



Florida Solar Energy Industries Association

## INDUSTRY NEWS

# CONSTRUCTION SEES A 51.4% CUT IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION RATES OVER PAST FIVE YEARS

### Workers' Compensation Rate Changes Effective January 1, 2008

Code Number	Description	2007 Rate	1/1/2008 Rate	Percentage Change
5606	Construction Executive Superintendent	3.41	2.74	-19.64%
8810	Clerical	.48	.37	-22.91%

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) proposed an overall workers compensation rate level decrease of 16.5% for the voluntary market industrial classes effective January 1, 2008. On October 22, 2007, the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) issued its order requesting that NCCI submit an amended filing for an overall workers' compensation rate level decrease of 18.4%, a difference of -1.9%. The order also provided NCCI the option of appeal.

On October 29, 2007, NCCI submitted an amended filing for -18.4% in accordance with the OIR order. The new rates and other changes were effective January 1, 2008 to new and renewal policies.

The overall average rate impact at an industry group level would be as follows:

	1/1/08 Filing	Cumulative 10/1/03-1/1/08
Manufacturing	17.5%	47.6%
Contracting	17.9%	52.0%
Office and Clerical	21.3%	50.8%
Goods and Services	19.0%	51.5%
Miscellaneous	15.2%	53.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>51.4%</b>

JANUARY-MARCH 2008

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# Message:

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**VICTOR EYAL**  
**FLASEIA PRESIDENT**

The heat is on! The Public Service Commission has unanimously approved Net Metering in the sunshine state, potentially making it one of the best programs of its type in the country. Specifically, the rule expands the size of eligible systems from 10 kW to 2 MW, expands eligible systems from photovoltaic only to encompass all renewable energies and expedites the interconnection of customer-owned renewable generation. The commission's approval of true net metering is a great accomplishment for FlaSEIA, an important advancement for Florida and a victory for solar energy.

As mentioned in our last newsletter, this has been an outstanding goal of our organization. The voices and commitment of our members and staff make the difference in advancing and solidifying our industry for the economic and environmental future of this great state.

Our work is far from done, however, and we cannot rest on our laurels. While the net metering rule puts Florida on the map with other states in strong renewable energy programs, we are still without a stable rebate program that is viable and accessible to more residents and businesses as the momentum for solar energy builds. This year's funding was drained by mid-year. Therefore, all rebates which are submitted from January to June of this year will be funded from next year's allocation, creating a vicious cycle of drain on the funds. For this reason, we must all step up our efforts to strongly promote an increase of the Solar Tax Rebate in Florida for the next fiscal year. Our new public relations and marketing campaign will help create awareness and educate consumers so that they too may join our cause. It's time for all of us to turn it up a notch and become even more vocal for this vital legislative issue.

The creation of a public utility fund is another important legislative goal for the sunshine state and one that would have an immediate impact. Studies have repeatedly shown that residents would support a nominal surcharge added to their utility bills to support the development of renewable energy in the state (78% of Floridians indicated they would be willing to pay up to one dollar or less to support solar in a 2007 Mason-Dixon poll). Even a very small

amount, perhaps just 75 cents per month, added to each resident's monthly utility bill would accumulate significant dollars very quickly in a statewide fund reserved for this important purpose.

One type of proposed legislation that is surfacing in states such as California and New Jersey is hybrid pool heating requirements. In California, for example, the Hybrid Swimming Pool Heating Act which is currently on the floor of the legislature requires that all new and existing gas-heated swimming pools utilize solar for a portion of their pool heating load. This is a step in the right direction and would make sense in our state where sunshine is free and abundant. No pool in Florida should be heated primarily with gas when the technology and payback of solar creates such tremendous financial and environmental savings to Florida. We will work to develop and promote similar hybrid-based heating legislation, along with our commitment to seek enforcement of existing laws that mandate commercial pools utilizing fossil fuels only as a secondary source to renewable heating source, unless the pools are covered at night.

Many of us came forward, unsolicited, and contributed large amounts of money to fund professional personnel that will represent FlaSEIA's interests to our government and the public commissions. Additionally, our board members and colleagues have been investing a great deal of time and effort to participate in endless meetings and presentations to the lawmakers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank this special group of people and to encourage them to continue with this great mission. I also want to thank all of the members who have contributed to the marketing fund. The whole state and solar trade salutes you!

