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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GMCA
September 2018

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FPL BLOWS \$3 BILLION HEADS UNDERGROUND

By Eric Berkowitz

Florida's energy infrastructure was slammed by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne in 2004 and Dennis, Katrina and Wilma in 2005. Hurricane Wilma ripped windows and exterior doors from buildings, turned cars into pinballs, gobbled up chunks of beach like popcorn and otherwise hammered FPL's then 4.3 million customers. Whacking the electrical grid, Wilma snapped or toppled more than 11,000 of FPL's support poles and damaged almost 100 transmission structures - the large wide-open towers that carry power to the main feeder lines.

FPL's high-voltage Levee - Midway transmission line connects Midway Substation in St. Lucie County to Levee Substation in Miami-Dade County via the Corbett and Conservation Substations in Palm Beach and Broward Counties. Flawed with defective bolts, 30 steel line poles between the Corbett and Conservation Substations cascaded as they fell when Wilma knocked them over like bowling pins. The severed 500 kV transmission line blocked juice to 233 substations while another 8 substations experienced major damage, plummeting the grid into chaos.

To dampen the cycle of cyclonic destruction and power failures - typically followed by a huge ratepayer funded recovery assessment - on April 25, 2006, the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) issued Order Number PSC-06-035 1-PAA-E, requiring FPL and the state's other investor-owned utilities to create storm-hardening plans that would "minimize future storm damages and customer outages" - hurricane preparedness measures that shield the grid's most vulnerable elements from windstorm and storm surge.

FPSC Neutered

After consumer watchdog FPSC denied an unjustifiable massive rate increase in 2010, four of the regulatory panel's five members were booted out - either deprived of Senate confirmation or omitted from the Governor's nominating list. Hand-picked by Governor Scott, their replacements once again resumed a historical practice of rubber-stamping power company wet dreams. FPSC antics were thereafter documented in a 2014 report and a subsequent 2018 follow-up by non-partisan government watchdog "Integrity Florida".

While approving a 2014 industry proposal to gut Florida's energy-efficiency goals by more than 90 percent and voting for every requested rate hike, including an FPL surcharge to recover an investment of up to \$191 million in a speculative fracking venture in Oklahoma (reversed by the Florida Supreme Court in 2016), industry puppets that controlled the FPSC sat mute as the utilities played a shell game with their order to minimize outages.

A year after FPL Group shareholders voted to change the company's name to NextEra Energy in 2010, Eric Silagy was named President of subsidiary Florida Power & Light Company, adding the CEO crown in 2014. Silagy and other FPL executives declared that outages primarily caused by debris and vegetation hitting power lines could not be prevented by hardening the grid.

Continued on page 10

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

Chip LaMarca's JULY 2018 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

In his July 2018 LaMarca Letter, District 4 Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca flags his recognition by the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) as a Presidential Advocate along with six other Broward Commissioners – and his receipt of FAC's prestigious 2018 President's "Commitment to Service" Award; imparts how the FAA credited Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) for its outstanding safety protocols; reports that an FLL public artwork display entitled Wavelength has been honored by the Americans for the Arts; heralds the Port Everglades installation of PORTS (Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - thereby providing real-time environmental and meteorological data to improve marine navigation; and closes with news about Broward County cornering 14 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties for innovative County government programs.

Superliner Collisions

Since more than 95 percent of U.S. international trade moves through the nation's ports and harbors, with about 50 percent of those goods being hazardous materials, the potential risks to maritime commerce and the coastal environment are daunting. As few available technologies address this danger, the attendant loss of life and cargo as well as catastrophic ecosystem impacts were long considered unavoidable – the cost of doing business.

For example, commercial vessels in the United States were involved in nearly 12,000 collisions, allisions, and groundings from 1996 through 2000. The 1989 Exxon VALDEZ navigational lapse cost more than \$2 billion and destroyed 1,300 miles of sensitive coastal habitats. In 2004, NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS), Office of Response and Restoration responded to over 120 events, including the release of 270,000 gallons of crude oil into the Delaware River near Philadelphia, and a spill of over 400,000 gallons of bunker oil in Alaska. More recently, marine accidents killed 1,163 people and caused \$197 million in insured losses in 2017.

