

Florida's Electric Utility Magazine

May 1999

# RELAY



Getting Value from IT Investments  
Internet Technologies for  
Local Governments  
The Best Annual Reports

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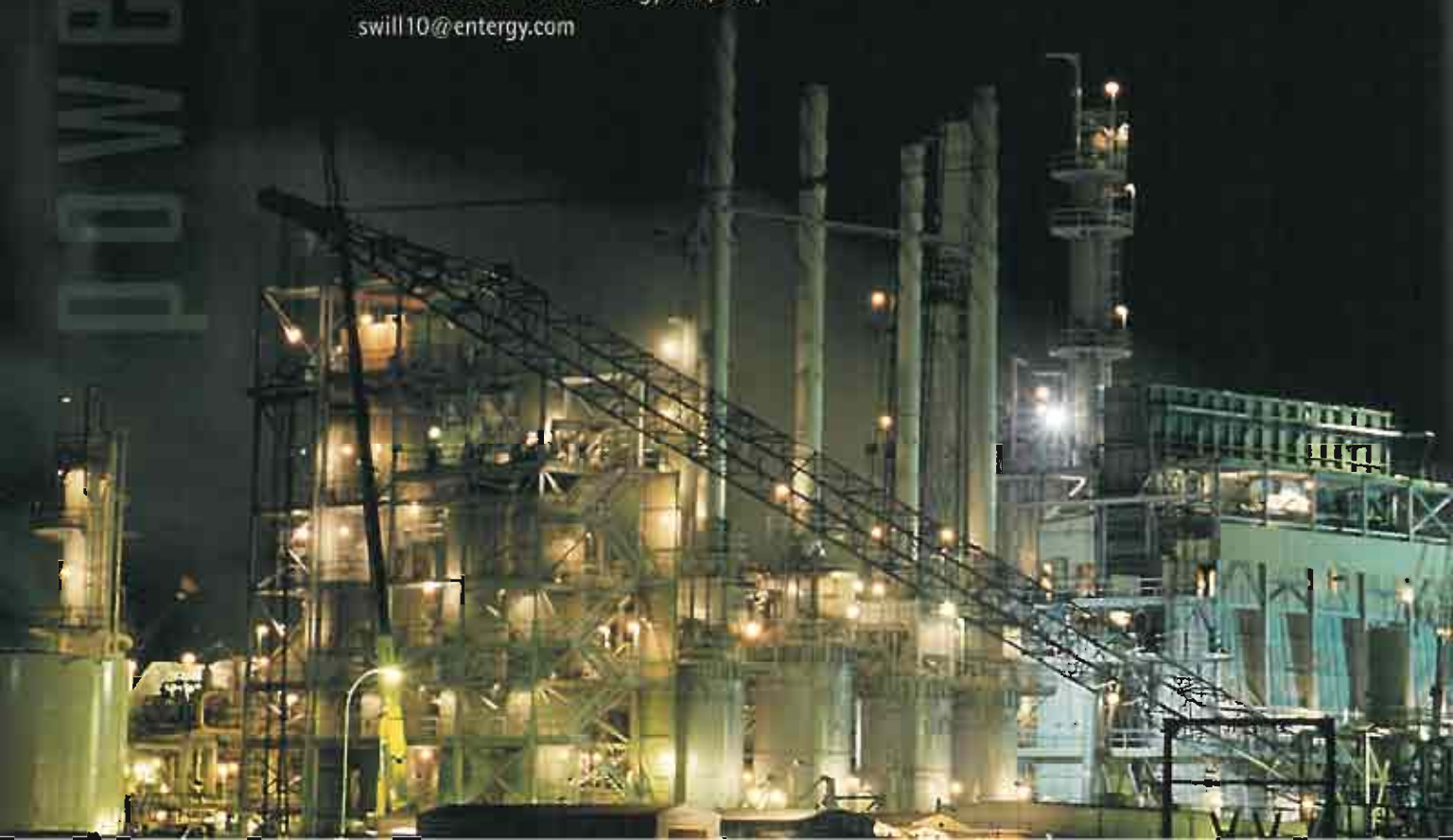


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# RELAY

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## **FLORIDA TRANSFORMER, INC.**

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# Our Hearts Go Out

**E**lectric utilities have complex relationships with one another. Sometimes we are partners. Sometimes we are good neighbors. Sometimes we are fierce competitors.

In mid-April an explosion occurred at Tampa Electric's Gannon Power Station. Tragically, three people lost their lives, and dozens more were injured.

There isn't a person in the electric business — competitor, vendor or partner — who does not feel strongly for everyone in the TECO family.

These are good people whose primary concern is working safely. Their record is excellent.

To the families of the injured: please know that around Florida and the United States, thousands of people have prayed for you and your loved ones.

Over the years, Florida's public power utilities have looked to TECO for advice and direction on how to best work safely in nearly every aspect of utility operations. Their guidance and instruction have been first rate. Just last year, FMEA honored TECO's Clyde Roberds with the Associate Member of the Year award. Clyde's service to Florida's public power utilities has been lengthy and unselfish. He has made numerous group presentations, provided videos and offered personal consultation. We will continue to look for TECO's guidance without hesitation.

## It Only Takes An Instant

Believe it or not, I lift weights. Last night I set myself up to bench press 100 lbs., which I do a few times per week. I positioned myself on the bench, pushed the bar up, and eased it forward to begin the reps.

