

# SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA STANDARDS

## 1. STATE YOUR VALUES.

Identify your principles and goals in a public statement.

## 2. BE INVOLVED.

Make a commitment to citizen involvement, collaborative approaches, and community partnerships.

## 3. PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP.

Be a leader on environmental quality and resource conservation.

## 4. MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS.

Promote opportunity, equity, and improved quality of life.

## 5. MANAGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Adopt best management practices, systems and new technologies.

## 6. GENERATE A FAIR RETURN.

Sustain your program through productivity and efficiency.



John Moran's "The Night Has A Thousand Eyes"

## ALL EYES ARE ON YOU ...

## OUR 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS!



*An alliance of business, government and civic leaders committed to defining excellence for Florida's economic, environmental and social future since 1990!*

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## THANK YOU!

We are thankful for our individual, corporate and foundation Partners who make events like these possible.

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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Florida Power and Light Foundation  
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Covanta Energy, Inc.  
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The Mosaic Company  
OUC - The Reliable One  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
The St. Joe Company  
WCI Communities, Inc.

### Manatee (\$1,500 up to \$2,500)

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Otis Wragg  
Florida Chapter of the American  
Planning Association

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

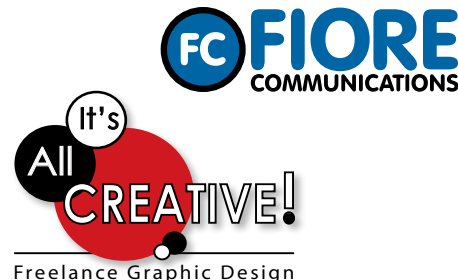
Potted Centerpiece Baskets on loan from -  
**Tallahassee Nurseries**

Catering - featuring Florida seafood, vegetables, fruit and nuts.  
**Carrie Anne and Co. Custom Catering**

Awards Summaries by  
**Dave Fiore, Fiore Communications**

Invitation and Program design by  
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## WELCOME!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Council's signature event — the 9th Annual Sustainable Florida Best Practices Awards. This program is designed to recognize and honor the best efforts to create a more sustainable Florida. And this year is no exception.

This year we received a record number of nominations — more than 40. Each nominee was outstanding. Each is a champion of sustainability and is leading by example. The combined effort of these and many others promises great potential for this and future generations.

Since initiating the awards program in 1998, the Council honored more than 100 businesses, non-profit organizations, government initiatives and individuals whose work demonstrates that a healthy environment and a healthy economy are mutually supportive.

A blue-ribbon panel of eight judges reviewed, scored and ranked the nominees. This group of independent volunteers help to provide a respected measure of best performance standards in the integration of environmental, social, and economic factors for the long-term sustainability of Florida.

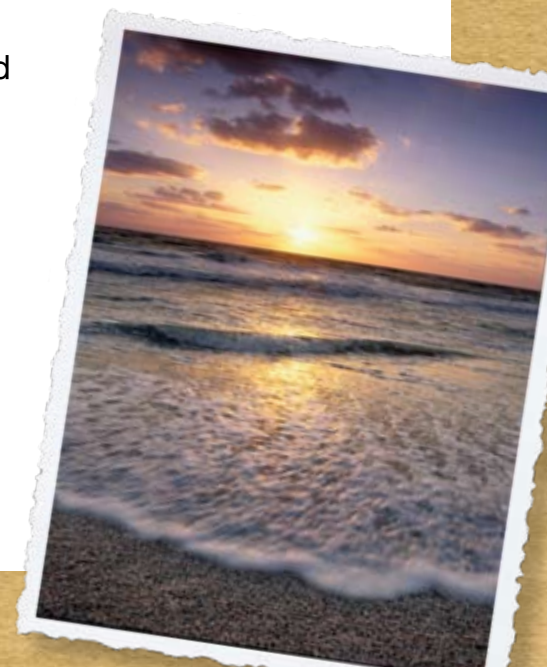
We congratulate the 2007 nominees and encourage others to follow their lead. Thanks for being a champion for a sustainable Florida!