By integrating real-time environmental data (water levels, tides, currents, wave force and periodicity, salinity, bridge air gap) and meteorological parameters (wind speed and direction, atmospheric pressure, air and water temperatures) with forecasts and other geospatial information, and tailoring the output to the needs of local destination ports, the NOAA PORTS® program effectively mitigates those risks.

The danger expands in lock step with the commercial incentive to move cargo in ever-larger ships fitted with deepening drafts. Since Port Everglades has evolved into one of the few East Coast ports capable of berthing Post-Panamax monster vessels, the surrounding community and offshore marine environment have become increasingly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of a navigational misstep. The system affords large vessels an adequate mar-

gin of safety while allowing port operators to maximize port throughput.

Although a topic typically avoided by port officials, ships accessing the port were at a serious navigational disadvantage. As observed by Port Everglades Deputy Port Director Glenn Wiltshire, "Before this equipment went into service, mariners had to rely on data for Lake Worth in Palm Beach County, or from Virginia Key in Miami to estimate conditions here." Some used a Ouija board.

The first PORTS® system was established in 1991 at Tampa, Florida, and has since spread across the nation. The system scope and sensor array at each seaport are tailored to meet its specific needs. In Port Everglades, NOAA installed a Micro-Wave water level sensor (MWWL) - a non-contact highly accurate sensor used to measure distance and monitor long-term sea level changes. A back-up pressure-based sensor measures water-level. Wind speed and direction are provided by a meteorological station outfitted with primary back-up wind sensors and placed on the roof of the Port's Harbormaster Tower.

*Soliciting the system was initially an advocacy brainchild of the Broward County Environmental Planning & Community Resilience Division, which co-sponsored the PORTS device, although a portion of the equipment costs were funded by a grant from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND). The Division is headed by Dr. Jennifer Jurado, who was also named the County's Chief Resilience Officer in 2016. Not too shabby. Peruse LaMarca's July 2018 message to constituents elsewhere in this edition. - [editor]**





Chip LaMarca's JULY 2018 Newsletter

and knowledge, wildlife control, Foreign Object Debris, emergency response, and Airport Rescue and Fire Fighter response and training. I am extremely happy to report that the FAA inspectors were highly complimentary of the hard work that they witnessed from the Broward County Aviation Department team.

In other airport news, a public artwork display at FLL has been honored by the Americans for the Arts as a 2017 outstanding public art project through the Public Art Network Year in Review Program. Newly built in Concourse A at Terminal 1, the display entitled "Wave-length" is a massive metal structure that appears to float weightlessly with gradient colors and shapes that change as you move. Broward's FLL is such an important gateway and I am excited that Broward County continues to provide opportunities for great pieces of public art that help improve our residents' and visitors' experience. For more information please visit Broward.org/Arts/PublicArt.

Port Everglades Update

I was proud to join Broward County's Port Everglades and the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) to announce a new system that offers public access to real-time tides, currents, water levels and other meteorological information thanks to an advanced sensor device developed and installed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The newly installed Port Everglades Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS®) is a decision support tool that measures and disseminates observations and predictions of water levels, currents and meteorological parameters that mariners need to navigate safely. Boaters and commercial mariners will be able to make safer choices based on the data from this equipment. Additionally, this equipment is collecting data about our natural resources that we can apply to preparations for storms, climate changes and sea level rise. PORTS® is available on the Port's website at porteverglades.net (top of the homepage under "Tides & Currents") or via phone at 866-213-5269.

Broward County Programs Recognized Nationally

Broward County has been recognized by the National Association of Counties with 14 Achievement Awards for innovative and effective County government programs that enhance services for residents in many different areas. The County was recognized for four environmental preservation and conservation programs which include: the Future Conditions Map Series: Groundwater Elevation Map, the Manatee Mobile App, Upland Mangrove Enhancement, and the Marine Environmental Education Center. The County received recognition for two Employment Assistance programs: the Transitional Employment Pilot Program, and the Community Recovery Aides Program. Also recognized within the "Helping Residents Connect with County Government" category was the Veterans Connect Program, the Active Learning Center at Broward County Libraries, and the Free Music Partnership Program. Additionally, the County was recognized for the Wide-Area Spray Truck Larvicide Technology, and the Special Needs Registry App. Internal training programs were also recognized: the Recording 6-week training program, the Recording Negotiable Instruments/Know Your Money initiative and the Climate Change Toolbox training program which was created by County employees for County employees. Broward County continues to be innovative with a multitude of programs and services being offered.

