

Sarasota County First Renewable Community Demonstration Project

- National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has named Sarasota County as its first renewable demonstration project in the country.
- Sarasota County is taking the first step to reduce its dependence on fossil fuel. The Demonstration Project is an opportunity to be an energy leader and to leverage partnerships to achieve energy independence.
- A renewable energy-based community is unique because it allows people to achieve energy independence by using energy that runs a home to power a motor vehicle.
- To reach the goal of zero energy, a house must be super energy-efficient and consume no more power annually than a small photovoltaic system (solar powered) can supply.
- A zero energy home (ZEH) includes the following strategies:
 - Structural insulated panels
 - Energy efficient cooling/heating equipment
 - Reflective metal roofs to reduce heat gain
 - Heating/cooling ducts located inside an environmentally controlled space
 - High efficiency windows to reduce solar heat gain
 - ENERGY STAR rated appliances and lighting
- ZEH's have many advantages:
 - Improved Comfort – reduces interior temperature fluctuations
 - Reliability – a ZEH can continue to function even during blackouts
 - A ZEH home protects owners from fluctuations in energy prices
 - Environmentally Friendly – a ZEH saves energy and reduces pollution

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- The new Florida Energy Act includes cash rebates that will reduce consumer costs significantly for solar power applications.
- The Florida legislature appropriated \$2.5 million in funding for both commercial and consumer solar incentives for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.
- The Federal Energy Bill offers a 30% tax credit to individuals for the purchase of residential solar energy systems and a \$2000 tax credit to homebuilders of houses that are 50% more efficient than the national code. A zero-energy home would qualify through 2007.
- Renewable Demonstration Project is expected to begin by the end of 2006.