

RELAY



Annual Report Issue
The Value of
Good Management
Cooperative Trenching

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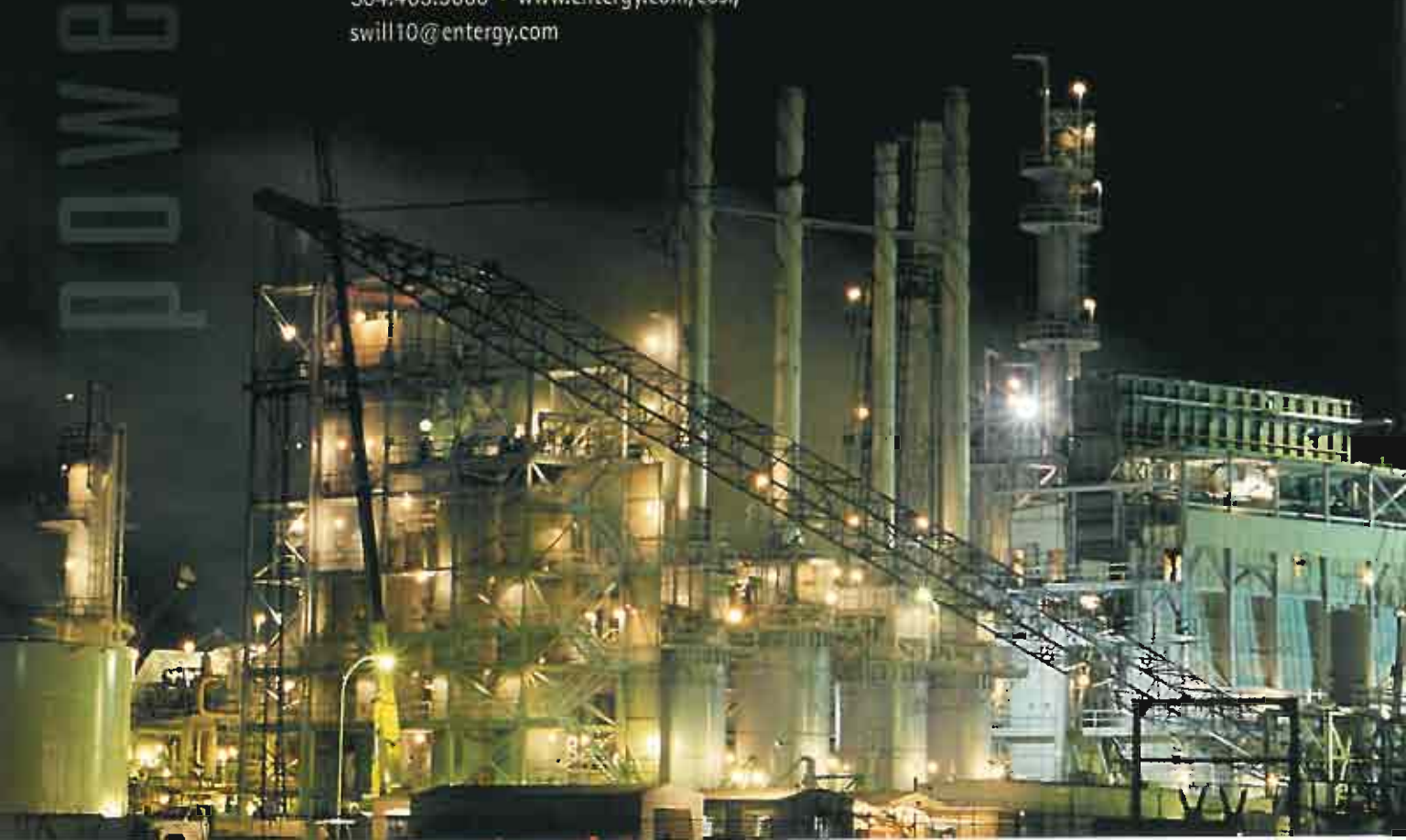


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RELAY

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If you want high customer satisfaction, you've got to add the missing ingredient: great managers.

