limit their ability to use integrated systems and innovative technologies that are necessary to lower a building's energy needs. The outcome-based compliance path would solve that problem, setting targets for the actual energy use of a building and determining compliance through the building's achievement of that
target once in operation. Unlike existing pathways to address energy use--prescriptive or modeled performance options--the outcome-based pathway allows the design team the greatest flexibility and relies on measured energy-use data that can help communities and building owners better meet their energy and carbon emissions reduction goals. [More]

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Moving Beyond Net-Zero Buildings To Net-Zero Communities & Districts

Going net zero one building at a time is a commendable goal, but as we're learning, not without challenges, including accounting, the role of the utility, the potential for overbuild (sizing a single building's renewable generation to cover its peak load), and practical challenges unique to particular buildings.

Enter the biggest growing trend for net-zero energy planning and design: net-zero districts, campuses, and even entire communities.

Applying net-zero energy at a district or community level has several advantages. For instance, multi-building systems offer opportunities for taking advantage of diverse load shapes, heat requirements, and opportunities for renewable energy production. Just as automakers can meld many models' fuel economies into a fleet average, so too can net-zero districts and communities achieve net-zero status in aggregate even though some individual buildings may do better or worse.

So far, the nation's largest planned community designed to reach net-zero energy is West Village, a mixed-use campus neighborhood at the University of California, Davis. It's designed to ultimately house 3,000 students along with 500 staff and faculty families. The first phase is complete and has been occupied for more than a year, achieving 87 percent electrical self-sufficiency. Higher-than-expected demand from plug loads in some of the apartments, together with glitches in heat-pump water
heater operations, accounted for the shortfall in meeting the net-zero goal in the first year, but West Village's managers are confident that they will do it. [More]

**NAR Homebuyer Trends Report Identifies Important Sustainability Features For New Homes**

The National Association of Realtors 2014 Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends report identifies sustainability features that buyers find "very important" in a new home. At 36 percent, heating and cooling costs was the most-selected option, followed by commuting costs. Energy-efficient appliances followed by energy-efficient lighting ranked third and fourth, respectively. Surprisingly, landscaping for energy efficiency was ranked as the fifth most important feature. [Full Report]

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<th>Characteristics of Homebuyers</th>
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**Green MLS Implementation Guide Available To Help Realtors, MLS Staff and Vendors**

Looking to have green fields integrated into your local MLS? The National Association of Realtors (NAR) released the Green MLS Implementation Guide, which is designed to provide a blueprint for MLS staff and their software vendors to implement Green MLS fields. Consider sharing the guide with local realtors and MLS staff members.
Florida PACE Funding Agency Announces Available Funding

The Florida PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Funding Agency (Agency) through its EVest Program announced that $200 million in financing is now available to property owners in subscribing local government jurisdictions for qualifying energy efficiency, renewable generation and wind-resistance home or commercial business improvements or repairs. The improvement financing will be repaid over time as part of the property owner's annual property tax assessment. Currently the only participating areas are Flagler and Nassau counties.

The Agency's EVest Program is entirely voluntary and is available only in subscribing counties and municipalities. It is available without liability or cost to subscribed counties and municipalities, and brings with it employment and economic development benefits. Liability protection is ensured through the Agency’s judicial validation that has already been obtained from the Florida Courts for every Florida city and county.

The Agency's EVest Program is non-exclusive, allowing participating local governments the opportunity to retain additional PACE providers at their sole discretion. Subscription to the Agency's EVest Program is accomplished by resolution of the local commission and a short, judicially validated interlocal agreement.

FPL Earns EPA Clean Air Excellence Award

Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) has been selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a 2014 recipient of its Clean Air Excellence Award, which honors innovative programs that benefit communities, the environment and the economy.

FPL is widely recognized for lowering emissions with its next-generation clean power plants. FPL has extended this commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants through its clean vehicles fleet and consumer education program.

The EPA recognized FPL's industry-leading deployment of fuel-efficient vehicle technology, which is an important part of the utility's overall efforts to provide affordable, clean, reliable electric service to its 4.7 million customers throughout Florida. [More]
Will the Sunshine State Ever
Embrace Solar Like This?

Ted Turner, owner of Turner Renewable Energy, teamed with Southern Company through a subsidiary in January 2010 to form a strategic alliance to pursue development of renewable energy projects in the United States. The partnership has primarily focused on developing and investing in large-scale solar PV projects in the Southwest, where solar resources are most available. The Macho Springs Solar Facility brings the partnership's overall solar capacity to more than 290 MW.

Southern Company subsidiary Southern Power and Turner Renewable Energy has announced the acquisition of the largest solar facility in New Mexico - the 50-megawatt (MW) Macho Springs Solar Facility. Construction of the plant began in July 2013 and commercial operation was scheduled to begin this month. Electricity generated by the facility will serve a 20-year purchase power agreement with El Paso Electric (EPE).

The facility is expected to generate enough electricity to power more than 18,000 homes. It will displace more than 40,000 metric tons of CO2, the equivalent of taking 7,500 cars off the road, and will displace more than 340,000 metric tons of water consumption annually in southern New Mexico and west Texas.

Southern Power and its subsidiaries own and operate 17 facilities in eight states, with more than 8,800 MW of generating capacity operating in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina and Texas. [More]

Four Florida Metro Areas Ranked
Most Dangerous in Nation for Pedestrians

The National Complete Streets Program of Smart Growth America has released the 2014 edition of Dangerous by Design. In order to compare the relative safety of one place to another, this report uses a Pedestrian Danger Index (PDI) that gives an indication of the likelihood of a person on foot being hit by a vehicle and killed.

According to the report, which covers the period from 2008 to 2012, Florida has the top four most dangerous metropolitan areas for pedestrians in the nation.

Metro Orlando tops the list of most dangerous areas to walk this year, followed by the Tampa-St. Petersburg,
Jacksonville, Miami, and Memphis regions. Across the Orlando region, the calculated PDI for 2003-2012 was 244.28, four times higher than the national PDI. Tampa-St. Petersburg had a PDI of 190.13, Jacksonville was 182.71 and Miami-Fort Lauderdale was 145.33. The Birmingham, Houston, Atlanta, Phoenix and Charlotte regions round out the list of the ten most dangerous places to walk. [Full Report]

Want to make your community safer, consider Complete Street policies.

FGBC Welcomes New Members

Bill Cook
Bill Cook Luxury Homes
Winter Park

Charles Reid
Current Builders
Pompano Beach
(Rejoin)

Alan Stocker
Current Builders
Pompano Beach

Edward Roske
City of Palm Bay - Utilities
Palm Bay

Scott McCracken
Sawhorse Construction
Vero Beach

Ed Cannatelli
Cannatelli Builders
Pompano Beach
(Rejoin)