As always, it is my honor and privilege to serve you.
Best regards

Chip

Dear Broward County Residents,

I am honored to serve as your County Commissioner representing our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale and all of the amazing cities, towns and villages in between. Here are some recent highlights from around Broward County:

Commitment to Service Award

It was a tremendous honor for me to receive the 2018 President's "Commitment to Service" Award from the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), which was presented at the FAC Annual Conference and Educational Expo Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, June 27th. Representing Broward County as a FAC member over the past eight years has been an extremely rewarding experience. The Florida Association of Counties works on behalf of Florida's 67 counties to advocate for home rule and legislation that is vital to the quality of life for all of our residents.

I have had the great pleasure of being appointed to Chair the FAC Finance and Tax Policy Committee for a number of years. I have also served on the FAC Board of Directors, Legislative Executive Committee, Finance & Audit Committee, Urban Caucus, as well as various committees with the National Association of Counties. I am most proud of completing the Certified County Commissioner training program as well as the Advanced County Commissioner program. I was also thrilled to join six of my colleagues as we were recognized as Presidential Advocates by FAC for our work during the 2018 Legislative Session.

FLL Update

Broward County's Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) recently received an extraordinary achievement for "zero discrepancies" by the Federal Aviation Administration. FLL is in the midst of a major expansion program with several ongoing construction projects, therefore achieving this accomplishment is a tremendous tribute and speaks to FLL's dedicated team. The Federal Aviation Regulations Part 139 certification is an annual inspection that reviews the Airport's compliance with the FAA's airfield safety requirements. It includes the inspection of 102,000 linear feet of airfield markings, 500+ airfield signs, 3,000+ runway/taxiway lights, safety areas, staff training



Commissioner Chip LaMarca

President's "Commitment to Service" Award

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SEPT/OCT

SUN	MON	TUE	WED
2 SunTrust Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-396-3622	3 Labor Day Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	4 Fort Lauderdale Cty Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	5 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-406
9 Erev Rosh Hashana	10 Fort Lauderdale Job Fair Embassy Suites by Hilton Fort Lauderdale 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 1-866-838-5111	11 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	12 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-406 Fall Business Expo 2018 Broward Convention Center 4 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-838-9644
16 Farmers Market El Prado Park, LBTS 9 am to 2 p.m. Info.: 561-714-2745 Davie PAL Kids Triathlon Bamford Park Pine Island Aquatic Center 8 a.m. Info.: 954-321-2561	17 Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	18 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268 Erev Yom Kippur Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	19 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-406
23 Farmers Market El Prado Park, LBTS 9 am to 2 p.m. Info.: 561-714-2745 Erev Sukkot	24	25 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268	26 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-406 March of Dimes Signature Chefs Auction Ritz-Carlton (Ft. Lauderdale) 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Info.: 754-300-2614
30	1 Commissioner Heather Moraitis: Beach Community Center, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	2 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	3 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-406