We should not forget our membership drive. The "Solar Buzz" should make it easy for you to get additional companies and individuals to join FlaSEIA. Let us keep our eye on the goal and fighting the good fight for free sustainable energy in our great state!

*Sincerely,*  
*Victor Eyal*  
*FlaSEIA President*

**2007/2008 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

	2007 – 2009	2006 – 2008
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<b>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</b> Tom Harriman Harrimans, Inc.		

# URGENT STATE REBATES ARE IN JEOPARDY

**Situation Critical:** State rebates for solar are in jeopardy. At the beginning of April, the FlaSEIA Board and a few members were in Tallahassee to meet with our legislators. Although we did not meet with much opposition, we were hearing that there is “no money” in the budget.

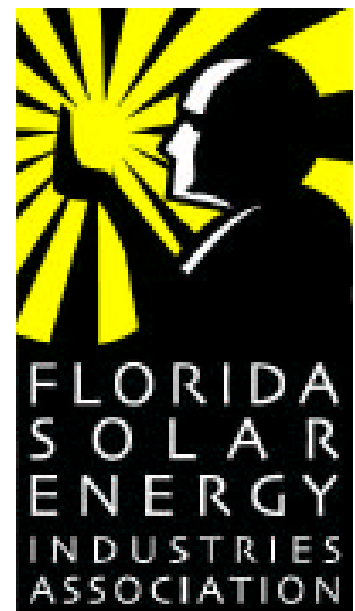
Never in our history have we been so close to achieving our goals but we’re still so far away. The future of our industry hangs in the balance, and we are asking for your monetary support.

Over the years, FlaSEIA has made great progress in developing a solar program in Florida -- from making the sales tax exemption permanent to establishing a solar rebate program. This year, the PSC

adopted a rule establishing net metering/interconnection policy that could be the best in the country.

FlaSEIA has hired Ron Sachs Communications, Inc., a top tier Public Relations firm, to get the message out and Southern Strategies, a top notch lobbying firm, to help with the lobbying effort. Both of these firms are considered to be the top in their respective fields and are very motivated to push through our agendas. In fact, we have negotiated to install a PV and thermal system for Southern Strategy as partial payment. The solar system will be very visible from Monroe street.

This solar campaign will target legislators, key decision makers,



*Industry News* is the official newsletter of the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association (FlaSEIA), a nonprofit, professional association of companies involved in the solar and energy conservation industries. *Industry News* is published four times per year and distributed to all member companies of FlaSEIA and a broad range of other interested parties.

the media and the general public throughout the upcoming legislative session.

Branded messages will pursue positive legislation on:

- extending the solar rebate program
- increasing its funding levels
- reinstating the solar property tax exemption
- enhancing solar grant and demonstration funding
- conducting public awareness campaigns
- establishing a Public Benefits Fund and Renewable Portfolio Standard

Audiences will be reached through:

- solar-powered billboards

- a press conference at the Capitol
- editorial board meetings with every major newspaper in the state
- guest columns, op-ed, press releases, media briefings and targeted advertising
- a Solar Energy Day at the Capitol

We need to raise \$30,000.00 by April 30, 2008. This money will also help push our other legislative objectives as well.

Help us to help you and your business. To make a contribution to the FlaSEIA PR Marketing Campaign, please contact the FlaSEIA office at (407) 339-2010. Donations need to be submitted to the FlaSEIA office **no later than April 30, 2008.**



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**T**heft is just part of the problem. Unscrupulous metal dealers who are willing to resell the stolen property are adding to the demand and supporting criminal activity.

- Thieves can easily sell copper wire and other metals at scrap yards across the state for \$1.50 to \$3.00 a pound.
- In three years, beer kegs scrap value has gone from \$5.00 per keg to over \$40.00 per keg.
- Florida isn't alone – each year copper and other metal thefts amount to \$1 billion in the U.S.

### **“Hot Wire” Crimes**

- A school electrical supervisor allegedly stole \$271,000 worth of copper wiring from the Broward County School District.
- The City of Orlando has had over 200 separate incidents of metal theft in the first six months of 2007, the city anticipates close to 500 total robberies for the year.
- Approximately \$200.00 in copper metal theft may cost a Seminole Heights church \$50,000.00 to repair.
- Two suspects removed the ground wires on 177 transmission structures between Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties, jeopardizing the safety of dozens of employees, contractors and community members.
- The local telecommunications company for Baker County had over 1,600 feet of aerial cable stolen; replacement costs are close to \$27,000.00.