Warmly,

Karen Childress,  
Council Chair

Tim Center,  
Director

P.S. To keep informed about the Council, upcoming events and related activities across the state, subscribe to the Council's e-newsletter - Envision Florida at [www.sustainableflorida.org](http://www.sustainableflorida.org).





## MISSION

Our mission is to advance the vision of sustainability by identifying, supporting and communicating best management practices — those which protect and preserve Florida's environment for the future while building markets for Florida's businesses by enhancing their competitive advantages today.

## COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Council of Sustainable Florida is a program of the Collins Center for Public Policy. Council activities are coordinated and supported by a volunteer board of directors. Board member terms are for three years.

- Karen Childress, Council Chair** – WCI Communities, Bonita Springs
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- John Masiello** – Progress Energy, Lake Mary
- Kathy Baughman McLeod** – Healthy Development, Inc., Tallahassee
- Mary Lou Rajchel, Esq.** – Florida Trucking Association, Tallahassee
- Judy Sanchez** – U.S. Sugar, Clewiston
- Jim Sellen** – MSCW, Orlando
- Dave Tillis** – Bonita Bay Group, Jacksonville
- Dreamal Worthen, Ph.D.** – Florida A&M University, Tallahassee

## JUDGES

- Mark Johnson**  
Florida Chapter - American Society Landscape Architects  
President, Signature Land Designs
- Stacy W. Ranieri**  
Sustainable Treasure Coast  
President, The Firefly Group
- Bart Bibler**  
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- Mike Joyner**  
Council Board Member  
Vice President, Environmental Affairs  
The St. Joe Company

## 9TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICES AWARDS

### AGENDA

2:30 PM – June 11, 2007  
Florida State University Alumni Center  
1030 W. Tennessee Street, Tallahassee, Florida

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**  
Karen Childress, Council Chair

**Keynote Address**  
John Moran, *Journal of Light: A Photographer's Search for the Soul of Florida*

### Presentation of Awards and Recognitions

**Sustainable Small Business Best Practice Award**  
Otis Ragg, Immediate Past Council Chair and Board Member

**Sustainable Large Business Best Practice Award**  
Richard Brightman, Council Secretary and Board Member

**Sustainable Government Best Practice Award**  
Dedee Delongpre', 2007 Awards Review Team, Council Board Member

**Sustainable Non-Profit Organization Best Practice Award**  
Gray Gordon, 2007 Awards Review Team,  
Council Board Member

**Sustainable Business Partnership Best Practice Award**  
Mary Lou Rajchel, Past Council Chair  
and Board Member

**Sustainable Green Building Best Practice Award**  
Mike Joyner, 2007 Awards Review Team,  
Council Board Member

**Sustainable Leadership Best Practice Award**  
Kathy Baughman McLeod, Council Board Member

**Sustainable Florida Legacy Award**  
Eric Draper, Council Board Member

**Closing Comments**  
Karen Childress, Council Chair

**Adjourn to Reception**



## 2007 AWARD NOMINEES

- Florida Biomass Energy Group, LLC
- Green Real Estate Education
- Trifecta Construction Solutions
- Publix Super Markets, Inc.
- Rayonier Biomass Boiler Team
- Walt Disney World
- Progress Energy Florida - Renewable Energy Program
- Progress Energy Florida - Energy Education Program for Students
- Titan America Medly Plant
- Safety-Kleen
- Florida A & M University
- Gainesville Regional Utilities
- Pinellas County
- City of Winter Park
- City of Gainesville
- City of Tallahassee Commission
- Collier County Stormwater Management Department
- Program for Resource Efficient Communities, University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS)
- A Gift for Teaching, Inc.
- Arthur R. Marshall Foundation and Florida Environmental Institute, Inc.

- WORKFORCE plus
- Green Living & Energy Education (GLEE)
- Indian River Habitat for Humanity
- City of Tallahassee
- City of Dunedin
- Nestle Waters North America
- The Original Florida Tourism Task Force
- Verandah by Bonita Bay Group
- Centerville Conservation Community
- The St. Joe Company
- myregion.org - How Shall We Grow?
- Massey Services, Inc.
- Babcock Ranch - Kitson & Partners, Florida Legislature Departments of Environmental Protection, Agriculture, Community Affairs and the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission; and Charlotte and Lee Counties
- Plum Creek
- The Honorable Michael S. Bennett, Florida Senate
- Manatee Technical Institute
- Florida Power and Light
- Solar Direct
- T.K. Wetherell, Florida State University
- Drew Smith, Two Trails, Inc.



## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### TRIFECTA CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS

The construction industry, not unlike many others, is most often driven by bottom-line considerations. Getting a project completed on time with as little hassle and as much profit as possible is always the goal.

While the industry as a whole may be resistant to change, there is one southwest Florida company doing its best to maximize the industry's impact on the possibility of a sustainable future for Florida.

Trifecta Construction Solutions, under the leadership of Dr. Jennifer Languell, has set a lofty goal to facilitate the implementation of environmentally responsible practices that result in valuable resource conservation. The plan is apparently working, as the industry is taking notice and what started as a one-woman business has grown to a staff of five, with expectation for more growth in the near future.

The company's ongoing commitment to promote and implement green building and sustainable construction practices includes a series of goals that include educating people about sustaining the environment, regarding the environment as a valued quantifiable factor for the world, inspiring others to pursue and implement environmentally responsible practices, pursuing improved technologies that conserve natural resources, transforming the industry to accept green building and sustainable development as baseline standards and providing the intellectual effort to have the sustainable environment realized.

These initiatives all provide solutions that can easily be implemented in the construction industry by reducing their use of natural resources while providing homeowners with a healthy home and assisting in the creation of wildlife habitat. If green building is designed in from the conceptual phase of the project, the initial costs are extremely low, if not insignificant.

One of Trifecta's specific goals is to facilitate the implementation of environmentally responsible practices

that result in valuable resource conservation. The company works with builders and consumers on new energy-saving products that save money as well as the environment. Through speaking engagements and seminars, company CEO Jennifer Languell is able to train those in the construction industry how to conserve energy, water and generally improve the health of their existing home. By encouraging developers to create green developments/communities – which can include wildlife corridors and restoring native wildlife habitat – consumers can see the environmental benefits for themselves.

Dr. Languell has garnered many awards for her efforts, including being named the National Association of Home Builders Green Building Advocate of the Year at the 2006 National Green Building Conference. She has appeared on CNN Headline News, HGTV, CNBC and has been featured in Florida Trend, Business Week and more.

### SUSTAINABLE SMALL BUSINESS BEST PRACTICE AWARD

Trifecta Construction Solutions has certified approximately 80 percent of the green homes in the state of Florida using the existing Florida Green Building Coalition Green Home Certification Standard. The company has proven itself to be a key leader in educating the community and the building industry on the benefits of green building sustainable development.

The firm's promotion of green building and sustainable development has helped "spread the word" and has inspired builders and consumers alike to pursue and implement environmentally responsible practices. But there is still more to do. Although green building is growing in popularity, there are many builders who are willing to "go green" but don't have the expertise to move forward. Dr. Languell is helping to fill that void, and the cumulative benefits of greening houses and communities is truly endless.

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

Hybrid vehicles are gaining popularity as small passenger cars, and now even as SUVs, but hybrid-powered engines for huge, multi-ton work vehicles? Would that work? Would it even be worth the cost to find out?

Florida Power and Light Company (FPL), a recognized leader in environmental stewardship, serves more than 4.4 million customer accounts and is the largest electric utility in Florida. It operates a fleet of 3,600 vehicles and uses approximately 2.5 million gallons of diesel fuel per year. Because FPL continuously evaluates options to reduce fuel consumption and harmful air emissions from its fleet, it was decided that, yes, the concept was certainly worth investigating.

In 2001, George Survant, director of fleet services for FPL, initiated the development of a Hybrid Utility Truck Working Group within WestStart/CALSTART, a non-profit organization that works with the public and private sectors to develop advanced transportation technologies and fosters companies that will help clean the air, lessen dependence on foreign oil and reduce global warming.

In the initial Working Group meetings, Survant convinced the fleet directors of 13 other utilities around the country to join in a pilot hybrid utility truck program. The group developed a common specification and issued an industry-wide request for proposals for hybrids that would perform identically to existing trucks while reducing fuel consumption, reducing emissions, improving drivability and increasing functionality by providing on-board electrical power generation.