As I lowered the bar, it suddenly caught on the exercycle handlebar, which I had moved next to the bench press the

previous weekend while spring cleaning. In an instant, the position changed from a carefully balanced barbell to an out-of-control flying object dropping downward toward my chest.

Thoughts passed quickly through my mind. From "This is embarrassing! I'll have to yell for my wife and eight-year old daughter to come and help me," to "Whoa, this is serious — I'm losing control and I'm pinned down — focus on fixing the problem!"

That's when I stepped on my daughter's birdhouse project. Crunch. Slowly, carefully, I lifted off the weights from my prone body.

As I thanked my lucky stars, I thought about what I "shoulda" done. I shoulda LOOKED at the bench press for obstructions. I shoulda TURNED ON ALL THE LIGHTS in the room so I could have seen better. I shoulda THOUGHT about what I was about to do and not just gone and done it. I shoulda. I coulda. I woulda.

## The First Step: Safety Training

Accidents and mishaps are shocking reminders of the importance of working safely. But how do we get to the point where we know we are safe?

*continued on page 6*



Barry J. Moline  
FMEA Executive Director

**Safety is a journey. Your organization and your employees are either on the journey or off it.**

Working safely is not an end point. It's not a final report. It's not an annual budget that ends on September 30.

Safety is a journey. Your organization and your employees are either on the journey or off it. On that safety journey there

are reminders and checkpoints daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly. Education is constant.

Are you on the journey? Are your employees?

FMEA now offers safety training.

The program was developed by professional trainers with decades of experience in the utility industry. Our principle instructor is Kyle Roberts, who is known to many public power utilities through his

presentations at FMEA meetings and as the Director of Loss Control for the Florida Electric Cooperatives Association.

Here are a few of the highlights and goals of our program:

- ◆ It's flexible — more than 15 training programs to choose from, with daily and annual (discounted) fees.

- ◆ Training is available for everyone — technical staff as well as non-field workers, including office staff.

- ◆ Documentation and certification — attendance will be documented and a semi-annual report will be sent to your safety coordinator.

- ◆ Accident review assistance, safety audits and safety policy reviews are all available.

For a complete description of FMEA's Safety Training and Services Program, call Cheryl Anderson, (850) 224-3314, ext. 2.

Don't say "I shoulda." Call today. ■

**For a complete description of FMEA's Safety Training and Services Program, call Cheryl Anderson, (850) 224-3314, ext. 2.**

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### KUA Wins Five Image Awards

The Kissimmee Utility Authority (KUA) recently received five awards for its public relations efforts from the Orlando Area Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA).

FPRA conducts the Image Awards competition annually to recognize outstanding local public relations programs and to encourage and promote the development of public relations professionalism. KUA was awarded two Image Awards, two Judges' Awards, and one Award of Distinction at FPRA's April 29 banquet held at the Orlando Science Center:

- ◆ In the newsletter category KUA received an Image Award and a Judges' Award for its monthly employee newsletter, *Power Line*.
- ◆ In the poster/calendar category KUA received an Image Award for its 1999 Calendar of Electrical Safety.
- ◆ In the annual report category

KUA received a Judges' Award for its 1998 Annual Report "The Storm Let Up. We Never Did," which describes the utility's recovery from a devastating tornado.

◆ In the special events category KUA received an Award of Distinction for the KUA.net Grand Opening Event in October 1998 — the public debut of KUA's Internet service provider.

KUA's winning entries will now advance to the state level of the competition. Winners will be announced July 27 in Orlando.

### GRU's Kurtz Testifies before Congress

"As we move to competitive markets, FERC's mission must change from setting reasonable rates to a responsibility to establish and maintain workably competitive electricity markets. This major change in focus will require clarifying the authority of FERC to take a number of actions to eliminate market power, to prevent the development of increased market power, and to act swiftly to prevent market power abuses," testified Mike Kurtz, general manager for Gainesville Regional Utilities, on May 6, 1999, before the House Commerce Committee' Subcommittee on Energy Power's hearing on market power.

Kurtz testified on behalf of the American Public Power Association; telling Congress that consumers need more protection relating to the merger review process. "If competition is the goal, then mergers need to be considered in a way that prevents them from setting back the emergence of competition," he said.

Kurtz also cited the control of generation and transmis-

sion resources by a relatively small number of privately-owned utilities as another impediment to competition, and described the opposition of Florida's private power companies to merchant plants as an example of their continued attempt to maintain generation market dominance.

"The transmission solution most in the public interest is the creation of truly independent system operators or other institutions that are controlled by the public and operated on a not-for-profit basis," he said.

Kurtz also testified against stand-alone PUHCA repeal, encouraged protections against anti-competitive affiliate transactions and the fair enforcement of reliability rules, and discussed municipal tax-exempt bond issues.

### Leesburg Receives National Diversity Award

The City of Leesburg received a first runner-up award in the 1999 City Cultural Diversity Awards, sponsored by the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO) of the National League of Cities (NLC). Awards were determined in four categories based on population size.

Focusing mainly on the city's collaboration with the Community Development Corporation (CDC) of Leesburg and Vicinity, the award highlighted several examples of Leesburg's cultural diversity efforts. One area focused on job creation in the African-American Community. Last year, the city of Leesburg funded two part-time positions for the CDC — a secretary and a community outreach coordinator.