### **Metal Theft . . . A Deadly Danger**

Stealing wire from utility sites can

cause power outages and surges or even worse. If phone wires are ripped from the ground, a person with an emergency may be unable to reach help. If utility wires are cut, electricity will not reach the home of an ill person who uses a medical device. Additionally, an innocent person may come into contact with equipment that has been damaged by metal thieves, potentially causing injury or death.

### **Public Safety Legislation: Saving Lives and Preventing Metal Theft**

Thirteen states now have laws to help stop secondary metal theft. In Florida, Representative Baxter Troutman (HB 105), Representative Scott Randolph (HB 113), Senator Lee Constantine (SB 556) and Senator Victor Crist (SB 748) have filed bills to help to deter this growing and costly problem.

This public safety legislation aims to crack down on theft by requiring secondary metal dealers to keep records including:

- Name and/or description of person from whom the goods were acquired
- Address and workplace
- Home and work phone numbers
- A thumbprint
- Vehicle information and photograph
- Videotape or digital image of the regulated metals being sold.

These precautionary actions will help deter thieves from bringing stolen items to a legitimate secondary metal dealer. Those unscrupulous metal dealers who do not provide the required information and receive stolen property can be charged with a felony of the third degree!



*Industry News* is published quarterly by the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association (FlaSEIA). Ideas, opinions and views expressed herein are not necessarily those of FlaSEIA.

- FlaSEIA, along with the following
- companies, are a member of the
- Floridians for Copper and Metal
- Crime Prevention Coalition: Alarm
- Association of Florida; Anheuser–
- Busch Companies; Asphalt
- Contractors Association of Florida;
- Associated Builders & Contractors
- of Florida; Associated Industries of
- Florida; AT&T; Beer Industry of
- Florida; Embarq; Florida Associated
- General Contractors; Florida
- Association of Electrical
- Contractors; Florida Building
- Material Association; Florida
- Electric Cooperatives Association;
- Florida Farm Bureau; Florida Home
- Builders Association; Florida
- Municipal Electric Association;
- FP&L; Florida Swimming Pool
- Association; Florida Refrigeration
- and Air Conditioning Contractors
- Association; Florida Roofing, Sheet
- Metal & Air Conditioning
- Contractors Association; Florida
- Fire Sprinkler Association; Florida
- Wall & Ceiling Contractors
- Association; Florida
- Telecommunications Industries
- Association; Florida Transportation
- Builders Association; Gulf Power;
- Independent Electrical
- Contractors of Florida; Miller
- Brewing; TECO; Underground
- Utility Contractors of Florida;
- and Verizon.

## HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY FAILED TO MAKE THE BALLOT

Florida Secretary of State Kurt Browning announced that the Hometown Democracy initiative failed to make the November 2008 ballot. Secretary Browning said that as of the 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 1, 2008 deadline:

- Hometown submitted 545,827 out of the necessary 611,009 valid signatures.
- Hometown also only qualified in

9 out of 13 congressional districts.

The credit for this victory must be given to the exceptional team at Floridians for Smarter Growth, who built an impressive statewide coalition over the past year. Through Floridians for Smarter Growth, more than 100 different organizations have joined the fight to stop Hometown, 19 local campaign chairs have been appointed and over 25,000 Floridians have joined the grassroots movement. Wade Hopping with Hopping, Green & Sams also deserves praise and appreciation for laying the foundation of the broad coalition upon which Floridians for Smarter Growth was built.

The campaign participated in more than 150 meetings across Florida in the past year to share with the people of Florida why Hometown would be so destructive to our state’s economy and quality of life. Floridians for Smarter Growth also managed to collect at least 320,676 of its own petitions in just seven months in a telling sign of voters’ dissatisfaction with Hometown’s reckless proposal and their desire to support a more responsible approach to growth in our state.

It’s also important to bear in mind the role that the people of Florida played in this result. In 2004, 68% of Florida voters approved the constitutional amendment that moved the deadline for gathering signatures from 90 days prior to the election to February 1. Without this amendment, Hometown would almost certainly be on the 2008 ballot, and Floridians would have very little time to prepare to stop it.