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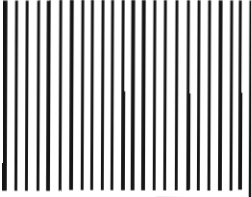


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The Value of Good Management

The key to satisfied customers is not in having a well-trained customer service staff. The key is having well-trained bosses.

That's the conclusion reached by the Gallop organization's Marcus Buckingham, who surveyed more than 400 companies over 15 years. In his research, Buckingham found that hiring bonuses, on-site day care, free massage therapy, and even high pay are not the most important factors in creating a happy staff.

For years, conventional wisdom held that high customer satisfaction depends on employees who are capable of handling any and all situations — from angry customers to utility disasters. Without question, customer service training is extremely important. But if you truly want high customer satisfaction, you've got to add the missing ingredient: great bosses.

Why great bosses? One simple reason: people like to come to work. And when they are happy at work, they treat their customers well. When customers are treated well, they are satisfied. (We'll talk about how much that is worth a bit later.)

Here are the characteristics of great bosses:

- ◆ Great bosses tell their employees what is expected of them at work.
- ◆ Great bosses provide the materials and equipment needed to do the job
- ◆ Great bosses give employees the opportunity to do what they do best every day.
- ◆ Great bosses praise and recognize employees for good work — at least once each week.
- ◆ Great bosses care about their employees as people.
- ◆ Great bosses encourage personal and professional development.

Buckingham's research found that the better the response to questions regarding

these characteristics, the better the company rated in terms of performance, productivity, employee retention, and most importantly, customer satisfaction.

It doesn't matter if the CEO is a great boss. It doesn't matter if the boss's boss is a great boss. What matters is whether the immediate boss is great. This means that every boss must be great.

The best bosses break conventional wisdom to fulfill the above six characteristics.

Sound too touchy-feely? Too subjective?

Too bad. This mountain of data shows that well-trained bosses improve company performance.

Obtaining new customers is much harder and more expensive than keeping the ones you already have. So you've got to hold on to your existing customers. And customer satisfaction is directly linked to employee satisfaction, which is directly related to the bottom line.

Jessica Thorn of the Columbia University Business School studied Sears, which calculated the value of employee satisfaction. In a study of 800 stores, when stores could raise employee satisfaction by 5 percent, store revenue went up by 0.5 percent. A mere pittance? For Sears, that's \$200 million per year!

What's the value of better employee satisfaction for your utility? **R**



Barry J. Moline
FMEA Executive Director

What matters is whether the immediate boss is great. This means that every boss must be great.

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Fort Pierce's Y2K Readiness Praised by DOE

Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) was one of 20 utilities nationwide randomly selected for a Y2K audit by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Following the audit, the review team was highly complimentary of FPUA's continuing assessment, remediation, testing, compliance implementations, and contingency planning. DOE reported that FPUA should be Y2K ready by Dec. 31, 1999, with little probability of failure.

The team also found that, after installing and testing a new SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system that is expected to be completed later this summer, FPUA will likely be Y2K ready by Sept. 30, 1999.

The North American Electric Reliability Council coordinated the review with the assistance of the American Public Power Association. FPUA was one of 20 electric utilities selected randomly from over 3,000 organizations in North America that produce, transmit or deliver electricity.

FPUA began working on Y2K compliance in the summer of 1996. Finance Director Frank Varella chairs FPUA's Information Systems Steering Committee (ISSC), which has spearheaded the utility's Y2K readiness efforts. Utilities Director Bud Boudreaux praised the work of the ISSC and of the many employees



working on Y2K subgroups.

"Early on, the ISSC adopted an excellent plan and strategy, assuring our success. It is gratifying when an independent agency like DOE expresses confidence in all that we have done. FPUA is pleased to have been randomly selected for this opportunity," said Boudreaux.

OUC Adds Transmission Tieline

Orlando's OUC has established a second transmission tieline with Florida Power & Light (FPL) in Brevard County, giving OUC a total of 15 ties with other utilities.

The newest tieline more than doubled transmission capacity between FPL and OUC's Indian River Power Plant, raising it to 1,000 megawatts (MW), according to OUC's project engineer and manager John White. Two dozen lines of optical fiber were simultaneously installed, giving the two utilities their first fiber optic link. Another 48 lines can be added in the future.