A second area focused on community pride and development in the



African-American community. Over a year ago, the Leesburg City Commission approved the CDC's use of tax-increment financing funds. With these funds, Leesburg area residents and businesses are empowered with land development consultants and other necessities to develop a community blueprint that supports the organization's present and future economic and land development goals.

A third area focused on the city's support and recognition of the advisory efforts of the CDC. The City has supported several visioning sessions of the CDC, which includes the development of a community comprehensive plan. The community development plans relate to land regulations and zoning, recreation program establishment, and other economic development efforts. These plans will be presented to the Leesburg City Commission for inclusion in the City of Leesburg Re-development Plan.

— From *Leesburg Service Line*,  
May-June issue.

### Top Five Generators Globally

According to a Datamonitor report titled "Global Generation Utility Benchmarking 1998," the world's top five electric companies produce 12.9 percent of global electricity, which is enough power to light 2.3 trillion bulbs for a year.

The report by the Datamonitor market analysis firm examines 200 of the world's largest generators, which together account for over 61 percent of global electricity generating capacity.

### Comparison of Top 10 Generators

| Rank | Country      | Company          | 1997 Total Generation Capacity (MW) |
|------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1    | Russia       | EAOUES           | 177,000.0                           |
| 2    | France       | Edf              | 102,500.0                           |
| 3    | Brazil       | Enebr            | 59,247.0                            |
| 4    | Japan        | Teppo            | 56,760.0                            |
| 5    | Italy        | Enel             | 56,236.0                            |
| 6    | South Korea  | Keppo            | 41,042.0                            |
| 7    | South Africa | Eskon            | 39,154.0                            |
| 8    | Japan        | Knwa             | 37,049.0                            |
| 9    | Canada       | HydroQuebec      | 31,396.0                            |
| 10   | U.S.         | Southern Company | 31,161.0                            |

### GoodCents Campaign Retargeted

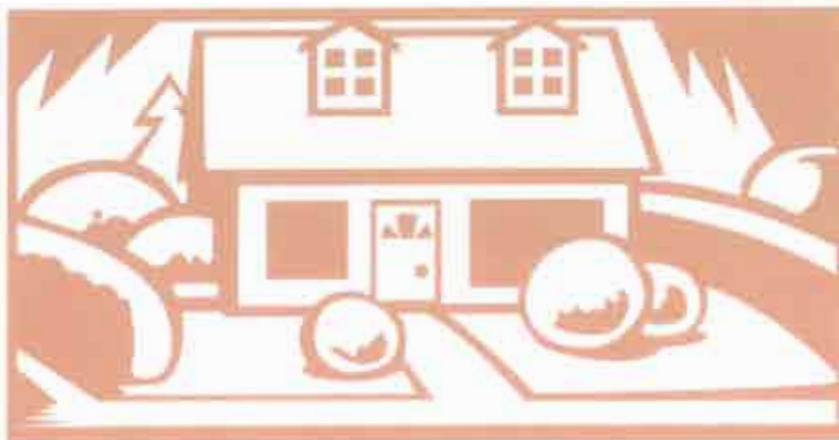
For many years, GoodCents ad campaigns have encouraged homebuilders and homebuyers to consider energy efficiency as they planned and built new homes. A revamped GoodCents advertising campaign now targets a broader base of Southern Company cus-

tomers with energy-related products and services.

The Southern Company recently launched an updated GoodCents advertising campaign as part of its unified marketing strategy for 1999. This represents the first time that GoodCents has been promoted under one common advertising campaign by the Southern Company's five Southeast utilities.

Southern Company says its research shows that the GoodCents name communicates attributes that customers value, such as energy efficiency, quality, comfort and savings. "GoodCents products make our customers' lives better, more convenient, and in many cases more cost-efficient," said Alan Martin, chief marketing officer of Southern Company.

In the past, GoodCents was a builder program specifically tar-





geted at homebuilders and homebuyers. The new campaign repositions the GoodCents program as offering advice on energy products and services offered by Southern Company's operating companies "to create better living for customers." GoodCents energy products and services include outdoor lighting, water heating, surge protection, heating and cooling systems, energy audits and financing.

The year-long multimedia campaign includes television, radio, outdoor, newspaper and magazine advertising. The campaign began running in mid-April across the Southeast. The TV spots will air during prime time news and sports programming in 14 markets throughout Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi. Southern Company's advertising agency, Shepardson Stern Kaminsky (SS+K) of New York, produced the ad campaign.

### Commission Approves FP&L Rate Change

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) approved a negotiated agreement between Florida Power & Light (FPL) Company that will reduce rates to FPL customers by more than \$1 billion over the next three years.

"It is, in its magnitude, historic," said Commissioner J. Terry Deason. "There are going to be tremendous benefits available right away."

The agreement, which takes effect immediately, calls for \$350 million in rate reductions for each of the next three years. Company officials told the Commission consumers should see reductions in the next 30 days.

The agreement calls for an FPL revenue reduction of more than 6

percent applied to all 3.7 million customers served by the company. The average residential customer will save approximately \$60 per year. The agreement also features a special revenue sharing rebate if FPL's annual revenues increase due to abnormally high electricity use by customers.

### FPUA a Charter Partner in EPA Program

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is partnering with 50 electric utilities and local governments to reduce emissions of the greenhouse gas sulfur hexafluoride (SF6).

