

## County Goes Green and Is the First to Get the **GOLD**

In September 2005, Mayor Richard T. Crotty announced that Orange County would register to become a Florida Green Local Government within three years. The County has not only achieved that goal, but it is the **first municipality in Florida to achieve the green local government certification at the GOLD level.**

Terry Jennsen, a member of the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), Inc, presented the award to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on Earth Day, April 22, 2008.



The Florida Green Building Coalition's Green Local Government designation recognizes green cities and counties for achievements in outstanding environmental stewardship. To become certified, a municipality must apply and meet a comprehensive list of criteria, organized in terms of local governmental agency functions, and outlined in the Green Local Government Standard on FGBC's Web site.



The standard focuses on improving environmental performance through a number of mediums: energy, water, air, land, and waste; and evaluates environmental practices done in-house, incentives and ordinances that foster green practices, and educational activities to improve the environment. Some of Orange County's practices and accomplishments include:

- Meeting many of the criteria regarding fleet management, including the addition of hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles to its fleet, and conducting best management practices to prevent stormwater pollution and recycling waste





Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFV) and hybrids in the County fleet

- Improving the existing County GIS system by including sustainability indicators, which is readily available to assist with community and environmental planning
- Implementing a green building awards program to recognize green projects in the government and private sector
- Invest in the installation of the largest solar photovoltaic (PV) array in the southeast. The PV array, which will be installed on the roof of the Orange County Convention Center, will allow for a substantial energy savings, and will become a model for clean energy in the community and the nation. This was made possible by partnering with the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC) and other agencies.
- Being designated a Tree City USA community through the Arbor Day Foundation 
- Continuing a land acquisition program, Green PLACE, to purchase and manage environmentally sensitive lands. Green PLACE stands for Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection. 
- Offering education and outreach to the community, which includes disseminating green products such as reusable cotton bags for shopping, tire pressure gauges to improve fuel efficiency, and low flow showerheads to reduce water usage, as well as a Toilet Replacement Voucher Incentive Program that offers up to \$100 per toilet to replace existing high-flow toilets with ultra-low-flow toilet (ULFT) models

One rewarding part of this process was discovering the numerous practices Orange County was already involved in to conserve natural resources and limit impacts on the environment. Some examples of this are: the process of using methane gas from landfills to provide enough electricity for more than 10,000 homes, a fleet that includes hybrid and alternative-fuel vehicles with plans to incorporate more, a mass transit bus system, a mobile irrigation lab, financial incentives to assist residents in making home improvements and landscape changes which conserve and protect local water resources, a progressive urban tree program, an active Florida Yards and Neighborhood program, an established urban growth boundary, and an

environmentally sensitive lands acquisition program. Identifying these existing programs was encouraging and helped to inspire continued improvements and further initiatives to reach the Green Local Government standard.

What started out as pledge in 2005 - to reduce petroleum fuel consumption in the County fleet by 20% over five years, to reduce electricity use in County owned buildings, and to become a certified Florida Green Local Government within three years - transformed into an initiative to join the fight to stop climate change.

As demand for sustainable communities and clean renewable energies continues to grow, Orange County will meet this demand, resulting in a competitive economic advantage. Renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind, can generate jobs in construction, manufacturing, and installation. One bonus of being a green government is that operations can run more efficiently, save money, and experience more effective risk and asset management.



For more information on the Florida Green Building Coalition and green certification programs visit: [www.FloridaGreenBuilding.org](http://www.FloridaGreenBuilding.org). To learn more about what Orange County is doing to create a green county, slow global warming, and what you can do to help, visit [www.ocfl.net/orangetogreen](http://www.ocfl.net/orangetogreen).



Orange County Convention Center