The project, completed in record time and within budget, was a joint venture between OUC and FPL,

which owns most of the new line. Both utilities had to retrofit and upgrade their sections of the existing transmission line and perform extensive work at their substations. Black and Veatch provided engineering services and most divisions of OUC's Transmission Business Unit were involved in the project.

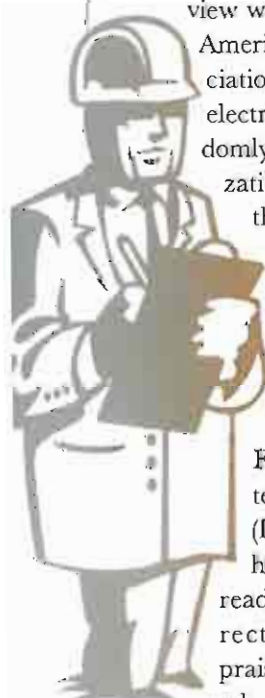
— From OUC Update, June 1999 issue.

Lakeland Celebrates 2000

Lakeland Electric has joined forces with several other organizations to put a positive focus on the upcoming Year 2000 rollover. Like utilities everywhere, Lakeland Electric employees have been working hard on Y2K remediation. Now the utility has joined forces with the Lakeland Ledger, Public Supermarkets and Lakeland Regional Medical Center to promote the Year 2000 in a positive way.

"Celebrate 2000: Envision the Future" is the message of the multi-faceted advertising campaign. For a partnership fee, Lakeland benefits from weekly advertising and logo placement on all promotion materials surrounding the monthly scheduled events, newspaper features and more.

"The impact of the Year 2000 promotion has not yet been measured, because Lakeland will see the after-effects of this celebration for many years to come," said Marketing Manager Mimi Fernandez. "For example, the Tuskegee Airman's Exhibit, which was here during Black History Month, experienced such a warm reception that their promoters extended the exhibition and plan to return to Lakeland next year."



“Lakeland Electric is connecting with the community on so many different levels, and continues to explore more ways to do so as we enter the 21st Century.”

Paper Waste Offers Possible Fuel Source

In late June, the U.S. Department of Energy announced the first in a series of grants under its new bioenergy initiative. Champion International and Georgia Pacific Corp. will receive \$1.75 million each to support the development of black liquor gasification, a new industry technology.

The new process harnesses reusable chemicals and generates electricity from pulp and paper mill waste products, leading to lower emissions, increased electric power generation, higher thermal efficien-

cies, improved operational safety, and lower capital costs. If all paper companies were to utilize the black liquor gasification technology, the industry would generate 11 to 22 gigawatts of energy a year, rather than being a significant energy consumer. In addition, this technology could cut carbon emissions annually by more than 30 million metric tons, which is equivalent to removing 6.5 million cars from the road.

GRU Receives APPA Community Service Award

The American Public Power Association (APPA) recently awarded Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) its National Community Service Award, which recognizes utilities for outstanding or sustained performance in enhancing the quality of life in their communities.

GRU’s many employee volunteer activities contributed to the utility winning the APPA National Community Service Award.

During off-hours you can find GRU employees involved in a variety of community activities, serving on the boards of many local civic and charitable organizations and working behind the scenes in all types of fundraising efforts. Among them are the March of Dimes and United Way campaigns.