SEPT 8: Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Kids Expo, Museum of Discovery and Science, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 305-521-5100
 SEPT 8: Davie Pro Rodeo, Davie Pro Rodeo Arena, 7:30 p.m., Info.: 954-680-8005
 SEPT 8-9: Florida Gun & Knife Show, South Florida Fairgrounds (WPB), Info.: 321-777-7455
 SEPT 14: Culinary Arts Showcase & Moonlit Movie, Movie: Coco, Jaco Pastorius Park (Oakland Park), 6:30 to 10 p.m., Info.: 954-630-4507
 SEPT 14-16: West Palm Beach Fall Home Show, South Florida Fairgrounds (WPB), Info: 855-523-5311
 SEPT 14-16: Marine Flea Market and Seafood Festival, South Florida Fairgrounds (WPB), Info.: 954-205-7813
 SEPT 15: Paddle with a Purpose, Reverend Samuel Delevoe Memorial Park (Ft. Lauderdale), 9 to 11 a.m., Info.: 917-652-1050
 SEPT 15: Citywide Yard Sales, Jaco Pastorius Park (Oakland Park), 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Info.: 954-630-4505
 SEPT 15-16: Aroid Society Show and Sale, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Miami, 10:30 a.m., Info.: Fairchildgarden.org
 SEPT 22: ZERO Prostate Cancer Run/Walk, Markham Park, 8 to 11 a.m., Info.: 202-303-3110
 SEPT 22-23: Downtown Delray Beach Craft Festival, 330 E Atlantic Ave. (Delray), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Info.: 561-746-6615
 SEPT 29: Miami Broward Junior Carnival, Central Broward Regional Park (Lauderhill), Info.: 954-494-4483
 OCT 2: Big Bad BBQ, Danto Builders (5601 Powerline Rd.), Fort Lauderdale, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Info.: 352-243-9536
 OCT 4: Art of Wine & Food: Wicked Wines, NSU Art Museum, 6 to 8 p.m., Info.: 954-262-0258

ONE SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

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LOTS HAPPENING IN TOWN!

<p>6</p> <p>Art of Wine & Food Series: Colors of Fall NSU Art Museum 6 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-525-5500</p>	<p>7</p> <p>First Friday Food Trucks Flamingo Gardens 5 to 9 p.m. Info.: www.flamingogardens.org</p> <p>Lipstick Lounge Gallery of Amazing Things (481 S. Federal Highway), Dania Beach 8 to 11 p.m. Info.: sweetmessages1@gmail.com</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Davie Pro Rodeo Davie Pro Rodeo Arena 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-680-8005</p> <p>Celebrity Chefs Food Tasting & Auction Hard Rock Live 6:30 to 10:45 p.m. Info.: 954-584-8000 X 361</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Disney on Ice (Through 9/16) BB&T Center Tix.: http://www.thebbtcenter.com</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Asia America Trade Show (Through 9/16) Miami Beach Convention Center Info.: 305-262-3200</p> <p>West Palm Beach Fall Home Show (Through 9/16) South Florida Expo Center - South Florida Fairgrounds Info.: 855-523-5311</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Tunnel To Towers 5K Run & Walk Huizenga Park 7:30 a.m. Info.: 718-987-1931</p> <p>Naked Feet 5K Ft Lauderdale Beach Park 8 a.m. Info.: 402-218-6966</p>
<p>20</p> <p>G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Friday Night Soundwaves Fort Lauderdale Beach Hub (Las Olas & A1A) Performer: Fireside Prophets 6 to 9 p.m. Info.: fridaynightsoundwaves.com</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Kids' Fishing Derby Welleby Park (Sunrise) 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Info.: 954-747-4600</p> <p>Riverwalk Fall Festival Esplanade Park Noon to 4 p.m. Info.: 954-468-1541, Ext. 208</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>The Best Bead Show (Through 9/30) DoubleTree Hotel (Miami) Info.: 610-241-8329</p>	<p>29</p> <p>The Greatest Bowlerman Strikes @ Boca 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-564-3512</p> <p>Rock the Dock Concert Series Shooters Waterfront 3 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954.566.2855</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Eat Your Heart Out Culinary Feast 2018 Galleria Mall 6 to 8:30 p.m. Info.: 954-918-3008</p> <p>Broward County Condo & HOA Expo Broward County Convention Center 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. 8:30 a.m.: Seminars Start Info.: 952-881-5030</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Miami Int'l Auto Show (Through 10/14) Miami Beach Convention Center Info.: 305-981-1448</p> <p>Oktoberfest (Through 10/7) Jaco Pastorius Park Info.: 954-630-4507</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Chefs Helping the Homeless Art Institute of Ft Lauderdale Chef's Palatte Restaurant 6 to 10:45 p.m. Info.: 954-832-7037</p> <p>"Fall Fiesta Salon" Exhibit Broward Art Guild 6:30 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-537-3370</p>

OCTOBER 7

Harvest Festival
Flamingo Gardens
9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info.: 954-473-2955

