

Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer E-Newsletter

December 2008



HERE COMES THE SUN

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) has approved Gulf Power Company's petition to establish a solar thermal water heating pilot program. By approving solar thermal water heating as part of Gulf's demand-side management program, the PSC continues efforts to raise awareness and increase the use of renewable energy.

PSC Chairman Matthew M. Carter II said, "Adding solar thermal water heating to Gulf's energy portfolio will provide an incentive for customers to take advantage of renewable technologies and to demand less energy from Gulf Power."

The pilot project will be effective for systems installed on or after January 1, 2009. Gulf Power will offer a \$1,000 rebate to qualifying customers after the system has been installed by a contractor with a valid solar or plumbing license. In addition to the Gulf Power rebate, customers will be eligible to receive a \$500 rebate through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Solar Energy System Incentives Program. Customers also will be eligible to receive a 30 percent federal tax credit of up to \$2,000.

The PSC will review the solar thermal water heating program and Gulf Power's energy education programs in 2010 to determine their effectiveness and their potential for continuation.

For more information, go to www.gulfpower.com/renewable/solarenergy.asp.

Florida Renewable Energy Portfolio

The Florida Legislature, through [Florida Statute 366.92](#), directed the PSC to develop rules for a renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS). The RPS will establish the minimum percentage of total annual retail electricity sales that must be produced by renewable energy sources in Florida.

The new rules will be designed to:

- Promote the development of renewable energy.
- Protect the economic viability of Florida's existing renewable energy facilities.
- Diversify the types of fuel used to generate electricity in Florida.
- Lessen Florida's dependence on natural gas and fuel oil for the production of electricity.
- Minimize the volatility of fuel costs.
- Encourage investment within the state.
- Improve environmental conditions.

Follow the PSC's progress as it develops a draft rule to be presented to the Florida Legislature early in 2009: <http://www.floridapsc.com/utilities/electricgas/RenewableEnergy/>



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What's on a Utility Pole?

We see them on our way to work or school every day, but have you wondered about all those wires, conductors, switches, and transformers on a utility pole? Utility poles may carry wires to distribute electric power for an electric utility and communication cables for telecommunications networks. Cable television wires are often also carried by utility poles.

Learn why utility poles are hot real estate at:

<http://www.floridapsc.com/consumers/utilitypole/en/default.aspx>



Home Energy Assistance

Low-income Floridians can receive assistance paying energy bills through the [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP). LIHEAP, administered by the Florida Department of Community Affairs, provides grants to local governments and non-profit agencies to assist eligible low-income households in meeting the costs of home heating and cooling.

To learn about qualifications, residents should contact their county's local [LIHEAP agency](#), or call the state's information line at 2-1-1.



Drop by Drop: Save Money on Your Water Bill

Only 2.5 percent of the world's water is fresh water, and less than 1 percent of the fresh water is usable. Florida's growing population is putting greater stress than ever on this essential - and limited - resource.

The PSC has prepared a brochure, [Drop by Drop: Save Money on Your Water Bill](#), to help educate Floridians about reducing water use, both inside and outside the home. Saving water not only preserves our valuable resource but also reduces water and wastewater bills.

More valuable information on water conservation is available at:

- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/>
- Florida's Water Management Districts:
 - [Northwest Florida Water Management District](#)
 - [St. Johns River Water Management District](#)
 - [Southwest Florida Water Management District](#)
 - [South Florida Water Management District](#)
 - [Suwannee River Water Management District](#)
- [Clean Water Action](#)
- [The Ground Water Protection Council](#)

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The Office of Public Counsel was established by the [Florida Legislature](#) as a service to the people of the state of Florida.

The Public Counsel advocates on behalf of Florida's utility consumers before both state and federal regulatory authorities, including the PSC, and before the Florida and federal courts.

The Public Counsel is independent from any regulatory authority and answers only to the people of Florida through the Florida Legislature.

The Office of Public Counsel also certifies eligibility for low-income qualifying [Lifeline and Link-up programs](#).

To learn more about the functions of the Public Counsel, visit their Web site at www.floridaopc.gov.