Among the 50 "charter utilities" to volunteer is the Ft. Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA). FPUA said it became a partner in EPA's initiative because it is dedicated to improving the quality of life for its residents by providing them with a clean environment.

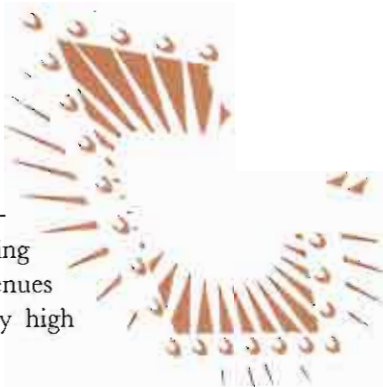
Ft. Pierce plans to write and implement a program over the next year to comply with EPA's initiative of eliminating SF6 gas emissions.

"Our mission at Ft. Pierce includes improving the quality of life in Ft. Pierce and one of the ways we can do that is by being a careful steward of the environment," said Thomas Richards, Ft. Pierce director of operations.

SF6 has been identified as a persistent and potent greenhouse gas. It is used in a variety of applications, including as an insulating material in electrical transmission and distribution equipment such as circuit breakers.


Electric power systems that join the partnership agree to:

- ◆ estimate their emissions of SF6;
- ◆ establish a strategy for replacing older, leakier pieces of equipment;

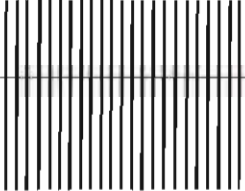


- ◆ implement SF6 recycling;
- ◆ ensure that only knowledgeable personnel handle SF6; and
- ◆ submit annual progress reports to the EPA.

The partnership is a part of EPA's SF6 Emissions Reduction Partnership for Electric Power Systems program. EPA's role in the partnership is to act as a clearinghouse for technical information on successful strategies to reduce emissions. In addition, the EPA will serve as a repository for data on the emissions reduction achievements of the partners; and work to obtain commitments from all electric power system operators to join the partnership.

Other utilities interested in taking part should contact Eric Jay Dolan, U.S. EPA, (202) 564-9044; or e-mail: [dolin.eric@epa.gov](mailto:dolin.eric@epa.gov). 





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# Internet Technologies Transform Local Governments

**T**he Internet is revolutionizing the way local governments do business. By using emerging Internet technologies, local governments are finding new ways to meet their communities' needs.

City governments already have a strong Internet presence, and commonly offer informational services about city statistics, area real estate offerings, recreational activities and tourist attractions. Increasingly however, cities are using the Internet to conduct business. Government services that can be found on the Internet include voter registration, building and zoning permits and applications, bill presentment, on-line account information, applications for utility disconnect and transfer services, and even auto licensing.

## Jacksonville, Florida

Florida's largest municipal utility, JEA, offers customers around-the-clock access to account information via its web site, [www.jea.com](http://www.jea.com). By entering either their telephone numbers or utility account numbers, JEA customers can access their account status and billing history.

JEA's web site also offers an on-line bill calculator that determines electric, water and sewer bills based on consumption. The page offers detailed instructions on how to read electric meters, allowing customers to determine their kilowatt-hour (kWh) usage.

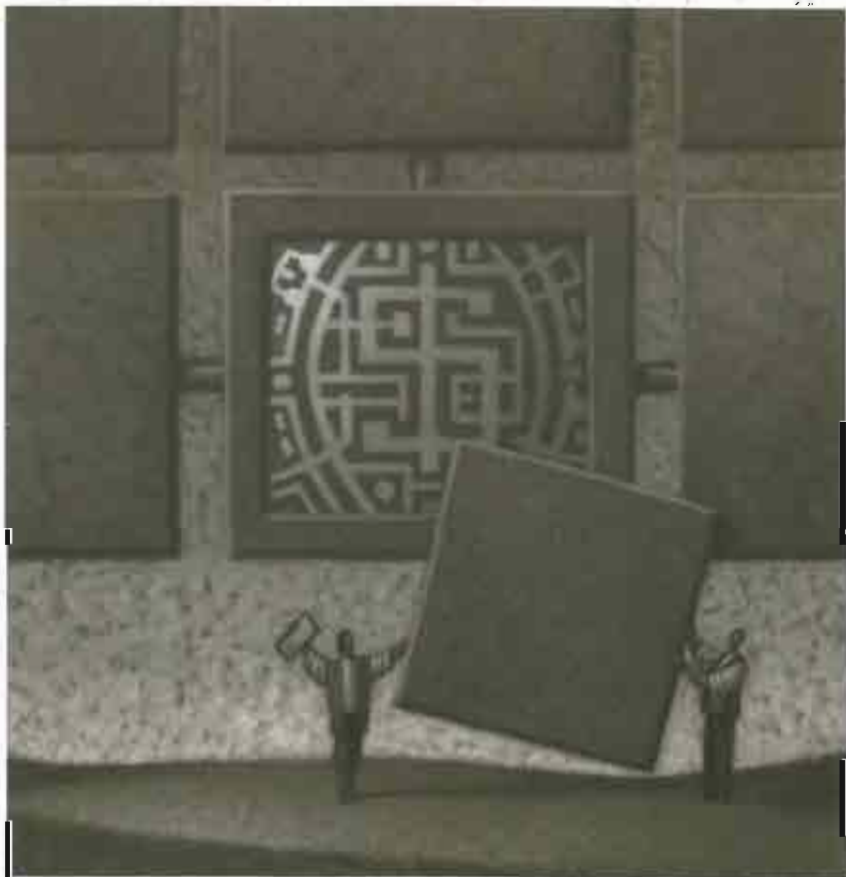
Customers enter their total kWh consumption, choose their county, and a detailed bill is calculated that includes tax amounts. A special builder's info section allows homebuilders to check the status of permits, look up meter information and offers a great selection of homebuilding links. JEA plans to offer other on-line services such as internet billing and presentation in the near future.

