

FLORIDA SOLAR ENERGY CENTER[®]
Creating Energy Independence

PRESS RELEASE

A Research Institute of the University of Central Florida



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For Immediate Release

**Solar Power Systems Educate Students, Reduce Costs for Schools
and Provide Emergency Power**

COCOA, July 14, 2011 – Nearly 100 Florida schools will be soaking up solar rays to power their buildings this fall thanks to the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC).

FSEC, a University of Central Florida research institute, is providing each school with a 10-kilowatt, solar photovoltaic (PV) system valued at more than \$80,000. These systems allow schools to capture the sun's rays and turn them into energy to help reduce electricity costs, and they also serve as generators during a power outage. Installation of the systems – under way now – will reduce energy costs by up to \$1,500 a year and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Each ground-mounted, 1000-square-foot PV system is capable of providing enough power to run a small appliance like a fridge, overhead lighting or series of electrical outlets.

Schools are getting the systems through the SunSmart Schools E-Shelter program, which was created with a \$10 million stimulus grant. A leader in solar energy research, FSEC is coordinating the program and providing educational materials for teachers to use with students, as well as training for school faculty and staff.

“Having these photovoltaic systems in plain view on the school campuses is that first step in raising awareness about this important renewable energy technology,” said Susan Schleith, FSEC project manager for the SunSmart program. “And when a student, parent or teacher asks, ‘What is that and what does it do?’ that’s when the learning begins.”

Schools receiving the systems are from around the state and include elementary, middle and high schools as well as one college. They were selected to take part in the program based on their status as an emergency shelter, demographics, and their renewable energy education and outreach plans.

Each PV system is connected to the utility electric grid, supplements the school’s electricity during normal operations and keeps a bank of back-up batteries charged. In the event the school is being used as a shelter and there’s an electrical outage, the system powers critical items in the shelter, using the back-up batteries when the sun isn’t shining.

For classroom learning, the system also functions as a learning resource, allowing students and teachers to see how much energy their system is producing, study the relationship between the environment and the PV system and explore the basics of electricity.

At the Academy of Natural Resources at Island Coast High School in Cape Coral, Fla., students take classes in subjects such as environmental science, solar energy and aquaculture. Science teacher Cherie Sukovich says the system will increase students’ understanding of how weather and other environmental factors play a role in capturing the sun’s rays.

“It gives us a very concrete, real-world way to show them an abstract concept,” she said.

Vergona-Bowersox Electric Inc., of Boca Raton, is installing the solar systems at the schools and will finish by 2012.

Following is the list of participating schools. For more information about the program, visit www.fsec.ucf.edu/go/sunsmart.

School	City	County
DeSoto Middle	Arcadia	DeSoto
Avon Elementary	Avon Park	Highlands
Baker School	Baker	Okaloosa
Boynton Beach Community High	Boynton Beach	Palm Beach
W. R. Tolar K-8	Bristol	Liberty
Hernando High	Brooksville	Hernando
Island Coast High	Cape Coral	Lee
Chipley High	Chipley	Washington
McMullen-Booth Elementary	Clearwater	Pinellas
Brevard Community College	Cocoa	Brevard
Endeavour Elementary Magnet	Cocoa	Brevard
Crawfordville Elementary	Crawfordville	Wakulla
Riversink Elementary	Crawfordville	Wakulla
Antioch Elementary	Crestview	Okaloosa
Champion Elementary	Daytona Beach	Volusia
Atlantic Community High	Delray Beach	Palm Beach
Heritage Middle	Deltona	Volusia
Pine Ridge High	Deltona	Volusia
Ronald W. Reagan-Doral Senior High	Doral	Miami-Dade
Dunnellon High	Dunnellon	Marion
Oak Hammock Middle	Fort Myers	Lee