OCTOBER 7

Dunn's Run
Ocean Way & SE 2nd St., Deerfield Beach
7:30 a.m.
Info.: 954-537-1010

OCTOBER 12-14

Oktoberfest
5111 Lantana Rd., Lake Worth
Fri: 5 to 11 p.m.; Sat: Noon to 11 p.m.; Sun: Noon to 8 p.m.
Info.: 561-967-6464

OCTOBER 13

Glam Doll Strut
Esplanade Park
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Info.: 954-298-5607

OCTOBER 13

Susan G. Komen More Than Pink Walk
Bayfront Park Miami
6:30 a.m. to Noon
Info.: 954-909-0454

OCTOBER 13-14

Treasure Coast Marine Flea Market and Seafood Festival
Indian River Fairgrounds (7955 58th Ave.), Vero Beach
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-205-7813

OCTOBER 13-14

Treasure Coast Boat Show
Indian River Fairgrounds (7955 58th Ave.), Vero Beach
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info.: 954-205-7813

OCTOBER 20

Smoke on the Water BBQ Feast & Competition
Esplanade Park
11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-468-1541, Ext. 208

First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: 954-776-1000
First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info.: 954-537-3370
Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Hub, 300 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 954-709-3197
Second Saturday of Every Month: Burlock Coast Farmer's Market, Burlock Coast at the The Ritz-Carlton, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: myfortlauderdalebeach.com
Second Tuesday of Every Month: Orchid Greenhouse Tours, Bonnet House, 11 a.m. to Noon, Info.: 954-703-2606
Mondays: Food Trucks at Artspark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood
Thursdays: BHIP Farmer's Market, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Arts Pavilion (633 N Federal Hwy.), 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736
Sundays: Las Olas Sunday Market, 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-426-8436
Sundays (through May): Farmer's Market at El Prado Park, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 561-714-2745
Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info.: 954-384-0442

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT WWW.GALTMILE.COM

Spinning the FPSC objective as an exercise in futility, instead, FPL soaked ratepayers for \$3 billion to implement a Chinese menu of improvements. While some funds were invested in component upgrades, most of the \$3 billion was used to expedite post-storm power restoration - which FPL publicly pitched as a "hardening project". At the annual FPL storm drill in May 2017, Silagy sought to justify having circumvented the FPSC objective, announcing "Understand that in a severe storm, we are going to have power outages, no matter how strengthened the grid is, no matter how smart it is."

\$3 billion Down the Rabbit Hole

The revised improvements included strengthening 600 main power lines servicing more than 700 critical community facilities, placing more than 450 main power lines underground, clearing vegetation from more than 135,000 miles of power line corridors while inspecting, upgrading or replacing more than 1.2 million poles. They also installed 4.8 million smart meters and 36,000 intelligent devices along the electric grid, enabling the semi-interactive pinpointing of grid problems and the occasional remote restoration of power.

FPL officials cited Hurricane Irma as the new system's first real test. After making its first U.S. landfall at Cudjoe Key, Hurricane Irma knocked out power to 90 percent of FPL's 5 million customer accounts — 10 million people — in 35 Florida counties. Irma deprived more Floridians of power than any storm in history - not exactly a ringing endorsement of FPL's eleven-year hardening plan.

In the wake of Hurricane Irma, the "Big Dog" of Florida energy utilities — and the third largest in the U.S. — raced to restore lost power across the state. Hoping to stave off the collective ill will of millions without power, Silagy said, "We've never had that many outages, and I don't think any utility in the country ever has. It is by far and away the largest in the history of our company." Did the \$3 billion expenditure FPL customers paid for in their bills make a difference?

Unhappy Campers

FPL spokesman and NextEra Energy Resources Communications

Manager Bryan Garner said yes, exclaiming how the post-Irma effort to restore power was four times faster than it was for Wilma. It took more than a month to recover power cut by Wilma, but power was fully restored 10 days after Irma moved north. However, Garner neglected to mention that despite its huge footprint, Irma danced up the Florida peninsula as a tropical Storm with sustained winds that dropped from 130 MPH to 60 MPH a few hours after making landfall. Large but disorganized, Irma only toppled 1,200 to 1,500 poles as a result of fallen trees, along with some infrastructure damage on the west coast — in contrast with the catastrophic grid damage and 11,000 poles downed by Wilma.