"JEA wants to be ready to provide

smarter, faster, and cheaper service to our customers, and creating on-line services will allow us to meet those goals," said Bill Cutts, JEA's VP of Customer Service.

## Denver, Colorado

Denver recently introduced [Denvergov.org](http://Denvergov.org). The site incorporates cutting-edge interactive capabilities, from auto licensing to voter registration to downloadable building





"The current voting process can be made much more user-friendly with the use of technology. But we must not sacrifice privacy and security for ease of access."

— Bill Jones

California Secretary of State

and zoning permits. Denver also plans to eventually allow electronic permit filing and provide property and civil court records on-line.

The city uses templates to standardize the look and feel of the web page, which allows some 250 departmental webmasters to keep their agencies' pages updated and remain consistent.

The impetus behind Denver's move to the Internet is cost. Although the city spent half a million dollars to create the new site, it forecasts huge savings and increased efficiency. On-line vehicle registrations, for example, cost less than a third of in-person vehicle registrations and are processed quicker.

#### **Palo Alto, California**

In February, 1998, heavy rains caused floodwaters to damage over 400 homes in Palo Alto, California, causing \$6 million in repair and clean-up costs. Afterwards, area residents complained that the city hadn't done enough to warn them about possible flooding.

The city of Palo Alto responded with a web page, [www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/emergency/emergency.html](http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/emergency/emergency.html), which provides real-time water-level data on three creeks in the area. The web page includes updates of water levels ev-

ery 90 seconds and displays a graph of 12-hour trends of tide and flood-basin levels.



When heavy rains arrived again this February, citizens flocked to the city's web page for information. On a normal day, the site receives 7,000-10,000 hits. This February's rains drew 32,847 hits in a single day, with an additional 20,000 users going directly to the creek-level page.

The cost? Instrumentation and other costs to feed the creek-level data to the web page amounted to less than \$3,000 per site.

#### **What's next? Internet-based voting!**

Once upon a time electronic voting meant no more pen and pencil. Now California is considering taking electronic voting to the next level — the Internet.

In mid-March, California election officials and data security experts gathered to discuss whether cybervoting could overtake existing voting methods. The first meeting of California's new online voting task force is examining questions such as voter authentication and privacy.

"The current voting process can be made much more user-friendly with the use of technology. But we must not sacrifice privacy and security for ease of access," said California Secretary of State Bill Jones in a statement.

The California task force will meet monthly and present findings by



year's end to Jones' office. The state legislature will have to approve Internet voting before the state can use its Internet presence to conduct political races. **R**

## FMEA Welcomes New Associate Members

### **Penske Utility Rental**

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**Type of business:** Rental/service of vehicles.

### **Public Financial Management**

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**Fax:** (407) 648-1323  
John Miller, *Managing Director*  
Steve Alexander, *Senior Managing Consultant*  
David Moore, *Senior Managing Consultant*  
Angela Kokoda, *Senior Managing Consultant*  
**Type of business:** Financial advisory and investments.

### **Two MJ Altman Employees Honored**

Two MJ Altman Companies, Inc., employees were recently honored. Mike McDoniels, owner of MJ Altman Companies, was selected as the Marion County Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year for 1998; and Debbie Zanetti, sales manager of MJ Altman Companies, was elected 1999 President of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce.

### **ABB & ESRI Partner to offer Network Management Software**

ABB Utility and ESRI have partnered to develop innovative software solutions for the planning and operation of networks for electricity, gas and water systems. The partnership's objective is to improve economic operating management through efficient localization and the

elimination of malfunctions. This will result in quicker and better service for end-users and reduced operating costs for network operators.

According to ABB, the relaxation of markets within the global economy will make it more important for network operators to optimize operating procedures. The company says that its integration of offline data from ESRI's geographical information system (GIS) and online data from ABB's network control systems opens up a large potential for improvement.

ABB is a world leader in control systems for the transport and distribution of electrical energy. ESRI, with over 300,000 customers, is the market leader in the area of geographical information systems.

### **AVO introduces new Megger MHP1 and MHP2 Production Hipots**

AVO International, a leading manufacturer of electrical test equipment and measuring instruments, recently introduced the new Megger MHP1 and MHP2 Production



HiPots, designed for workshop and production-line testing of finished electrical products. These instruments perform dielectric strength tests in conformance with UL and similar quality control standards.

The MHP1 and MHP2 HiPots are compact instruments, small enough to be portable, but heavy duty enough to be a part of a fixed installation in a

designated high voltage testing area.

AVO International manufactures a complete line of electrical testing and measuring instruments under the names of Megger®, Biddle®, and Multi-Amp®.