Freeport High	Freeport	Walton
Fruitland Park Elementary	Fruitland Park	Lake
C.A. Moore Elementary	Ft. Pierce	St. Lucie
Geneva Elementary	Geneva	Seminole
Haines City Senior High	Haines City	Polk
East Gadsden High	Havana	Gadsden
Havana Middle	Havana	Gadsden
Hialeah Gardens Senior High	Hialeah Gardens	Miami-Dade
South Dade Senior High	Homestead	Miami-Dade
Eden Park Elementary	Immokalee	Collier
Pinecrest Elementary	Immokalee	Collier
Warfield Elementary	Indiantown	Martin
Abess Park Elementary	Jacksonville	Duval
Arlington Middle	Jacksonville	Duval
Chets Creek Elementary	Jacksonville	Duval
LaVilla School of the Arts	Jacksonville	Duval
Key West High	Key West	Monroe
Discovery Intermediate	Kissimmee	Osceola
Ventura Elementary	Kissimmee	Osceola
Dr. NE Roberts Elementary	Lakeland	Polk
Carver Middle	Leesburg	Lake
Leesburg Elementary	Leesburg	Lake
Lyman High	Longwood	Seminole
A. Crawford Mosley High	Lynn Haven	Bay
Madison County Central	Madison	Madison
Lafayette High	Mayo	Lafayette
Robert Morgan Education Center	Miami	Miami-Dade
South Miami Senior	Miami	Miami-Dade
Avalon Middle	Milton	Santa Rosa
Bennett C. Russell Elementary	Milton	Santa Rosa
Everglades High	Miramar	Broward
Jefferson County Middle High	Monticello	Jefferson
River Ridge Middle High	New Port Richey	Pasco
Atwater Elementary	North Port	Sarasota
Hammett Bowen Jr. Elementary	Ocala	Marion
Vanguard High	Ocala	Marion
East River High	Orlando	Orange
Memorial Middle	Orlando	Orange
Pine View	Osprey	Sarasota
Palm Beach Gardens Community High	Palm Beach Gardens	Palm Beach
Cedar Grove Elementary	Panama City	Bay
Jinks Middle	Panama City	Bay
Longleaf Elementary	Pensacola	Escambia

R. C. Lipscomb Elementary	Pensacola	Escambia
Taylor County Elementary	Perry	Taylor
T. Dewitt High	Pierson	Volusia
Knights Elementary	Plant City	Hillsborough
Palmetto Elementary	Poinciana	Polk
Poinciana Elementary	Poinciana	Osceola
Kingsway Elementary	Port Charlotte	Charlotte
Bayshore Elementary	Port St. Lucie	St. Lucie
John M. Sexton Elementary	Saint Petersburg	Pinellas
Sebastian River High	Sebastian	Indian River
Explorer K-8	Spring Hill	Hernando
St. Cloud Elementary	St. Cloud	Osceola
Douglas L. Jamerson, Jr. Elementary	St. Petersburg	Pinellas
Fairmount Park Elementary	St. Petersburg	Pinellas
Port Salerno Elementary	Stuart	Martin
Deerlake Middle	Tallahassee	Leon
Apollo Elementary	Titusville	Brevard
Trenton Elementary	Trenton	Gilchrist
Vernon High	Vernon	Washington
Oslo Middle	Vero Beach	Indian River
Wiregrass Ranch High	Wesley Chapel	Pasco
West Gate Elementary	West Palm Beach	Palm Beach
Yulee High	Yulee	Nassau
Yulee Middle	Yulee	Nassau

About FSEC

The Florida Solar Energy Center, a research institute of the University of Central Florida, is the largest and most active state-supported energy research institute in the nation. Current divisions and their research activities include Advanced Energy Research: alternative transportation systems, hydrogen fuel and fuel cells; Buildings Research: energy-efficient buildings; and Solar Energy: solar water and pool heating and solar electric and distributed generation systems. For more information about the center, visit <http://www.floridaenergycenter.org> or call the FSEC Public Affairs Office at 321-638-1015.

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