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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

July 1998



Hi-tech Solar Home Unveiled in Lakeland

1997-98 Annual Report Issue



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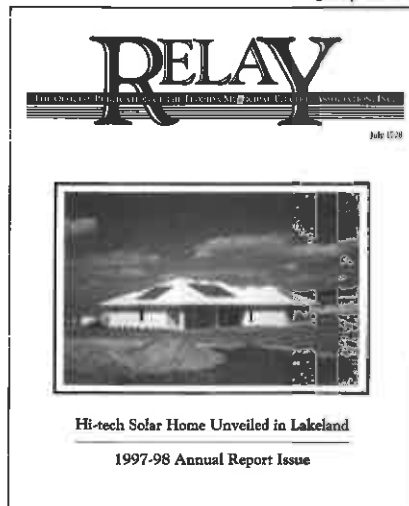
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July 1998



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OHM PAGE



Barry J. Moline
FMEA Executive Director

Whoops! We forgot the facts!

There you go again, Mr. President." When candidate Ronald Reagan delivered that line in 1979 during a presidential debate with Jimmy Carter, the message he sent was that Carter was misinforming Americans about Reagan's position on the issues.

The same is true today in a different venue, as the president of the Edison Electric Institute, Thomas R. Kuhn, is misinforming just about anyone who will listen about public power utilities and the private-use issue.

His efforts were enough to dupe the editor of *Electric Light and Power*, Denise Warkentin, to write a misguided editorial on the IRS restrictions.

In his *Electric Perspectives* magazine column, Kuhn talks about public power utilities serving customers outside their service territories with either transmission facilities that are required for the competitive network or excess generation. He makes a poor analogy to competing in the Olympics. Kuhn says that the Olympics don't allow competitors to use performance enhancers to help them compete. "If shareholder-owned electric companies cannot use steroids, shouldn't their competitors follow the same rules?" Furthermore, Kuhn states, "If consumers are to reap the full rewards of restructuring, no competitor should be artificially handicapped or advantaged."

There you go again, Mr. President.

Kuhn fails to mention at least \$56 billion in unpaid deferred income taxes (those are interest-free federal loans) and the nearly \$40 billion in tax-exempt bond financing issued to many of EEI's private utility members. (Yes, those are tax-exempt bonds to private corporations.)

Whoops. I guess in his Olympic analogy, Kuhn believes that knee-capping your fellow competitor is perfectly legal.

EEI has been able to influence Denise Warkentin, managing editor of the electric industry's trade publication, *Electric Light and Power*. In her April 1998 editorial, Warkentin laments the IRS action on private use.

Probably the funniest line is when Warkentin asks, "How does one go up against the IRS?" Private utilities, who dominate the U.S. power industry, have all the fire power they need to make their case in any venue. Their

financial resources appear bottomless. The IRS does not scare them.

Could it be that the private utilities are just wrong?

Private utilities serve more than three-quarters of the nation's electric market. Nearly all are implementing aggressive growth business plans. Should they really fear public power utilities, which serve less than 15 percent of the customers and own only 11 percent of the generation? Or maybe the private utilities are just trying to twist the rules as they are being written, not to level the playing field, but to level the competition.

Public power utilities exist to serve their local communities. That's how it has been for more than a century, and would continue except for the electric industry's movement toward deregulation. We didn't invent the private-use problem — it was created for us.

We expect misinformed diatribes from the Edison Electric Institute.

However, Warkentin's commentary in a seemingly unbiased trade publication that pits one industry sector against another reduces her credibility and that of *Electric Light and Power*. Many public power readers of that publication were offended by her comments. She missed the mark by 180 degrees. Next time, she ought to do about ten minutes of research and consider the facts. **R**

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NEWS LINES



FMPA Intervenes in FPL/Central Maine Merger

The Florida Municipal Power Agency (FMPA) has made a motion to “intervene, protest and make a request for a condition,” regarding the proposed purchase of Central Maine Power Company’s (CMP) generating assets by FPL Group, parent company of Florida Power & Light. FMPA has asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to make the transfer of 1,185 MW of CMP’s resources conditional on FPL’s agreement to join a Florida Independent System Operator (ISO).

FMPA says that FPL is preventing a statewide ISO from being formed to prevent a Florida-wide transmission rate from being established. The current system creates inequity for Florida’s municipal utilities, and allows FPL to maintain a discriminatory transmission pricing system.