Since more than 21,500 workers had converged on Florida to rescue the grid, including FPL vegetation and line workers, support staff and people from 30 states and Canada, some municipal officials questioned why many local neighborhoods were deprived of power for a week and a half, given the huge labor force and the relatively minor damage responsible for the vast majority of outages. The City of Coral Gables filed a class action suit accusing the utility of dragging its feet.

The FPSC is once again showing a pulse. When the Governor recently adopted a more centrist public persona for his planned Senate run, the FPSC slowly returned to advocating on behalf of consumers. During the 2004 – 2005 serial hurricanes, former Governor Jeb Bush added 31 points to his approval rating by visiting devastated neighborhoods with Emergency Response officials armed with supplies and services. Taking a page from his predecessor's playbook, when Scott air-hopped around the State during Hurricane Irma and promised to turn the lights back on, it cleared the way for the FPSC to finally review compliance with its 11-year old 2006 order.

The Undergrounding Controversy

Notwithstanding FPL efforts to spin their hardening program as successful despite record outages, angry ratepayers contend that their \$3 billion was misspent, and should have been used to better protect the grid from outages, as mandated by the original FPSC order. State legislators, local officials, FPL customers and re-empowered FPSC appointees are questioning why FPL didn't spend the money on relocating more utility lines underground.

FPL spokespersons had been quick to point out that underground lines are susceptible to flooding and face the same problems as above-ground lines when transformers, substations or other infrastructure goes offline. However, local officials and rate-payers discounted these admonitions as self-serving corporate excuses. In fact, except for an underground line damaged by an uprooted tree in Homestead, the roughly 40 percent of FPL's 67,000 miles of distribution or neighborhood power lines that are already underground were unmolested by Irma.

After Wilma, when much of Fort Lauderdale lost power, the Galt Mile wasn't exempted by its interred power infrastructure. A few days later, former Galt Mile President Bob Rozema called then Mayor Jim Naugle in the late afternoon, exhorting, "I need the power back within 24 hours." By dusk, the Galt Mile was lit up like a Christmas Tree. It only took a few hours to locate and repair minor damage to an above ground feeder line.

Although underground lines rarely suffer damage, when they do, the need to first locate and disinter a line break can delay the restoration of power to connected homes and businesses. With the possible exception of underground lines installed for future communities on undeveloped land, interring lines can be an expensive enterprise, even though Power companies often contribute 25 percent of the cost — as required by state regulators.

Costs vary depending on the terrain or whether a site is already cluttered with buried utility lines for water, sewer, gas, internet, cable TV and/or telephones. Florida Power & Light spokesman Bill Orlove estimates that the cost of moving above ground lines

Continued on page 14

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EDITOR'S COMMENTARY

District 1 City Commissioner HEATHER MORAITIS' JULY 2018 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

**In her July 2018 Newsletter, District 1 City Commissioner Heather Moraitis welcomes a Commission decision to green light a Hensel Phelps Construction Co. proposal for renovating the fast decomposing Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex, the heart of the city's century-long swimming and diving legacy. She also awaits All County Paving's planned resurfacing of Bayview Drive from Sunrise Boulevard to Commercial Boulevard; once again recommends implementation of a virtual neighborhood watch - a dividend of downloading the free Neighbors App by Ring; seeks to improve communications between constituents and the City through the Lauderserv app; announces her return to City Hall by August 13, before the August 21 Commission meeting and her first Telephone Town Hall Meeting on August 22 from 7 to 8 p.m.*

Salvaging a Legacy

Following decades of botched opportunities to salvage the heavily eroded Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex (FLAC), on November 17, 2017 the city's Procurement Services Division released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a design-build firm to complete long-overdue Aquatic Center Renovations. Reawakening a conflict between budget hawks who oppose funding a facility that runs annual deficits of

more than \$1 million, and supporters desperately lobbying to preserve a swimming and diving legacy that dates back to the early 1900s, the solicitation framed a last-ditch City Commission effort to find common ground.

