

## Florida Governor Crist Receives “Golden Meter” Award for Solar Energy Leadership

*Solar Advocates, Industry Honor Sunshine State's Net Metering Progress*

**March 31, 2009 - Tallahassee, Fla. –**

At a ceremony held in Tallahassee today, Florida Governor Charlie Crist received the 2009 Golden Meter Award for his leadership in creating policies that foster a strong solar energy market. The Award was presented by The Network for New Energy Choices, The Solar Alliance, The Vote Solar Initiative, The Interstate Renewable Energy Council and The Florida Solar Energy Industries Association.

“I am honored to accept this Golden Meter Award for supporting Florida’s growing solar energy market,” said Governor Crist. “Our residents and businesses have an immense opportunity to benefit from clean, reliable, in-state energy from the sun. I will continue working to unleash the solar opportunity in the Sunshine State.”

“Net metering” allows homeowners and small business owners who install solar or wind renewable energy systems to connect to the grid and receive credit for the electricity they produce. It is one of the most effective tools that states can implement to promote small scale solar installations. Under the leadership of Governor Crist, in 2008 Florida implemented a world-class net metering program that expanded the size of eligible systems from 10-kilowatts (kW) to 2-megawatts (MW). The new net metering rules will play a critical part in accelerating solar market growth and green job opportunities in the Sunshine State.

“Solar is ready-to-go technology that can help address America's economic challenges, desire for energy independence, and growing concern about climate change,” said James Rose, policy analyst for Network for New Energy Choices. “Florida’s net metering policies will encourage the most innovative developers, manufacturers and entrepreneurs to set up shop here as the state and national economies recover.”

"Florida made exciting advances in solar policy over the past year, success owed in large part to the vision and leadership of Governor Crist," said Gwen Rose, deputy director of Vote Solar. "These new net metering rules mark real progress made along the path to meet the Governor's ambitious 20 percent by 2020 renewable energy goals for Florida. Once coupled with a strong incentive program, Florida will be poised to create tens of thousands of new jobs and become a major player in the nation's burgeoning renewable energy economy."

"We are already seeing Florida jobs being created and preserved by solar energy projects. Effective policies like the new net metering program are key to unlocking solar's full economic potential," said Bruce Kershner, executive director of the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association. Solar Alliance President Carrie Cullen Hitt continued, "The speed and efficacy with which Florida implemented these net metering



From left to right: Barry Moline, FMEA; Chris Maingot, Superior Solar (FlaSEIA); Bruce Kershner, FlaSEIA; James Rose, NNEC; Gwen Rose, Vote Solar; Governor Charlie Crist; Martha Duggan, SunEdison (Solar Alliance); Yann Brandt, AGT; Rich Paul-Hus, Hypower Inc.; Nick Larossi, SACE

rules serve as a model for future solar progress in the Sunshine State, and indeed for states nationwide."

Past Golden Meter Award recipients include the Colorado Public Utilities Commission and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. For more information about net metering progress nationwide, read the Network for New Energy Choices report, *Freeing the Grid: Best and Worst Practices in State Net Metering Policies and Interconnection Standards*: [http://www.newenergychoices.org/uploads/FreeingTheGrid2008\\_report.pdf](http://www.newenergychoices.org/uploads/FreeingTheGrid2008_report.pdf)

#### **About the Vote Solar Initiative:**

Vote Solar is a non-profit grassroots organization working to fight climate change and foster economic opportunity by bringing solar energy into the mainstream. Since 2002 Vote Solar has engaged in state, local and federal advocacy campaigns to remove regulatory barriers and implement the key policies needed to bring solar to scale. [www.votesolar.org](http://www.votesolar.org)

#### **About the Solar Alliance:**

The Solar Alliance is a state-focused alliance of global solar equipment manufacturers, photovoltaic (PV) system integrators, and financiers dedicated to accelerating the promise of PV energy in the United States. [www.solaralliance.org](http://www.solaralliance.org)

#### **About Network for New Energy Choices (NNEC):**

NNEC promotes policies that ensure safe, clean, and environmentally responsible energy options. NNEC collaborates with all levels of government, planning agencies, public interest organizations, government and industry associations, professional societies, labor groups, businesses, and the public. [www.newenergychoices.org](http://www.newenergychoices.org)

#### **About the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC):**

IREC is a U.S. non-profit organization committed to accelerating the sustainable utilization of renewable energy and technologies in and through state and local government and community activities. [www.irecusa.org](http://www.irecusa.org)

#### **About the Florida Solar Energy Industries Association (FlaSEIA):**

Founded in 1977, FlaSEIA is a nonprofit professional association of companies involved in the solar energy industry. Members include manufacturers, distributors, contractors, retailers and consultants who provide solar water heating, pool heating and solar electric systems. Research Centers and Utilities also are members. [www.flaseia.org](http://www.flaseia.org)

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