In its intervention, FMPA requests that FERC make final approval of the sale conditional on FPL’s agreeing to the key ISO principles as outlined in FERC Order No. 888, which include separating control of

the transmission grid from dominant generation owners, fostering region-wide transmission arrangements that support fair competition and efficiencies for generation sales and avoid pancaking and discrimination, and promoting regional planning.

FPL offered to purchase Central Maine’s assets at 3.5 times its book value in January, 1998, to gain entry to New England market opportunities. The premium paid reflects the paid-down value of CMP’s hydroelectric assets. FMPA’s motion includes a protest to FERC

that this write-up “is plainly intended to be recouped from consumers, one way or another.”

The motion says there is a “strong nexus between FPL’s competitively insulated Florida business” and their attempt to enter, “at a premium,” the competitively opened New England market. FMPA intervened in FPL’s bid to purchase power plants in Maine, saying that if FPL is participating in a fair transmission system in New England (i.e., an ISO) then they should likewise support creation of an ISO in Florida.

Tank Replacement Heads Skyward with Key West’s Innovative Method

Fuel tank replacement is tricky but necessary work. Key West’s City Electric System has found a clever method to lift the heavy tanks during refurbishment.

The purpose of the refurbishment is to make sure that if a leak occurred, the fuel would not leak into the environment, and would be safely contained.

The utility recently began refurbishing the tanks that supply diesel fuel to the utility’s six Stock Island generators. Each 240,000-lb. tank needs to be carefully lifted 10 feet off the ground

during the process.

Key West’s subcontractor, Total Plant Maintenance, Inc., of Irvine, California, inflated air bags under each tank and inserted cribbing under the tank as the air bags floated the tank upwards. Once off the ground, they placed an impervious liner underneath, topped the liner with a layer of sand and poured three inches of asphalt. The air bag method has already allowed the safe refurbishment of CES’s 1.9-million gallon tank, and will be used next on two 500,000-gallon tanks.

Co-ops form Touchstone Energy

A coalition of over 400 electric cooperatives has announced the creation of a name brand to improve competitiveness in the electricity marketplace. The brand, Touchstone Energy, will be “the electric cooperatives’ unifying brand that will stand strong in the competitive environment, while . . . strengthening each cooperative individually through the sharing of research ideas, and advanced technology.” The cooperatives hope to build on the close relationships they have built with customers by developing a national brand to say that customers can get the same type of service from coop-

eratives across the country.

Touchstone Energy will kick off its marketing campaign with a 60-second television commercial to be used at both the local and national levels. The degree to which Touchstone will be a competitive force in the electricity marketplace is still in question; company officials have indicated that if customers want them to compete more aggressively with investor-owned utilities, they are prepared to do so. The company has also indicated that it may be ready to enter the power marketer business.

From *Electric Power Alert*, May 20, 1998 issue.

Proposal Would Limit Tax-exempt Bonds Used for Generation

Public utilities that choose to sell power beyond their service areas would be denied the use of tax-exempt debt under a bill introduced in late May by Rep. Philip English, (R-Pa.)

English, a member of the influential House Ways and Means Committee, said the bill deals only with government-owned utilities that are selling excess electric generation outside their service areas. It also does not touch existing tax-exempt bonds or current bondholders.

"There are approximately 2,200 utilities in this nation that are owned by state or local governments," English said in a statement, "My bill will impact less than 30 — those with excess generation capacity who choose to sell to



persons other than their historic customers."

The bill would bar public utilities selling outside their service areas from using tax-exempt debt and their general income tax exemption to support electricity sales, English said. It would not affect federally-owned utilities such as the Bonneville Power Administration nor rural electric cooperatives, English stressed.

The measure also would not stop municipalities from annexing new service territories or "engag(ing) in growth consistent with state rules," English added.

California Retailers Sue to Stop Consumer Ballot Initiative

A coalition of California business, taxpayer and labor groups has filed a lawsuit to keep off the November ballot an initiative which would overturn parts of the state's already-operating electricity restructuring plan.

Californians for Affordable and Reliable Electric Service (CARES) filed the lawsuit to halt the initiative movement because the initiative would invalidate contracts, already-sold bonds and prompt further lawsuits, the group said. The lawsuit was filed after the consumer groups proposing the initiative announced they were certain they had more than the required number of signatures necessary to place the initiative on the ballot.