The group received funding to purchase 24 hybrids from the Army's National Automotive Center for the cost above the price of purchasing 24 comparable existing trucks. FPL took possession of three of the trucks in November 2005 and the impact was immediate.

The hybrids showed a 55.3 percent reduction in fuel consumption as well as significant emissions-reduction benefits.

To enhance the benefits of the hybrids, FPL fuels the vehicles with B20 (20 percent biodiesel fuel produced from soybeans). This provides an additional 20 percent reduction in petroleum use and a further substantial reduction in harmful emissions as shown in testing by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Another important feature of the hybrid system is that when the trucks reach the work site, the hybrid system can power the hydraulic pump that operates the aerial device and its tools for up to two hours without running the engine. It is this ability to shut down the engine that helps the truck cut fuel use so significantly.

FPL continues to serve as the user lead for the Hybrid Utility Working Group, which has all of the initial 24 pre-production hybrid trucks deployed. FPL is taking delivery of five additional hybrid-electric trucks in 2007.

To determine the impact of the fuel savings and the economic feasibility of the project, the group used an internationally recognized independent testing lab to measure and validate the emissions and fuel economy of the hybrid truck compared to the conventional truck. The results showed that the hybrid truck substantially increases fuel economy and decreases fuel use. The fuel reduction ranged from roughly 40 to 60 percent, a significant amount for fleets. The trucks also reduce, by almost half, smog-forming emissions and cut global-warming gases compared to the trucks they replaced.

FPL and its utility partners are committed to advocating the use and advancement of hybrid technology on the state and national levels.

**SUSTAINABLE  
LARGE BUSINESS  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS

Publix Super Markets is the largest employee-owned supermarket chain in the United States, with more than 900 stores and support facilities throughout Florida and four other states, and more than 143,000 associates. The company recognizes the need to conserve resources by implementing sustainable practices – to make sure that more than just its logo is green.

The key elements in developing sustainable practices, according to Publix executives, are to identify the resources used and the life cycle costs of the product or activity, including its environmental impact. Publix's commitment to sustainable practices includes energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling, water conservation, transitioning away from hazardous waste materials, hurricane preparedness and recovery, and providing information to encourage associates to participate in conservation programs.

In 2002, Publix launched a program to involve all associates known as "Get into a Green Routine." The program represents resource conservation, responsible waste management and pollution prevention. Publix continues to sustain the Green Routine program using a combination of educational materials, associate input and the formation of dedicated teams in the facilities division to evaluate and validate the practicality of emerging energy-efficient technologies.

Publix also has an energy management program as well as a commissioning program to assure that equipment is operating at optimal efficiency. From 2002 to 2006, the company has succeeded in reducing electricity usage by an average of 7 percent overall and approximately 23 percent in new stores. It has reduced its electricity usage by 642 million kilowatt hours throughout the company's facilities over that period.

Publix's energy conservation program is first focused on reducing overall electricity usage, using more energy-

efficient technologies, commissioning equipment to function at optimal levels, and measuring and reporting energy usage. Stores were given a "Get into the Green Routine" kit consisting of stickers for light switches, cooler doors and back doors; posters with tips on saving energy; and a video that lightheartedly walks associates through the store and shows them energy-saving practices.

To better serve its customers in times of need, Publix invested \$100 million to install generators at stores in areas with the highest risk for hurricane damage. By the end of this year, about 400 stores, many in coastal areas, will be equipped with generators that will power the entire store during power outages.

Publix follows the hierarchy of reduce and reuse before considering recycling and other methods of diversion from the landfilling of garbage. Some examples of how Publix reduces

and reuses includes, re-using plastic crates for shipping dairy and juice beverages, plastic totes for produce and trays for bakery products. Dry groceries are shipped to stores in reusable cardboard boxes, and stores donate surplus food to local charities and food banks. In 2006, Publix recycled more than 209,000 tons of cardboard and 7,600 tons of plastic as well as many other materials. The avoided landfill disposal costs (as a result of recycling) exceeded Publix's garbage costs in 2005 and 2006.