There is still a great deal of work for us to do. We have fought for several years to give Florida voters the right to revoke their signatures, and while it had a significant psychological impact on Hometown’s leaders, there are

steps we clearly need to take to make it a more effective campaign tool.

Furthermore, it's worth remembering that most of Hometown's signatures will still be valid in 2010, and even though the signature threshold will rise after the 2008 election, the likelihood of Hometown making the 2010 ballot is very high. Florida needs to pursue additional reforms to the process of collecting signatures, particularly with regard to curbing abuses by out-of-state paid signature gatherers. The Florida Legislature must address the fact that the petition gathering industry is unregulated, unmonitored and poses a risk to the safety and welfare of average Floridians. The unity of the business community will be crucial to ensuring that we return our constitutional amendment process to the citizens of Florida.

## FLORIDA PSC ENCOURAGES ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

In recognition of Earth Day, the

Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) is encouraging all Floridians to step-up efforts to conserve energy, reduce waste and recycle resources.

"Earth Day reminds us that we should make wise energy decisions at home and at work all year long," said PSC Chairman Matthew M. Carter II. "Using energy efficiently and conserving it whenever possible will also help you save money now, and in the future, by reducing your energy needs." The PSC's commitment to energy conservation and renewable generation is highlighted by recent Commission actions to encourage additional renewable energy generation.

- On March 4, 2008, the Commission approved a rule addressing net metering standards for Florida's five investor-owned utilities. Net metering allows electric customers who own photovoltaic systems, or other renewable generation equipment, to receive credit for the extra electricity they supply back to the utility. By offsetting consumption through net metering, customers can carry energy credits forward to the next month's billing cycle.

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- The Commission conducted four informational workshops, from July through December 2007, to discuss establishing a state renewable portfolio standard (RPS). An RPS encourages renewable energy development by requiring utilities to generate a certain amount of power from renewable sources, usually by a certain date. The Commission’s summary of PSC findings from these workshops is available at: [http://www.psc.state.fl.us/utilities/electricgas/RenewableEnergy/2008\\_03R\\_PSSummaryFinal.doc](http://www.psc.state.fl.us/utilities/electricgas/RenewableEnergy/2008_03R_PSSummaryFinal.doc).
- Last year, the Commission approved two negotiated power contracts with new renewable generators totaling approximately 120MW. Many municipal and public utilities also have green pricing programs that encourage further development of renewable generation.
- Since January 2008, the Commission has approved two renewable energy contracts totaling more than 80MW, one using landfill gas as fuel and one using waste wood products. Together, they will produce enough electricity to power almost 48,000 homes.

The PSC is committed to making sure that Florida’s consumers receive their electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and wastewater services in a safe, affordable, and reliable manner. The PSC exercises regulatory authority over utilities in the areas of rate base/ economic regulation; competitive market oversight; and monitoring of safety, reliability, and service.

For additional information, visit [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com).

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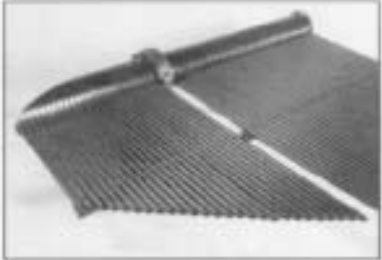
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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

JANUARY–MARCH 2008

**F** laSEIA extends a hearty welcome to the following new members who have joined the association from January 1, 2008 through March 31, 2008. We thank them for joining our association and look forward to their participation in helping this association achieve its goals.

## **Contractor**

T8 Lighting, Inc.  
Michael Ivester  
804 Watt Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
Phone: 850/422-1302  
Fax: 850/422-1358  
E-mail: [t8lighting@comcast.net](mailto:t8lighting@comcast.net)  
Website: [www.t8electrical.com](http://www.t8electrical.com)

## **Manufacturer**

UniRac, Inc.  
Chris Meier  
1411 Broadway Boulevard, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102-1545  
Phone: 505/242-6411  
FAX: 505/242-6412  
E-mail: [chrism@unirac.com](mailto:chrism@unirac.com)  
Website: [www.unirac.com](http://www.unirac.com)