### **FPL Energy, Inc. Completes Maine Power Plant Purchase**

In early April, FPL Energy, Inc., a subsidiary of FPL Group, Inc. completed the previously announced purchase of Central Maine Power Company's non-nuclear generating assets. The purchase includes hydro, fossil and biomass generating plants with a total capacity of 1,185 megawatts. FPL Energy's new generating assets were purchased for \$846-million, and include 373 MW of hydro, 781 MW of fossil and 31 MW of wood-fired capacity. The company assumed ownership after completing a signing ceremony with CMP officials at the Portland, Maine City Hall.

"This transaction expands FPL Energy's role in the New England energy market and adds hydro capacity to our growing portfolio of environmentally favored generation assets," said Michael Yackira, FPL Energy president.

"We face financial challenges due to the changes in the regulatory environment since we announced our intention to purchase these assets last year," Mr. Yackira said. "We expect to enhance our outlook by improving the efficiency of these assets and actively participating in the regulatory process. We also hope to work closely with local and state officials, as well as the business community to our mutual benefit."

Including the Maine assets, FPL Energy has more than 4,300 MW of generating capacity operating, announced or under construction. The company has holdings in 12 states and two other countries. **R**

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# Getting Value From Technology Investments

An assessment of current IT effectiveness is essential to realize the full potential of your IT investment.

by Rich Kalisch  
Director Information  
Systems Consulting  
R. W. Beck

**T**he growth of information technologies (IT) is one of the trends credited with keeping the U.S. economy healthy. The flip side is that organizations everywhere — both public and private — are spending a larger portion of their financial resources on new technologies. Electric utilities are discovering that an increasingly competitive marketplace also necessitates increased technology needs and expenditures. To receive the best value in making investments in IT, utilities should follow a process that includes assessing effectiveness, developing funding and management, and establishing a thorough strategy.

## Assessing Your Investment

Although most organizations invest significant dollars in IT (personnel, hardware, software), the results vary widely from organization to organization. What are the indicators to the effective use of IT and what can be done to optimize IT effectiveness?

There are two primary methods of

assessing IT effectiveness. The first method involves measuring the level of frustration within your organization regarding IT use and the services provided by the Information Services organization. Frustrations can take various forms, including:

- ◆ Inability to fund new applications that are considered important to the mission of the department.
- ◆ Inability to obtain sufficient resources from Information Services.
- ◆ Inability to obtain help from Information Services on a timely basis to fix

problems or handle new projects.

These are symptoms of underlying issues, not the basic problems. Consequently, proposed solutions (such as authorizing more money, increasing IS resources, having each department do their own IS work, or reassigning IS personnel to departments) will not necessarily solve the problems. In many cases, after approving these recommendations, executive management has found that IT effectiveness has not improved and frustrations still exist. In fact, in most cases IT costs escalate to unprecedented levels.

The second method of evaluating the current state of information technology effectiveness involves comparing your organization's use of IT with best practices and leaders in the industry. This evaluation

**Management should not be dealing with decisions regarding computer platforms or network operating systems, but focusing on the business/organizational benefits and costs.**

focuses on how current information systems support the business goals and objectives of departments.

In the area of IT, there is one fact that is constant: it is very easy to spend a lot of money on IT without achieving the expected benefits. In these situations, management becomes very frustrated with information technology results and costs. Whether at the beginning of IT implementation or further along the road, it's important to remember that an assessment of current IT effectiveness is essential to realize the full potential of your IT investment.

## Funding and Managing for Success

Several fundamental issues regarding IT effectiveness involve the management, coordination, and organization of providing information technology capabilities. One traditional approach to managing information technology involves an Information Services Group, which is responsible for technology direction, networking, computer components, application systems development, and applications support. Having these responsibilities does not necessarily mean the IS group has the resources and funding to fulfill its mission, however. In many cases the individual to whom the IS group reports (such as the Finance or Administration department head) becomes involved in funding decisions.

Another approach is the formation of an IT steering committee which attempts to prioritize projects and ex-

penditures. A committee structure based on a consensus approach, which is political by nature, rarely yields acceptable results. In either case, on what basis can the individuals involved make funding recommendations?

Executive management must provide the leadership for the organization and coordination of information technology resources. The objective of executive management is to provide a structure and environment for information technology decisions and the delivery of IT resources that yield the expected value to the organization. The governance of information technology resources should be the responsibility of executive management and cannot be delegated. This may make some executives uncomfortable due to the technical nature of IT.

The solution involves structuring technology decisions within the context of business decisions so the management is addressing business issues, not technical ones. For example, management should not be dealing with decisions regarding computer platforms or network operating systems, but focusing on the business/organizational benefits and costs of a proposed IT project.

The policies and procedures established to govern IT should address these objectives:

- ◆ Provide a mechanism to establish and enforce information technology strategies and standards along with a defined process to evaluate exceptions.
- ◆ Establish the role and mission of the central IS group and emphasize accountability and responsiveness.
- ◆ Structure a process for funding IT activities and projects directly by the sponsoring department.
- ◆ Structure a process for funding IT activities and projects involving the overall computing network which supports all departments.

Maintaining a business focus will ultimately ensure a high level of IT effectiveness and guide the ongoing IT decision-making process efficiently and successfully.