Publix believes that every company has the potential to reduce energy usage and manage its waste to minimize the materials put in their garbage containers (which ultimately end up in a landfill or a waste-to-energy facility). By following the same process, each company can determine how best to achieve energy savings without sacrificing productivity or losing money.

**SUSTAINABLE  
LARGE BUSINESS  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### PINELLAS COUNTY

Pinellas County is at a crossroads, and its leaders are determined to make sure they follow the path that utilizes sustainable practices to ensure a bright future.

In a little more than 125 years, Pinellas County has been transformed from an isolated, largely undisturbed wilderness into a major urban community. It soon will be the first county in the state to run out of undeveloped vacant land available for growth and development. In land area, the county is small – only 280 square miles – yet its population of approximately 950,000 permanent residents makes it the fifth-most populous county in Florida.

In 2005, its Board of County Commissioners completed a blueprint for urban sustainability following a strategic plan known as Vision Pinellas. The Board made a commitment to fund the first Regional Specialized Agent for Urban Environmental Sustainability in partnership with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agriculture Services. As part of that plan, the Bushnell Office for Sustainability was formed at the Pinellas County Extension to help lead the county's sustainability efforts.

The goal was to create a coordinated, multi-discipline approach to providing programs on urban sustainability to the community and local governments. An application was made to the Florida Green Building Coalition for the Green Local Government certification, which would help measure the county's efforts and determine where new initiatives could be developed. Pinellas County was awarded the first Green Local Government certification in Florida in December 2006 due to the county's ongoing and innovative programs in comprehensive planning, waste management, environmental management and community education. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Sustainability Resolution that helps to foster a culture of sustainability in county government and

enable the adoption of sustainable practices in the community.

Using one of its own facilities as an example of good stewardship, the Board made a mid-course correction in the renovation of the Bushnell Center. In its efforts to upgrade the 26-year-old building, the extension's engineer and purchasing department requested that they use a "cool roof," which exhibits a high reflectivity value and is certified as an Energy Star product. The cost was \$30,000 over the price of the original new roof, which would have cost \$300,000.

The contractor suggested that the cool roof would not be worth the additional cost over time, but the extension

engineer was determined to explore the facts for himself. He used industry standards and research-based estimates to put together his own analysis and discovered that the cool roof would pay for itself in just four to five years. In fact,

the county would realize a savings of roughly \$34,000 over the 12-year period – twice that of the baseline roof. Leading by example, a cool roof on the Pinellas County Extension building provides an additional intangible value to the facility's educational mission.

Through its efforts at social marketing, county employees and residents are committing to adopt more sustainable behavior, including switching out incandescent bulbs for CFL bulbs, consuming more local and regional food, and changing their AC filters regularly.

The cornerstone of the Pinellas County's Sustainability Initiative is the focus on fostering a culture of sustainability within county government. For truly long-term sustainability, each of the county's 3,000+ employees will have to realize what sustainability means to them on a day-to-day basis and what role they play in the larger sustainability focus.

**SUSTAINABLE  
GOVERNMENT  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### A GIFT FOR TEACHING

One person's trash being another person's treasure is a true-enough adage, but it doesn't mean a lot unless there is someone to connect the parties. An Orlando-area non-profit called A Gift for Teaching does just that as it recycles surplus goods from local businesses and places them into the hands of resource-challenged teachers and needy school children.

The organization has opened two Free Stores where teachers can shop for essential school supplies such as books, backpacks, paper, crayons and glue. But the stores also serve as a clearinghouse for surplus items and merchandise that businesses would normally discard. Rather than clogging local landfills, the items are used by resourceful teachers as educational tools.

The simple solution bridges the gap between the great need for school supplies and the excess resources available in the community. Since the first AGFT store opened to teachers in 30 public schools in 1998, it has grown significantly to now reach 318 schools. Now, there are two Free Stores that provide valuable learning tools for more than 110,000 students who qualify for a free or reduced lunch in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties.

First priority for the learning tools are given to teachers working in schools that serve the most economically disadvantaged students. There are 114 schools in the area that have more than 60 percent of their students receiving free or reduced lunches. The community has rallied around the cause, with donations from more than 4,600 businesses and individuals to distribute approximately \$27 million worth of educational supplies.

