

October 24, 2013

In This Issue

[Articles of Interest: Amazon Brings Distribution Center to Ruskin](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Putnam Proposes Sales Tax Reduction On Energy Purchases](#)

[Stalled Septic Tank Study Could Delay New Regulations](#)

[Proposed Workers' Comp Rate Increase Denied](#)

[FGBC Debuts Certifying Agent Recognition Program](#)

[Houzz Survey Reveals Latest Kitchen Trends](#)

[RESNET Opens Consumer Website on HERS Index](#)

[FGBC Welcomes New Members & Certifying Agents](#)

[Earn Cash Back with FGBC Rewards Program](#)

Articles of Interest

Amazon Brings Distribution Center to Ruskin
[More](#)

Florida Joins Mississippi in Flood Insurance Rate Hike Lawsuit
[More](#)

The New-Home Buyer's State of Satisfaction

Putnam Proposes Sales Tax Reduction On Energy

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam said he will push in 2014 for a \$250 million reduction on sales taxes that businesses pay for energy. Putnam outlined his legislative proposals in Orlando at the Florida Energy Summit being held by his department. He said he would propose cutting the commercial energy sales tax in half, noting that residential utility customers do not pay the tax.

Putnam also proposed creating a sales tax holiday weekend for the purchase of energy- and water-saving appliances costing up to \$1,500. He said a 2010 rebate program for Energy Star appliances saved 7.6 million kilowatt hours of electricity and 124 million gallons of water in a year.

The Legislature in 2011 transferred the Florida Energy Office from the governor to Putnam's department. After several years of failed legislation to require or encourage more renewable energy, the Legislature in 2012 passed what Putnam described as a "modest" energy bill (HB 7117) providing \$100 million in tax breaks over five years for the development of renewable energy.

In 2013, the Legislature passed HB 579 providing a \$25,000 per vehicle rebate for converting commercial fleet vehicles to natural gas. The bill calls for spending \$6 million per year for five years.

The Legislature in 2013 also passed HB 277 to partially implement a 2008 constitutional amendment that exempts renewable energy improvements from residential property tax assessments. In addition to the tax cut for commercial energy use, Putnam said he would propose extending the tax exemption for renewable energy improvements to commercial property. [[More](#)]

Stalled Septic Tank Study Will Delay New Regulations

The engineering firm conducting a \$5.1-million study of septic tank alternative technologies is asking for a one-year

[More](#)

**FGBC In The News
Neal Named FGBC
Builder of the Year**

[More](#)

**Funding
Opportunities**

**National & State Green
Building Funding
Opportunities** [\[More\]](#)

Quick Links

[Join FGBC](#)

[Linkedin Group](#)

[Facebook Blog](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Certification Counts

**"Florida Green"
Certifications To Date
Homes**

1,026 Homes in 2013
6,821 total as of
10/17/13

Commercial Buildings

Registered: 26
Certified: 8

Hi-Rise

Registered: 9
Certified: 2

Land Development

Registered: 61
Certified: 13

Local Government

Registered: 68
Certified: 48

Multi-Family

In 2013
10 Buildings
196 Units

Recent Certifications

Abacoa

Land Development
2,050 acres
residential, retail &
commercial space
Score: 210

extension, which could further delay implementation of septic tank regulations across the state. Hazen and Sawyer is requesting an extension until Jan. 16, 2016 to complete the study.

HB 1263 in 2012 prohibited local governments from requiring advanced septic tank systems until the study is completed. Cities and counties with regulations that existed prior to Jan. 31, 2012 were exempted.

The Legislature required the study beginning in the 2008-09 budget and prohibited the Florida Department of Health from proceeding with nitrogen-reduction activities until the study was completed. As a result of the budget language, the department delayed implementing a rule requiring advanced septic systems in the Wekiva River area north of Orlando.

Homebuilders supported the requirement for the study, saying the advanced septic tank systems being required in Wakulla County and some other areas were too expensive to buy and operate. [\[More\]](#)

Proposed Workers' Comp Rate Increase Denied

Florida businesses won't have to worry about big increases next year in their workers-compensation insurance rates. The state Office of Insurance Regulation announced that it had rejected a proposed overall 1 percent increase in rates for 2014, though it would approve a 0.7 percent hike.

The decision follows increases of 6.1 percent, 8.9 percent and 7.8 percent during the past three years. Those hikes came after major rate cuts stemming from a 2003 law that overhauled the workers-compensation system - an overhaul that, even with a potential slight uptick in 2014, has resulted in a cumulative rate reduction of 56 percent, according to the Office of Insurance Regulation.

Numerous factors go into workers-compensation filings, but Insurance Commissioner Kevin McCarty said in a prepared statement Wednesday that rates could go down as much as 8.3 percent in the future if tighter limits were placed on reimbursements for care at hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers. [\[More\]](#)

FGBC Debuts Certifying Agent Recognition Program

The FGBC Board of Directors has approved a new recognition and rewards program for Certifying Agents. The rewards will be based on the number of homes certified over a calendar

Certified: 10/11/13

City of Tarpon Springs

Level: Silver

Score: 34

Certified: 8/20/13

**Florida Water Star
Certifications
NFWFMD and SRWMD
Areas**
7 Homes

**Education
Opportunities**

1000 Friends of Florida

Free monthly webinars

[\[More\]](#)

November 14, 2013

1:00 - 4:45 p.m.