## Strategy is Key

IT effectiveness involves more than technology direction, organizational structures, and policies and procedures. Another set of fundamental issues involves the strategy for computer applications and data that supports departmental business activity and the organization as a whole. Some of the questions to be resolved include:

- ◆ What applications are required to support department goals, objectives and activities?
- ◆ What general business and communications applications are required to support the overall mission of the organization?
- ◆ What capabilities should the applications provide?
- ◆ What are the application data integration needs across departments?
- ◆ Are current applications adequate or are new ap-





plications or revised applications required?

♦ What projects and activities should be considered to support those application systems needs?

♦ What is the recommended sequence and timing of these projects, recognizing business priorities and technical/financial realities?

♦ What are the costs on a budget year basis for implementing these projects?

The process of analyzing current computer applications in light of business goals, objectives and activities is based on information obtained from departmental management and staff plus knowledge of industry best practices. The outcome of providing answers to these questions constitutes an information systems application plan for the organization and for individual departments. The plan becomes the mechanism for funding and budget appropriations.

It is important to understand that this plan should represent an ongoing process that is updated and refined as a continual planning tool. Without the plan, budget and funding decisions become isolated guesses, without a common point of reference or clearly understood objective. ■



For more information, contact Rich Kalisch (rkalisch@rwbeck.com), Director Information Systems Consulting, or Patty Braswell (pbraswell@rwbeck.com), Marketing Director; R. W. Beck, Inc., 800 North Magnolia, Suite 300, Orlando, Florida, 32801; telephone (407) 648-3570.

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# More Alphabet Soup

By Robert Varela  
Editor, Public Power Weekly

**T**he electric utility industry, including public power, has another Washington acronym to worry about — TRI. It stands for the Toxics Release Inventory, which is compiled annually by the Environmental Protection Agency and publicized widely by EPA and environmental groups. This year, for the first time, electric utilities will be required, pursuant to Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, to report

their emissions and other releases to air, land or water of chemicals listed as toxic by EPA. The TRI reporting requirements were revised last year to apply to utilities that:

- (1) have coal- or oil-fired generation;
- (2) have 10 or more employees; and
- (3) annually process 25,000 pounds of a listed toxic chemical or use 10,000 pounds of a listed chemical.

By July 1, utilities that meet these criteria must report their 1998 releases to EPA. They also must report on their pollution prevention activities. There are at least 35 listed chemicals that utilities need to worry about and there are some specific exemptions from reporting certain mixtures, so each power plant's reports will depend on its unique situation.

The 10,000 to 25,000 pound threshold may sound like a small net, but it's broader than you may think. If you have a nuclear or natural gas plant that includes a small oil- or coal-fired turbine, then the entire plant is covered. And the net may get much broader if EPA has its way.

The world may change next year for those utilities now too small to report releases to EPA under the TRI program, said Lee Zeugin, an attorney for the Utility Air Regulatory Group. If adopted, a recent proposal by EPA would dramatically lower the thresholds for reporting releases of "persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic" (PBT) chemicals, including the

thresholds for mercury and PCBs.

The agency's proposed PBT rule would slash the threshold for mercury and PCBs to 100 pounds a year, and the reporting trigger for dioxins would go to one-tenth of a gram per year. "We believe every plant greater than 25 MW will fail the dioxin test," Zeugin said. "The mercury 100-pound number will capture 98-99% of coal-burning plants." And if you have trace elements of a listed chemical in your fuel, "that counts," he said.

The proposed PBT rule, if adopted on schedule, would apply to year 2000 releases, so the first reports would be due July, 2001.

Public power utilities that will be filing TRI reports this year need to start thinking now about how to communicate the information to their customer-owners. "Even if you have only a small plant, you're going to find some releases are large compared to other industries," Zeugin said. National or local environmental groups may target your plant, and anyone with Internet access can look up your power plant's releases on the Environmental Defense Fund's "Scorecard" ([www.scorecard.org](http://www.scorecard.org)), which provides details on release by postal zip code.

**The world may change next year for those utilities now too small to report releases to EPA under the TRI program.**

And even if you own no generation, you may get questions from reporters or customers who have seen articles on utility emissions. (The Electric Power Research Institute estimates that the electric utility industry's TRI data will probably increase the national total of toxics reported by about 1.3 billion pounds.) It would be a good idea to find out what your suppliers and neighboring utilities are going to report and what they plan to say to the public.

Utilities will have to explain the health significance of their releases. EPA sees the reporting requirements as a way to pressure industry

to reduce emissions, so the agency simply releases the raw numbers with no discussion of their impact on public health. Gather reliable data on the health risks from releases you are reporting so you can put them into perspective for the public.

It also is always good policy to alert your customers and news media about sensitive environmental and health issues before they hear about it from someone else. (Be aware that many private power com-

panies are talking about releasing their data to the public before the July 1 deadline for reporting to EPA.) You can include information in your customer newsletter, send letters to your large customers, and brief reporters on what to expect from the TRI reports.

As Lee Zeugin said at APPA's Engineering & Operations Workshop earlier this year: "If the local newspaper calls for your comments, it's probably too late."