Most of AGFT growth can be attributed to a wide volunteer and donor base. The stores have received help from 3,100 volunteers who have logged more

than 122,000 hours. For every \$1 AGFT receives, it is able to turn it into \$10 worth of classroom product since many of its vendors offer school supplies for free or greatly reduced rates.

As teachers scramble to find basic school supplies to give their students, businesses are routinely discarding outdated office supplies and old merchandise that can be used in classrooms. AGFT exhibits environmental integrity by moving the community's surplus resources into the hands of struggling students. Empty paper rolls from the Orlando Sentinel are converted into telescopes. Old letterhead is used to teach students to write business letters, and outdated AAA maps translate

into geography lessons. Rockets are made from old mailing tubes, discarded frame matte and plastic shopping bags.

In addition, through a partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections, AGFT began Crafts with Conviction, a program that

takes donated materials that are non-functional in their original state and ships them to correctional facilities where inmates produce teaching tools while giving back to society. Inmates create flash cards, writing journals and fraction sets out of oversized rolls of paper. They sew bolts of fabric from the costume departments at Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando into puppets, nap pillows and teddy bears. Since 2002, the Crafts with Conviction participants have produced more than \$1.3 million worth of school supplies and educational tools benefiting businesses, prisoners and schools.

AGFT has contributed to a sustainable future by providing a place for businesses to dispose of unwanted materials, improving the environment by recycling resources and giving economic relief to teachers and parents – while improving the lives and educational experience of thousands of children.

**SUSTAINABLE  
NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### HOW SHALL WE GROW?

Central Florida is one of the most exciting, fastest-growing areas in the nation. And while it has changed dramatically over the last 30 years, community leaders from across the region want to ensure that its future embraces the natural resources and characteristics that make it so special.

The result is the “How Shall We Grow?” initiative, a 15-month endeavor to engage citizens, community leaders and elected officials to create a shared vision for growth in Central Florida. The initiative began in January 2006 with grants from the Florida Department of Community Affairs and the Florida Department of Transportation to assist Central Florida in becoming the first region in the state to conduct a comprehensive regional growth-visioning project.

“How Shall We Grow?” brings together the Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance, myregion.com, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce to work collaboratively with the two state agencies to create a shared vision for growth in Central Florida.

For the first time, this group of county commission chairs, mayors and county managers is exploring ways to work together as a region rather than as separate entities in order to more effectively tackle the unprecedented growth facing the area.

So far, this unique initiative has reached more than 9,000 citizens through community presentations and outreach efforts and is projected to surpass the community engagement of other successful visioning efforts in the nation. The initiative has maximized resources such as an interactive Web site and Web log, e-mail communications, a monthly e-newsletter and local television programming to inform and educate the citizens of Central Florida about smart growth. The initial outcome of this project is the selection

of a common vision of 50-year growth by citizens in 93 jurisdictions. The region is now aware of the negative impacts of the traditional or trend growth patterns in Central Florida, and is open to the idea of developing new ways of growing to accommodate the influx of people in a way that would allow the natural environment to be preserved to a greater extent.

The “How Shall We Grow?” initiative used information and resources from the “Naturally Central Florida” project as a basis for its conserve, protect and restore education. Naturally Central Florida is a cooperative land conservation effort jointly sponsored by the Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies and the Environmental Task Force of myregion.com.

The desired outcomes and goals of the initiative include ensuring that viable examples of all natural habitats, and the native plants and animals that depend on them, will persist in perpetuity; enhancing the character of area communities

by framing urban settlements with scenic, historic and agricultural open-space buffers; protecting regional groundwater supplies, rivers, lakes and springs; protecting and sustaining the ecological, economic, aesthetic and recreational value of estuarine and near-shore ocean resources; providing rich and diverse natural recreational opportunities; and fostering greater public knowledge and appreciation of Central Florida’s diverse and valuable natural assets.

This program was funded in part by state grants to serve as a model for regional visioning throughout the state. This effort was successful in ensuring that community members are engaged in sustainability, which was key to the success of this initiative and will serve as a shining example for other communities as well.