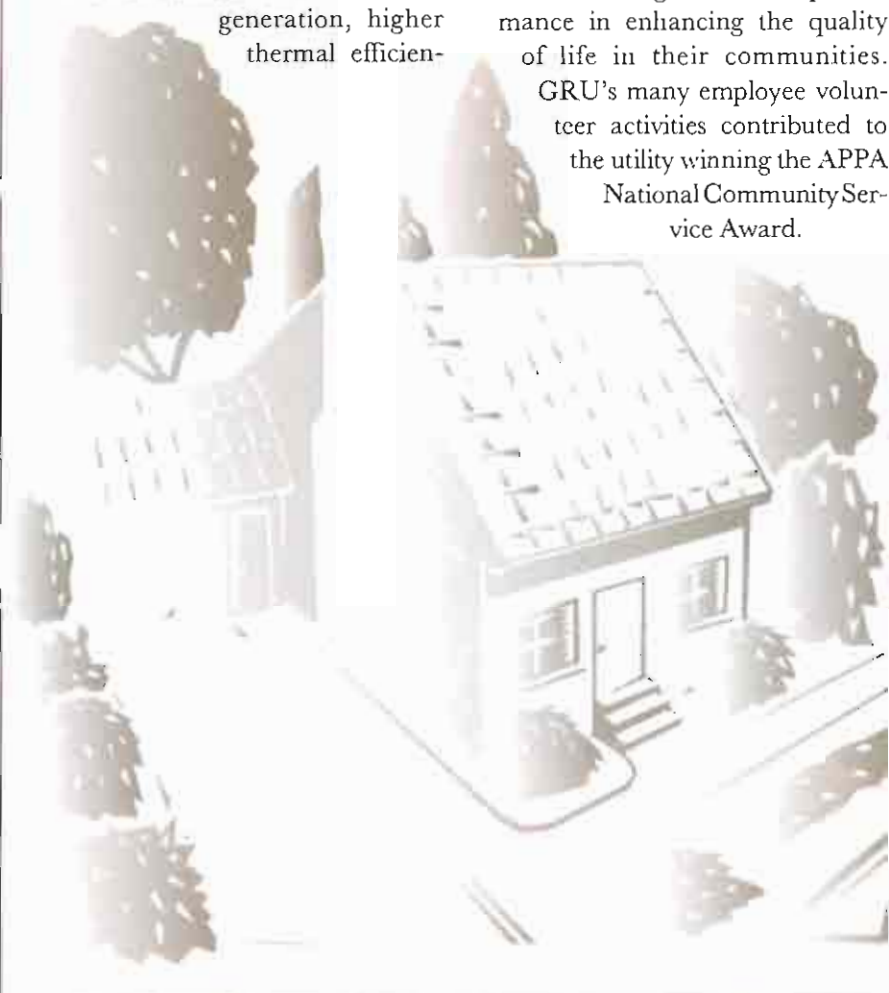
GRU employees also serve in coaching and mentoring roles in the community and with public and private schools. GRU volunteer efforts also support the University of Florida and Santa Fe Community College as sports boosters, and serve as partners in a wide variety of educational activities.

KUA Awards \$10.9-Million Generator Contract to GE

On June 16, Kissimmee Utility Authority’s (KUA) Board of Directors awarded a \$10.9-million contract to General Electric to build and install a steam turbine generator for a new generating unit at KUA’s Cane Island Power Park.

The new generator will be a 250-megawatt (MW) natural gas-fired unit with a projected in-service date of June 2001. Unit 3 joins Unit 1, a 40 MW unit, and Unit 2, a 120 MW unit, that began operation at Cane Island in 1995. Groundbreaking for the new unit is scheduled for December 1999.

Cane Island is a 1,027-acre site located nine miles southwest of Kissimmee in Intercession City. The power plant serves the energy needs of not only Osceola County residents, but residents of Bushnell, Clewiston, Fort Pierce, Green Cove Springs, Jacksonville Beach, Key West, Leesburg, Ocala, Starke, and Vero Beach. ■



PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

National experts said it wouldn't happen. Expanding competition in the electric utility industry was supposed to eliminate municipal utilities from the field of competitors. Some wove tales that community-owned electric utilities weren't smart enough to compete, weren't nimble enough to adapt, and weren't even interested enough to offer top quality services.

Public power's response to increased wholesale competition in Florida has been simple and direct: take advantage of a vibrant market. And who benefits? Our customers, who receive outstanding local service at competitive prices.

The word "government" has gotten a bad rap in recent years. Purveyors of privatization-at-any-cost have sometimes succeeded in convincing people that anything related to government is bad.

Reality, however, is much different. Local people like their local governments. They like local service. They like being served by their neighbors. They like electing their local leaders. There are no chains or franchises in local government.

The service provided by municipal electric utilities is one of the finest examples of local government in action. Community owned utilities are responsive to local citizens' needs. That is our legacy and our future.