**Florida-Friendly
Landscaping™
Program**

Free Class - 2 hours of

CAM CEUs are available

2556 West Hwy 318

Citra, FL 32113

Questions 352-273-4515

[\[Register\]](#)

November 15, 2013

**FGBC Certifying Agent
Annual Verification
Course**

Gainesville, FL

[\[Register\]](#)

Calendar of Events

November 1, 2013

**"Smart & Sustainable
Communities"
Workshop**

The Pearl Hotel

63 Main Street

Rosemary Beach, FL

[Email For Details](#)

or Call: 850-855-2108

November 4-8, 2013

**ARCSA Annual
Conference**

Austin Convention

Center

Austin, Tx

[More](#)

**FGBC Committee
Meetings**

Board of Directors

year period. The winners will be recognized at the FGBC annual achievement awards ceremony held during the GreenTrends Conference each year. Award categories and their corresponding rewards are:

- **Gold Level**-100+ Homes Certified
- free membership & GreenTrends registration
- **Silver Level**-50-99 Homes Certified
- 50% discount on membership & GreenTrends registration
- **Bronze Level**-25-49 Homes Certified
- 25 % discount on membership & GreenTrends registration

All winners also receive a plaque in recognition of their achievements.

Houzz Survey Reveals Latest Kitchen Trends

A recent Houzz survey of almost 8,000 homeowners in the U.S. and Canada offers insight into what consumers really want in their kitchens these days. The big reveal is that most all hate their current kitchen countertops and no longer tolerate Formica or tile. Half want granite and 36 percent will choose quartz. What does the dream kitchen look like? It looks a lot like this, which is one of the Top 10 photos saved to ideabooks on Houzz from July-September 2013.



2nd Wednesday
Monthly
3 p.m.

Commercial

1st Tuesday
Monthly
3 p.m.

Education

1st Thursday
Monthly
3:30 p.m. (new)

GreenTrends

4th Tuesday
Monthly
2 p.m.

Hi-Rise

3rd Tuesday
Monthly
11 a.m.

**Homes and Affordable
Housing**

(Joint Meeting)
2nd Tuesday
Monthly
2 p.m.

Land Development

4th Wednesday
Bi-monthly
4 p.m.

Local Government

1st Tuesday
Monthly
10:30 a.m.

**Membership and
Programs &
Promotions**

(Joint Meeting)
1st Wednesday
Monthly
3 p.m.

*Traditional Kitchen by San Francisco
Interior Designers & Decorators
Fiorella Design*

What is it about this kitchen that everyone likes? Well, 75 percent of the respondents

want soft, neutral colors in the kitchen and 65 percent will choose stainless steel appliances, half will select tile backsplash, 35 percent will opt for hardwood floors, and 50 percent said a "chef's stove" is their dream appliance. And no surprise, over 75 percent want the kitchen open to other living areas, with 61 percent incorporating a kitchen island.

Improving the overall look and feel of the kitchen was cited as the main motivating factor for remodeling, followed by improving function. Upgrading appliances and improving storage came next. Surprisingly, increasing home value came in at No. 5 as a motivating factor, barely beating out the desire to have an open floor plan and to improve entertaining space.

That means, for the most part, homeowners are remodeling their kitchens for themselves, not a future buyer. And many are also doing it with the environment in mind. Nearly half (49 percent) say that using eco-friendly appliances and materials in the kitchen is important. [[More](#)]

RESNET Opens Consumer Website on HERS Index

Consumers are now able to learn about what the HERS Index is, how it works and where to find a HERS rater or builder through a newly launched RESNET website (<http://www.HERSindex.com>). In addition, the site offers interactive tools, videos and articles to explain the benefits of a HERS rated home, how the HERS index works, and what variables impact the energy rating. The searchable database of energy raters and HERS partner builders needs some refinement, but it does offer lists with hyperlinks. [[More](#)]

FGBC Welcomes New Members & Certifying Agents

New Members:

-**Claire Lewis**, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program, Gainesville, FL FGBC Sponsor: Deirdre Irwin

-**Susan Adams**, Ro-Mac Lumber & Supply, Inc., Leesburg, FL FGBC Sponsor: Greg Thomas

Earn Cash Back with FGBC Rewards Program

The FGBC Membership Rewards programs offers cash rewards for recruiting new members into the FGBC. For each member you sign up, earn 10 percent of their membership dues.

Credits will be applied to your dues renewal. Based on the number of members recruited in 2013, the current standings as of October 23, 2013 are:

Recruiter	New Members
Carmack, Gary	5
Poirier, Doug	3
Smith, Drew	3
Conn, Randy	2
Crum, John	2
DeCarlo, Tracy	2
Irwin, Deirdre	2
Ritter, Nate	2
Abney, Kyle	1
Arce, Omar	1
Burke, Eileen	1
Camp, Skip	1
Kiefer, John	1
Lazar, Bill	1
Rinehart, John	1
Rutenberg, Marc	1
Thomas, Greg	1
Triolo, Joe	1

Certifying Agents this is a no-brainer for you. Every time you contract for certification services, be sure to include an FGBC membership in your contract price. Fill out the membership form and submit with payment to FGBC to earn your rewards.

Check the FGBC website for details and to download a membership application and Rewards flyer. [[More](#)]

Sincerely,

Suzanne Cook, CAE
FGBC Executive Director