**SUSTAINABLE  
BUSINESS  
PARTNERSHIP  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### BONITA BAY GROUP

Bonita Bay Group has championed sustainable development and environmental stewardship since the company’s inception in the 1980s, creating communities that preserve and enhance a site’s natural attributes. But the timing of its plans for a new development called Verandah would present an opportunity for the company to take its commitment to the next level.

Shortly after Bonita Bay Group’s acquisition of 1,456 acres along a 1.75-mile stretch of the Orange River, east of Ft. Myers, in early 2000, the Florida Green Building Coalition announced plans to create a statewide green land development standard, giving the company the opportunity to validate its long-held development principles and its growing commitment to green building.

Verandah’s land plan started with a detailed assessment of the site and its ecosystems as well as a look at the property’s past, including a historic flow way that was interrupted by prior agricultural use.

Planners spent hundreds of hours creating and altering the design of the community to accommodate existing sabal palms and live oaks, some of them nearly 100 years old. The trees affected by development were relocated. And instead of building a single, large clubhouse, Bonita Bay Group created Verandah’s River Village, a grouping of individual amenity buildings designed to fit within an existing hammock of large oak trees.

Verandah’s final master plan preserves and re-establishes wildlife habitat, restores the flow way and protects the site’s ecosystems. More than 70 percent of its 1,456 acres will remain open space, including 125 acres of wetland preserve, 84 acres of upland preserve, nearly 300 acres of lakes and nine miles of walking trails and pathways that link to a shopping center, a much-needed commercial component.

The company partnered with Dr. Pierce Jones, founder of the Florida Energy Extension Service’s “Build Green and

Profit” program, to develop green guidelines for amenity buildings and single-family homes that conserve water and electricity as well as improve indoor air health. Two months after opening, Verandah was recognized by the Florida Green Building Coalition as Florida’s first green land development.

Prior to developing the property, Bonita Bay Group created a series of “Green Commitments,” an 11-page document that detailed the steps the company would take at Verandah, including responsible site development, conservation and green building. That commitment included steps for conservation in the areas of natural resources (accommodating existing native vegetation,

transplanting more than 200 oak trees and preservation of 1.75 miles of river frontage), water (using drought-tolerant landscaping, maximizing the principles of xeriscaping and using treated effluent when possible), and wildlife (preserving 128 acres

of foraging habitat, protecting manatees and building birdhouses for specific species to the area).

The sustainable development commitment at Verandah extends to its builders, which are required to reduce the environmental impact of their homes. All of the development’s single-family homes must meet Florida Green Building Coalition standards and may use as much as 35 percent less energy than a home built to standard Florida building code.

Designing Verandah to exceed new green land development standards resulted in a community that minimizes its impact on the environment, conserves energy and water usage and protects and enhances natural habitat. It has been used by Bonita Bay Group as a springboard in adopting many of the practices to enhance the sustainability of its other communities.

**SUSTAINABLE  
GREEN BUILDING  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### SENATOR MIKE BENNETT

As a Florida state senator, Mike Bennett has the critical responsibility of helping to shape Florida's future for generations to come. It is a responsibility that he takes seriously.

For the past seven years, Senator Bennett has served the citizens of Florida, first as a member of the House of Representatives and now as a state senator. He has continuously fought for the passage of legislation that will create a Florida that we can be proud to pass along to our children and grandchildren.

The number of bills that Senator Bennett sponsors each year that relate to improving Florida's environment has increased each year that he has been in office. For 2007, almost 20 bills either directly relate to, or have a component that relates to, improving the environment.

He has successfully co-sponsored legislation that awarded grants and incentives to alternate energy programs initiated throughout the state. He also has sponsored a number of bills that will improve the quality of life for all Floridians, including an amendment to the state constitution creating a 250-mile barrier around Florida against offshore oil and gas drilling. He also sponsored legislation that would protect sea grasses from the damage of motorboats as well as create a sea grass restoration program. He sponsored legislation to create the Florida Alternative Energy Technology Center, which would be the principal organization in the state for alternative energy technology, with related legislation to increase the use of biofuels as an alternative energy source. This effort has been supported by both business and environmental groups.