The ballot initiative

would replace the 10 percent rate cut with a 20 percent rate cut and strict requirements on utilities' recoverable costs for past investments. CARES said the initiative, if approved by the taxpayers, would force the state to take money from its general fund to pay the liability costs, which the coalition estimates to be over \$6 billion.

The other groups which form CARES are the California Small Business Assn., California Business Roundtable, California Retailers Assn., Coalition of California Utility Employees/IBEW, the California Taxpayers' Assn., and the state's investor-owned utilities.

From *Megawatt Daily*, May 1998.

Massachusetts Utility Deregulation has Unexpected Tax Consequences

A tax cut for business is an unexpected consequence of utility deregulation in Massachusetts. Retailers and other nonindustrial businesses are about to receive a 50 percent cut in the sales tax they pay on their electric bills, according to the *Boston Globe*. This will save the private sector about \$30 million a year, but will cost the state of Massachusetts in tax revenue. The state has been collecting about \$65 million a year with the tax.

As a result of opening the power market to

competition, utility bills have been unbundled, reflecting separate charges for generation, transmission and stranded costs.

And now, because of lobbying from retailers and others, the state has decided businesses will not be taxed for transmission costs for the delivery of electricity. Those costs constitute about half of total electric payments. Commercial customers will pay the usual 5 percent tax only on the other half of the bill, for generation and stranded costs.

"We're essentially



cutting the energy tax by \$30 million," said Charles D. Baker, secretary of the executive office of administration and finance.

Residential consumers and manufacturers are already exempt from paying the sales tax on electric bills. Nonindustrial commercial customers have been paying the tax since the 1980s, according to

the Retailers Association of Massachusetts.

This newfound tax consequence, which the association and Associated Industries of Massachusetts have been urging the state to clarify, would apply to about 1,500 retailers and 10,000 outlets. Office buildings and warehouses also are eligible for the tax break.

Although deregulation took effect March 1, the tax issue has not been fully clarified and decided until now, so electric bills will be credited retroactively, Baker said. **R**

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FEATURE



Hi-Tech Solar Home Unveiled in Lakeland

by Stephanie Wolanski
FMEA Director of Communications

Imagine spending only \$13 a month for electricity to cool your home. Unimaginable? The Unimaginable is becoming reality in Lakeland, where a solar home experiment has resulted in an 83 percent savings in energy costs.

Perhaps best of all, the savings are measurable and can be proven. Built next to the highly efficient 2,425-square-foot solar home is an exact replica using traditional construction and cooling methods. With thermostats for the two homes set similarly, the solar home uses 83 percent less electricity, and has an inside temperature that is two degrees cooler. Thus far, for every \$2.81 in electricity costs used by the traditional house, the solar home uses only 43 cents.

"Once again, the Lakeland area continues to be the proactive center of commercial development and demonstration of new energy-efficient technologies within the state of Florida," said Bob Siegel, managing director of Lakeland Electric & Water.

A combined effort of Sandia National Laboratories, the Florida Solar Energy Center, The Florida Energy Office, Lakeland Electric & Water, and a Lakeland-area homebuilder, the project's goal is to see if energy-efficient design can combine with the use of photovoltaics to pro-

vide a home's total energy needs in Florida's hot, humid climate. The solar home includes a combination of technologies that greatly reduce air conditioning load. These include extra wall insulation, a white tile roof to reduce attic heat gain, a novel inside-the-home duct system, a high performance air conditioner and argon-filled windows that let in light while rejecting heat gain. All appliances and lighting are also high-efficiency models, and the range, clothes dryer and heating use propane gas.

"The house is designed to provide enough power during the utility peak so that it won't place a net demand on the grid," explained project team leader Danny Parker, an FSEC research scientist. "If the concept proves viable, hundreds of houses like this could be built without increasing the need for extra utility generation capacity. That's a big accomplishment," he added.

The cost of the solar home was \$70,000 more than the conventional home, to pay for all the energy efficient features, of which the biggest cost was \$40,000 for the solar energy collection system. The house has already been sold, and the new owners moved in early this month. Over the next several years, FSEC researchers will continue to compare the solar home's energy consumption/cost with that of its more-traditional neighbor. ■

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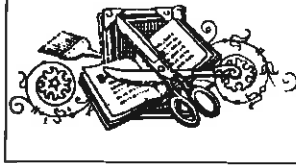
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- ◆ Developing and carrying out a communication strategy that's linked to the marketplace.

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