Of the 40 firms that downloaded the solicitation from BidSync, and the 23 that attended the pre-proposal conference, the project only attracted bids from Gulf Building LLC and bid-winner Hensel Phelps Construction Co. Since a third unsolicited proposal would have violated regulations governing beachfront construction, it was rejected offhand. While the \$27 million Hensel bid was \$8 million less than the competing \$35 million Gulf Building proposal, it was \$7 million more than the \$20 million budgeted for the project.

A negative vote would have triggered a planned relocation of the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) to Santa Clara, California, where city officials are building a new aquatics center. At the persistent urging of District 2 Commissioner Steve Glassman, Commissioners ignored the budget shortfall and authorized staff to pursue negotiations with Hensel.

*The dearth of competitive bids is no accident. Previous campaigns to approve FLAC renovations were derailed by political posturing, budgetary turf protection, and a bidding process from Hell that was condemned by the Office of Inspector General for violating State Law and dissuading competitive bids. More on this next month. Read District 1 Commissioner Heather Moraitis' July 2018 Newsletter elsewhere in this edition. - [editor]**

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From the Desk of Commissioner **HEATHER MORAITIS**

July 2018

I am excited to announce that on Tuesday night, after fourteen years of negotiations, we voted to renovate the existing Aquatic Center facility and provide pools that meet international competition standards, provide adequate spectator seating for competition events, and increase programming opportunities for the facility. We will also improve the parking lot drainage and landscaping, exterior of the facility, and the entryway to the facility. The Aquatic Center Renovations will be designed and constructed for up to \$27,000,000. In addition to these renovations, we recently renewed our partnership with the International Swimming Hall of Fame and they will continue to call Fort Lauderdale their home!

Sincerely,

Heather Moraitis

Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center Renovation

I am excited to announce that on July 10th, after fourteen years of negotiations, we voted to renovate the existing Aquatic Center facility and provide pools that meet international competition standards, provide adequate spectator seating for competition events, and increase programming opportunities for the facility. We will also improve the parking lot drainage and landscaping, exterior of the facility, and the entryway to the facility. The Aquatic Center Renovations will be designed and constructed for up to \$27,000,000. In addition to these renovations, we recently renewed our partnership with the International Swimming Hall of Fame and they will continue to call Fort Lauderdale their home!

Bayview Drive Resurfacing Project

The City's Bayview Drive Resurfacing Project is scheduled to begin on Monday, July 23 and is expected to be completed by the end of November. The project area is located on Bayview Drive between Sunrise Boulevard and Commercial Boulevard. The work will include milling and resurfacing of the existing asphalt pavement, installing new pavement striping, bike lane symbols and sharrows (i.e., shared bike lanes). Upon completion, Bayview Drive will feature two vehicular travel lanes between 9 and 10 feet wide and two bike lanes that are 4 feet wide. The contractor for the project is All County Paving, a company that has extensive experience with resurfacing projects throughout the City.

Telephone Town Hall Meeting with Commissioner Moraitis

On Wednesday, August 22, 2018 from 7 p.m. – 8 p.m., talk to Commissioner Heather Moraitis about City programs, services or ideas to improve Fort Lauderdale. Residents with listed phone numbers will receive a call prior to the start of the meeting. Neighbors can also call the number below to join the conversation. Call toll-free (877) 353-4701 to join!

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The Fort Lauderdale Police Department encourages our neighbors to download the Neighbors application (iOS/Android), join their neighborhood and discover the power that can emerge from combining neighbors, cameras and the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Visit www.flpd.org/ring to learn how to download the Neighbors app by Ring.

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- Sign-up for Email Updates/Newsletters to get additional links to important city information, upcoming events, photos, commission agendas and meeting reminders for district meetings. Please contact District 1 Assistant Melissa Coningsby, MConingsby@fortlauderdale.gov or 954-828-5033, to receive emails or to schedule an appointment.
- Follow Commissioner Moraitis on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn @heathermoraitis



underground can range from \$500,000 to \$4 million per mile, while above-ground lines cost about \$300,000 - \$400,000 per mile. This is weighed against the daunting cost of outages to ratepayers forced to fund the recovery, a mountain of disposable income lost to millions of homebound employees, and revenues lost to businesses shuttered until power is restored – a triple whammy.