For more information on the TRI program, visit the EPA Web site devoted to the program: [www.epa.gov/oppintri](http://www.epa.gov/oppintri). It includes reporting forms and instructions, contacts for assistance with reporting questions, and fact sheets on the health and environmental effects of TRI chemicals. The Electric Power Research Institute is providing a number of TRI services for its members. APPA members can contact Bill Wemhoff, director of environmental regulatory affairs, at (202) 467-2943 or via e-mail: [bwemhoff@APPAnet.org](mailto:bwemhoff@APPAnet.org). For more information on environmental issues in general, a March Status Report of Major Environmental Regulatory Activities of Interest to APPA Members is available on APPA's Web site, [www.APPAnet.org](http://www.APPAnet.org). Go to the Member Services section and look under Regulatory Information. **R**

**Related Web Sites:**

[www.scorecard.org](http://www.scorecard.org)

[www.epa.gov/oppintri](http://www.epa.gov/oppintri)

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O F F I C E S N A T I O N W I D E

# The Best Annual Reports

by Stephanie Wolanski  
FMEA Director of Communications

Each year, FMEA receives somewhere between 50 to 80 annual reports. We receive them from our utility members, many long-time associate firms, other Florida electric utilities, a large number of state and regional utility associations/agencies, and a variety of other industry entities. For the past 14 years, I've been involved or responsible for the production of FMEA's annual report, so I find the cavalcade of reports instructive.

In this article, I had intended to focus solely on the best of this year's reports, and will still discuss that further along. But in the midst of writing

this article I received my stockholder's annual report from Xerox, and had a number of my long-held assumptions questioned.

Tucked inside, near the front, was a benefits statement, concisely listing what Xerox's performance in the past year had meant to ME. One page. No theme. No jargon. Just measured performance. I read the entire report. I've never done that before in over a decade as a Xerox stockholder. My curiosity heightened, I ordered a new batch of annual reports from the *Wall Street Journal*. The Southern Company takes the same approach. So does Entergy. Return to stockholders is clearly posted up front with an easy to understand graphic or concise text. Searching further, I found that in Lakeland Electric's 1997 report, the inside front cover features a graphic highlighting the city's dividend from the utility.

For years we've been extolling the benefits and advantages of public power. Instead of stockholders we have citizen-owners and bondholders. But how often, in our annual reports, do we clearly quantify our benefits for our specific audience? The Xerox report immediately told me that my investment in Xerox had increased in value by 67%. Wow. That's a lot of value. But

how could this approach translate for public power?

Several instances come to mind. Each municipal electric utility has both tangible and intangible value. The key is quantifying benefits we take for granted.

- ◆ What tax savings do your city residents receive by having a public power utility? What's the actual dollar savings this represents per citizen? What's the percentage of increase?

- ◆ What dollar amount does your annual revenue transfer represent to the fire department? How many calls did the fire department respond to? How many homes were saved? What about parks and recreation? How many children took part in community programs paid for with revenue transfers? What is the dollar value of these programs? How much money did participating families save?

- ◆ If you've upgraded facilities, improved efficiency or reliability, what is the dollar amount of that investment and the



subsequent dollar value to individual customers?

♦ What programs or services did you introduce or expand that represent both a financial investment and a potential financial return to your customers?

For example, how much money did load management customers save? How many dollars did your utility invest in energy conservation audits and what is the potential customer savings? How accurate are your meter readers and what dollar amount does this accuracy represent?

In the group of 1998 annual reports received at the FMEA

office, none take this direct of an approach to quantifying their benefits. There are, however, several that stand out, either for their overall effectiveness or for specific approaches.



The **Kissimmee Utility Authority's** (KUA) 1998 Annual Report has an eye-catching design. *The Storm Let Up. We Never Did* is the very effective theme. Impressive photography and a very well-written account describe KUA's responsiveness during a devastating tornado.

**JEA's** 1998 annual report focuses on *Building Community*. Operating highlights are up front, with percentages of increases and savings detailed, and on several pages near the front, excellent graphs highlight JEA's low rates.

**OUC's** 1998 Annual Report, *The Heat Was On*, features a magazine-like format and a great contents page with catchy summaries of accomplishments. A two-page spread highlights OUC's 75 years of service and presents growth trends in an easy-to-read format.

There are many more examples of great annual reports, from FMEA members and others. In planning your utility's next report, please call me at (850) 224-3314, ext. 5, if you need examples as described above. ■

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## Stay Organized!

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- ◆ Implement the "automatic discard system" to keep files from bulging with information that is no longer needed;
- ◆ Review 25 rules for alphabetic filing that end confusion and mistakes;
- ◆ Learn clever tips for quick file retrieval;
- ◆ Discover new ways to manage "ticker" files and never again overlook an important future need.

The fee for the seminar is \$79 per person. For more information, call (800) 255-6139.

## Merchant Power Plants Workshop

PHB Hagler Bailly, Inc. is presenting a two-day workshop, *Merchant Power Plants*, June 2-3, at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City in Arlington, VA.

The workshop includes topics such as: Developing Merchant Plants, Structuring the Merchant Power

Project and US vs. International Merchant Power plants. The fee for the workshop is \$1195. For more information, call (212) 371-8320. ■

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1999

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3-4 **Florida Association of Utility Trainers Conference**, Tallahassee

28-30 **Electric Utility System Operation for Non-engineers**, Orlando

### July

20-22 **FMEA-FMPA Annual Conference**, Casa Marina, Key West

22 **FMEA Board of Directors Meeting**, Casa Marina, Key West

22 **FMEA Legal Seminar**, Casa Marina, Key West

### October

26-28 **FMEA ECW Workshop and Trade Show**, Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando



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