But perhaps Senator Bennett's most visible contribution was his sponsorship of legislation that created the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida, an organization with the responsibility of envisioning

the future of the state as it relates to such issues as transportation, water quality, housing, health care, education and growth. The commission's objective is to develop and recommend policies, plans, action steps or strategies to assist in achieving its vision. Senator Bennett is one of 15 board members for the commission.

Without proper planning to handle Florida's steady growth rate, the economic costs to our children and grandchildren will be astronomical. By creating the Century Commission, Senator Bennett took the important first step to plan for this growth. The commission has developed several recommendations that include

developing research that enables Florida to become independent of foreign oil, launching research initiatives relating to long-term water supply, developing a comprehensive Cooperative Conservation Blueprint for the state, understanding the

values and goals for Florida's future and measuring our progress toward those goals, while making a commitment to establish a process and structure that supports intergovernmental cooperation.

As a businessman, Mike Bennett has demonstrated through his actions that business and environmental goals are not at cross purposes. As he clearly says, "We're selling the quality of life. We better take care of it."

Senator Bennett's focus on Florida's future can be seen in the legislation he has sponsored. From offshore oil drilling and alternative energy to requiring gambling ships to keep the oceans clean, Senator Bennett is doing his part to ensure a sustainable Florida for generations to come.

**SUSTAINABLE  
LEADERSHIP  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**

## 2007 SUSTAINABLE FLORIDA BEST PRACTICE AWARD WINNERS

### BABCOCK RANCH

For more than four years, the state of Florida and the Babcock family attempted to negotiate the sale of 91,000 acres of Babcock Ranch, a 65-mile environmental corridor stretching from Lake Okeechobee to the Gulf Coast through parts of Lee and Charlotte counties. Any potential deal seemed impossible until Kitson&Partners, a development company, agreed to step in as a private partner and help make it happen.

Kitson&Partners approached the Babcock family with an ambitious and complex plan to purchase the corporation that owned the land (which the state could not do), sell 80 percent of the property (74,000 acres) to the state for permanent preservation and retain the remaining 17,000 acres in the southwest corner for the development of a state-of-the-art community.

The land was especially important to the state, as it included the 17,700-acre Telegraph Swamp, with its incredibly valuable groundwater resources and vast timber and ranch lands that provide important habitat for panther, black bear and other protected species.

By the time the contract was ready for the governor and Cabinet's consideration, the partnership had grown to include the Department of Environmental Protection, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Legislature and the Department of Community Affairs – in addition to local support from the Lee and Charlotte county commissions.

The cost of the state's 74,000 acres was \$350 million, which was purchased with state general revenue dollars, with no impact on the Florida Forever funds. Legislators also approved an unprecedented land management plan that will assure that the Babcock Ranch Preserve – run by a not-for-profit board – is financially self-

sustaining. Under the agreement, existing operations such as cattle ranching and eco-tourism will continue, generating operating revenues for the Preserve. For the first five years, Kitson&Partners agreed to manage operations of the ranch, which includes 5,000 cattle valued at \$5 million.

The new planned community includes all the necessary infrastructure and amenities, including a town center, high school and shopping centers – as well as 9,000 acres of green space, recreation trails and restored wetlands. At the end of the day, 90 percent of the original 91,000 acres is protected or restored, and Kitson&Partners is focusing its community development on just 8,000 acres.

This was the first time the state's conservation land acquisition program had partnered with the private sector to split a property to provide permanent protection for a significant portion of land. It provides a template for future partnering efforts that would

stretch limited taxpayer dollars, preserve pristine conservation lands and allow the development community to build on the land that is most suitable. This method of preserving the "last best pieces" of the state is preferable to the state competing with the private sector.

The community's master plan is the result of an unprecedented collaborative process that included more than 200 individuals. Their input is reflected in a plan for a community where greenways, open spaces and nature will be an integral part of the daily quality of life.

With the combined efforts of Kitson&Partners, the agencies of the state, and Lee and Charlotte counties, the Babcock Ranch project will help sustain southwest Florida's natural resources, quality of life and ranching heritage, while meeting the demands of a growing population.

**SUSTAINABLE  
LEGACY  
BEST PRACTICE AWARD**