Left, Barry Moline; right, Byron Knibbs

Byron Knibbs
FMEA President

Barry Moline
FMEA Executive Director

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LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REPORT

Municipal electric utilities enjoyed a relatively quiet legislative session. Nevertheless, FMEA's legislative staff dealt with a wide array of utility issues:

- ◆ A proposal to roll back the tax rate on electricity was first scooped back, but never passed the Senate;
- ◆ A much heralded tax rebate of excess state general revenue funds was never taken up in the Senate and consequently never became law;
- ◆ House Bill 867 passed the Legislature, making changes to the force account statute but retaining an existing electric and gas exemption.



- ◆ The Commerce Protection Act relating to Y2K liabilities, Senate Bill 80, passed with a number of protections added for local governments and businesses.

- ◆ Early in the session, the PSC ruled that the Duke/New Smyrna Beach merchant plant application could proceed, generating discussion in the Legislature as to whether merchant plants should be permitted to use the Power Plant Siting Act. No legislation on this controversial subject was passed,

allowing the project to continue through the regulatory approval process.

- ◆ Eminent Domain legislation passed, including a provision to exclude utilities from paying attorney's fees in certain condemnation situations.

- ◆ A rural economic development bill was passed to help develop infrastructure in rural areas, but excludes funding construction of electric projects that would compete with incumbent suppliers.

- ◆ In the last hours of the 1999 session, the state's electric cooperatives successfully introduced and passed legislation that allows them to provide both "energy and non-energy services" to their members for the purpose of economic development, but does not strictly limit them to economic development purposes. The effects of this legislation are still under discussion.



REGULATORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A series of tools were developed and sent to all FMEA members for "off-the-shelf" utilization:

- ◆ Model cable-TV franchise ordinance;
- ◆ Model joint pole-attachment agreement;
- ◆ Model utility authority charter;
- ◆ Model Y2K response letters.

FMEA represented its members and developed responses for a number of important issues before the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC):

- ◆ Medically Essential Electric Service Tariffs;
- ◆ Merchant Plant Docket (ongoing);
- ◆ Reserve Margins Docket for generation (ongoing);

- ◆ RTO (regional transmission organization) workshop on independent transmission system operator options (ongoing);
- ◆ Y2K readiness.

FMEA represented its members' interests on a number of important Department of Revenue issues:

- ◆ Possible sales tax exemption on transmission and distribution purchases for repairs, replacements, and refurbishment is being pursued with DOR, and a Petition for Declaratory Statement, or, alternatively, a Petition for Rulemaking, has been filed at the DOR seeking an interpretation of recent

statutory changes that could give FMEA members a sales tax exemption.

- ◆ Nursing home sales tax exemptions were coordinated with DOR, and a *pro forma* Sales Tax Exemption Certificate was prepared and approved for use by DOR.

Y2K ASSISTANCE

As with most organizations, Y2K remediation was a priority at FMEA throughout the year, and continues to be addressed through a broad array of processes:

- ◆ FMEA Members were regularly informed of the latest legal and statutory developments dealing with Y2K issues.

- ◆ Model Y2K response letters were prepared for FMEA Members to utilize in answering vendor and customer inquiries on Y2K readiness. Appropriate disclaimer language was also prepared to incorporate the benefits of federal legislation dealing with Y2K liabilities.

- ◆ An in-depth analysis of recently-passed Florida legislation dealing with Y2K liability issues, and suggested tariff language to be filed at the PSC in order to obtain a Y2K liability shield were developed and distributed to all FMEA Members.

- ◆ The FMEA Y2K Seminar, held in May, included a presentation on Y2K-related legal issues.



COMMITTEE & DEPARTMENT REPORTS



ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS (E&O) COMMITTEE

Chair: Kenneth L. Davis, Kissimmee

Vice Chair: Pete N. Lindburgh, Vero Beach

The Engineering and Operations Committee met once in 1999 at the Energy Connections Workshop. Representatives from generation and T&D departments discussed issues they are working on and ways they can solve current problems.

At the workshop, E&O presentations included network meter reading; improved reliability through better tree trimming; disaster preparedness and lessons learned from tornadoes in Kissimmee and Hurricane Georges in Key West; new revenue opportunities in telecommunications; the pros and cons of ISOs; the issues surrounding purchasing power versus building a power plant; lessons learned from power market price spikes; merchant plants; partnering in power plant O&M, pollution prevention; and distributed generation issues.



ENERGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES (ECCS) COMMITTEE

Chair: Jean Henning, Ocala

Vice Chair: Chris Gent, Kissimmee

The ECCS Committee focuses on developing educational opportunities and tools for customer services and communications professionals in the electric utility industry. The committee meets quarterly. Networking and information exchanges are an integral part of the group's meetings.

This year the committee established a Key Accounts Group to facilitate the exchange of ideas and programs among key accounts representatives statewide. One of the group's goals is to enhance communication between key accounts representatives to better serve mutual customers such as national accounts. The group plans to provide training to key accounts representatives to enhance skill levels for handling large commercial accounts.

The committee held its annual Mid-Year Workshop in Gainesville. The highlight was an excellent training session on the manager/supervisor's role in customer service.

FMEA honored 14 cities for outstanding community service programs during the Annual Conference.



SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chair: Tommy Buchanan, Gainesville

Vice Chair: Karen Robinson, Ocala

FMEA's Safety Committee meets quarterly so that representatives of Florida's public power utilities can enhance their safety preparation and training, and share safety procedures and processes. The group held its annual workshop and trade show in Moy, which highlighted

current safety issues and offered product networking opportunities. This year's meetings were held at the Lakeland Center. Most conferees attended a valuable workshop on field supervisory training.

Twenty member cities received safety awards during the FMEA-FMPA Annual Conference awards luncheon. Nine cities received plaques for overall perfect records and best incidence rates for 1998. Another eleven cities were awarded certificates for perfect records in specific categories of employee operations.

ENERGY CONNECTIONS WORKSHOP AND TRADE SHOW

The Energy Connections Workshop was held in Kissimmee. Deregulation issues were the premiere topic at the general session, with an update on deregulation issues, lessons learned in Europe, and viewing deregulation as an opportunity. A Business and Financial concurrent session was added this year. The workshop offered four concurrent session tracks:

- Generation and Power Supply
- Transmission and Distribution
- Energy, Communications and Customer Service
- Business and Financial

Business and Financial professionals met for the first time in 1999 at the Energy Connections Workshop and Trade Show. Topics discussed included: GASB, making effective financial presentations to policymakers and rating agencies, and unbundling costs and designing rates.

The trade show continued its growth tradition with 48 booths, offering products and services such as distribution hardware, customer service, billing and SCADA software, Internet partnerships, energy services, safety clothing, training materials and power generation services.

EFMEA UTILITY TRAINING INSTITUTE

FMEA's Utility Training Institute was unveiled with an in-house safety program. FMEA's program offers on "a la Carte" design, where members can choose training sessions ranging from technical to general safety modules. A Safety Training and Service Program brochure is available for members to select from over 20 training modules and services.

FMEA sponsored a workshop: "Y2K: It's Crunch Time, Are We Ready?" with speakers from the State of Florida, and regional critical-infrastructure representatives to discuss preparedness, legal and technical issues. A three-day workshop, "Electricity Utility Systems Operations for the Non-Engineer" was extremely valuable, with utility professionals from across the United States attending.

FMEA continues to build a strong relationship with Florida's electric cooperatives, inviting representatives to all FMEA training meetings, the FMEA-FMPA Annual Conference and the Energy Connections Workshop and Trade Show.

TRAINING 1998-1999

- Utility Threat of Service Training
- Enhancing Your Public Image
- Valuing Customers Skills and Strategies
- Y2K Workshop
- GIS User Group Workshop
- Field Supervisory Training
- Safety Workshop and Exhibit
- Manager/Supervisory Role in Customer Service
- ECOS Mid-Year Workshop
- Key Accounts Relationship Development
- Electricity Utility System Operations
- Residential Energy Audits Training



Florida's **PUBLIC POWER** NETWORK

F FMEA COMMUNICATIONS

FMEA continues to reach its members through a diverse menu of communication tools:

◆ The March 1999 issue of *Relay Magazine* brought a totally redesigned magazine with a four-color cover and the use of color throughout each issue. A new monthly column is Best Practices, which details utility programs that are worth a closer look.

◆ The 1999 Membership Directory was expanded to meet our members' needs, and now incorporates legislative and mutual aid directories as well as regular member information.