## **Original Equipment Manufacturer**

Citel, Incorporated  
Patrick Coyle  
1515 NW 167th Street, Suite 6-303  
Miami, FL 33169  
Phone: 305/621-0022  
Fax: 305/621-0766  
E-mail: [fcoble@citelprotection.com](mailto:fcoble@citelprotection.com)  
Website: [www.citelprotection.com](http://www.citelprotection.com)

## **Consultant**

Gloria Spire Solar  
Mark Goodreau  
One Patriots Park  
Bedford, MA 01730  
Phone: 781/275-6000  
Fax: 781/973-2400  
E-mail: [ncain@gloriaspire.com](mailto:ncain@gloriaspire.com)  
Website: [www.gloriaspire.com](http://www.gloriaspire.com)

## **Out-of-State**

Solar Power Partners  
Dan Poore  
100 Shoreline Highway, Suite 210B  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
Phone: 415/389-8981  
Fax: 415/789-4139  
E-mail: [dan@solarpowerpartners.com](mailto:dan@solarpowerpartners.com)  
Website: [www.solarpowerpartners.com](http://www.solarpowerpartners.com)

9

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[www.aetsolar.com](http://www.aetsolar.com)

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## Certified Contractor License Renewal

Just a reminder that certified contractor licenses issued by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) are up for renewal on August 31, 2008. Current law requires licenseholders to obtain 14 hours of continuing education with at least one hour in workplace safety, one hour in workers' compensation, one hour in business practices, one hour in laws and rules and one hour in advance building code.

Don't forget to notify DBPR of any address change. Section 489.124(2) gives sole responsibility to the licensee for notifying DBPR in writing of the licensee's current mailing address and phone number. Failure to notify DBPR of a change of address shall constitute a violation of this section. In addition, if your address changes and you do not notify DBPR, you may not receive important mailings such as your renewal notice.

## New Fingerprinting Requirement

Effective November 1, 2007, all applications for initial licensure as construction contractors will be required to have a criminal background check performed by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. This requirement applies to applications for initial licensure, change of status, additional business and endorsement. Each applicant will be required to submit electronic fingerprints through the department's vendor Promissor. Starting October 1, 2007, the fingerprint fee for Promissor is \$56.25. You may contact Promissor

at [www.promissor.com](http://www.promissor.com).

For additional information regarding this requirement, please visit [www.myflorida.com/dbpr/pro/cilb/faq.html](http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr/pro/cilb/faq.html).

## Financially Responsible Officer Bond Reduction

The Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB) has decided to lower the bond requirement for Financially Responsible Officers from \$500,000 to \$100,000. The new bond form is currently available as part of the Financially Responsible Officer Application Package.

## New I-9 Form Deadline for Employees/ New Hires

A revised Form I-9, *Employment Eligibility Verification*, has been released for immediate use with a new M-274, Handbook for Employers, Instructions for Completing the Form I-9.

The new I-9 eliminates some documents as being acceptable proof of citizenship and added one document. The new I-9 should be used immediately as the previous I-9 form was only accepted through December 7, 2007. With the change in documents accepted, all employers should recomplete the new form for all current employees and new hires. The new I-9 can be found at [www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf) and the new Handbook can be found at [www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/m--274.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/m--274.pdf).

# Initiative:

**F**laSEIA wishes to thank the following companies for their financial commitment to FlaSEIA and the Florida solar energy industry as participants in the Florida Manufacturers' Initiative (FMI) program.

**DHW COLLECTORS**

AET d/b/a Thermafin Manufacturing  
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# **Horizon:**

**2008**

**ASEA Solar 2008, Town and Country Resort &  
Convention Center, San Diego, CA  
May 3–8**

**FlaSEIA Board of Director's Meeting, Longwood  
June (TBA)**

**Southeast Building Conference,  
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL  
July 31 – August 2**

**FlaSEIA Board of Director's, Annual Meeting & Auction  
November (TBA)**

**FlaSEIA Board of Director's Meeting, Longwood  
August (TBA)**

**Solar Power 2008, San Diego, CA  
October 13–14**

**For additional information on the above meetings and/  
or events, please contact the FlaSEIA office at  
(407) 339–2010.**



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Longwood, FL 32750-4125  
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Website: [www.FlaSEIA.org](http://www.FlaSEIA.org)**