As confirmed by a similar FPL report filed with the FPSC following Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Irma was not the first test of FPL's grid upgrades. Although a cakewalk next to Irma, FPL feedback after Hurricane Matthew showed that 13.8 percent of non-hardened overhead facilities experienced power failures, while 9.4 percent of hardened FPL Flip-Flops

Acknowledging that the substantial upfront outlay and servicing access impediments are problematic, Utility Associations, Public Service agencies (including FPSC), Energy Think Tanks and University Researchers agree that – although not a panacea – undergrounding is the most effective available vehicle for preventing outages. Projected savings to the power companies (and their ratepayers) from reduced maintenance and dramatically lower damage repair and recovery costs more than justify the initial expense.

Without conceding that its \$3 billion expenditure was disappointingly misdirected, in FPL's post-Hurricane Irma report to state regulators, the company observed that underground power lines performed 85 percent better than overhead power lines. Additionally, 82 percent of non-hardened main power lines experienced an outage, compared to 69 percent of hardened overhead main power lines and 18 percent of underground main power lines. Except for the glitch in Homestead, interred neighborhood lines were spared.

The 2017 FPL post-Irma report concluded that underground power utilities worked so well during Hurricane Irma in September and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 that FPL's goal is to have its entire distribution system "hardened or placed underground by 2024." Keeping the company's options open, the report carefully avoided compromising the lucratively skewed cost-sharing formula or revealing criteria for determining if a system element should be hardened or undergrounded.

To defuse growing pressure on regulators to demand statewide undergrounding, Bryan Olnick of FPL distribution operations told FPSC commissioners at a May 2018 meeting that "Underground power lines performed 80 percent better than overhead ones during Hurricane Irma... which was expected," and disclosed a corporate plan to launch a "3-year undergrounding pilot program" to bury power lines in certain neighborhoods throughout the state.

Follow the Money

FPL officials nurse a mercenary incentive for their decision to back burner the FPSC grid hardening order in favor of an expedited power restoration plan - money. "Since 2007, FPL has successfully worked with municipalities to complete more than 50 municipal overhead to underground conversion projects," boasted FPL spokesman Bill Orlove, referring to cost-sharing agreements for which the municipality typically picks up 75 percent of the tab less some credits received for removing the above ground architecture. After all, why bury lines with ratepayer dollars that would otherwise fatten the bottom line for investing shareholders when you can use municipal tax dollars to reduce the corporate outlay by 75%.

Given the questionable impact of his \$3 billion expenditure on outages that might not have occurred had he instead buried the lines, FPL CEO Eric Silagy picked up his marbles and flipped the script. After Irma, Silagy announced "We're big fans of undergrounding. We're supportive of it and want to work with any community that wants to do that." Why not? Unless the funding formula is reconfigured by statute or code, these communities will shoulder 75% of the cost of undergrounding assets that accrue to FPL ownership. It's better than printing money. Leery about whether lawmakers or regulators will mandate a more equitable cost-sharing formula in the foreseeable future, anxious officials in scores of Florida jurisdictions – including Miami-Dade and Palm Beach

counties and the cities of South Miami, Miami Beach, Jacksonville, Miami and Coral Gables – are negotiating with FPL to bury their power lines.

Since resident homeowners could be assessed from \$12,000 to \$25,000 apiece for undergrounding power lines in applicant Fort Lauderdale single-family home neighborhoods, the city requires 70% approval by the community before cutting a deal the FPL. While the sizable assessment has already proven a deterrent in several neighborhoods, City Manager Lee Feldman is currently in talks with FPL to bury lines in the wealthy Las Olas Isles community.

Miami-Dade Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava complained that the current cost-sharing formula functionally bars participation by poorer communities. She sponsored a resolution urging the Florida Legislature and the Florida Public Service Commission to require Florida Power & Light and other electrical utilities to bury their existing overhead power lines. As to the cost, Cava responded "It's time to bite the bullet. I understand there's a cost to burying the lines, but when most of the city loses power, that's extremely disruptive, and there's a cost to that too." Ooh-Rah!•



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