◆ Florida's Public Power Network, FMEA's web site, has been under development since the end of 1998, and is scheduled to go live before the Annual Conference. The web site incorporates news, an associate member buyers guide, threaded discussions, a live chat area, and allows access to FMEA's most popular publications. On-line registration for training and conferences is also available.

◆ The Energy Brief continues to highlight important restructuring news.

◆ The Management Information Service is published periodically and is being converted to a web-based format, with relevant news clips that are searchable.



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Cooperative Trenching Gets Results

by Dan Jesse
GRU Public Information Editor

Joint trenching saves time and money, lessens the inconvenience for the public — and invites innovative cooperation.

For Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), the University of Florida's (UF) new Hotel and Convention Center provided an excellent opportunity to try a simpler and better way to perform joint trenching. The object of joint trenching is to lay conduit for more than one utility at the same time, resulting in a more efficient and public-friendly work process.

Bill Stormant, Electric Utility Engineer II, and John Raimer, Electrical Engineering Technician II, agree that the experimental way that the UF project was approached was an unqualified success. Stormant performed the up-front design and Raimer and Distribution Manager John Welch oversaw the daily construction operations. Both gave credit to Gas System Operations Director Tommy Brazeal for offering the services of the Gas Department to make this joint trenching project something special.

Stormant said, "The idea was to allow the Gas Department personnel to lay the conduit for four different utilities — Gas, Electric, GRUCom and General Government's Traffic Engineering. The concept of joint trenching takes efficiency to a certain point, but the concept of allowing one team to lay all of the conduit takes it to the next level."

This method eliminated the necessity to coordinate the needs of four different utility crews trying to work in the same place at the same time. Both Stormant and Raimer said the result was a project that ran as "smooth as silk." GRU was able to join with General Government's Traffic Engineering Department to share the costs by piggybacking all four utilities in a project that laid four to five miles of pipe in four weeks.

Brazeal made this an even more efficient task by agreeing to have his crews, Crew Leader Lee Gottschalk, Equipment Operator John Jenkins, and Construction Workers Fred Howard and Kevin Osborn (with the assistance of Electric Lead Line Worker Henry

Hines) lay all the pipe. As a result, the project went smoothly. Raimer and Hines received cross training in gas, and the gas crews received cross training in electric.

Raimer reported that this was the first time all of these utilities had ever been placed together in one trench by one GRU crew.

Raimer said, "I have never seen a job go more smoothly. There were no problems, no delays and it finished ahead of schedule. I was really impressed with the project from start to finish. Tommy Brazeal had a real 'can-do' attitude. He said it would be 'no problem' and had a positive attitude the whole way."

According to Raimer the idea was made possible by the formation of the new Energy Delivery Department. He felt this type of cooperation would have happened eventually, but as a result of the new organization it happened much sooner.

He said, "Joint trenching is a necessity of modern growth patterns. We are putting bigger buildings in smaller spaces and more buildings on less land."

Raimer said that he thought this type of cooperation was good for GRU in the eyes of the customers, who will see this as an excellent example of internal cooperation and efficiency.

He added, "This was an important job for GRU, both for community relations, UF relations and financially. It shows we know how to communicate and cooperate to do a job better than the competition." ■

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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

August

- 10 **ECCS Committee Meeting**, Orlando
19 **Safety Committee Meeting**, Tampa
25 **Deregulation Simulation Workshop**, Ocala
31-
Sept. 1 **Communicating with the Media**, Orlando

September

- 13-17 **Lineman Apprenticeship (B-LAB) Correspondence Lab Program**, Sumterville
15 **Deregulation Simulation Workshop**, Fort Pierce

October

- 20-22 **Advanced Lineworker—Phase II**, Sumterville
26-27 **FMEA Energy Connections Workshop and Trade Show**, Radisson Twin Towers at the entrance to Universal Studios, Orlando
28 **FMEA Safety Committee Meeting**, Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando
FMEA ECCS Committee Meeting, Radisson Twin Towers, Orlando
FMEA Engineering & Operations Committee Meeting, Orlando

November

- 9-10 **Business Strategies Workshop**, Orlando

Nov. 29-

- Dec. 3 **Lineman Apprenticeship (C-LAB) Correspondence Lab Program**, Sumterville

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