**Florida Team Starts Major Dept. of Energy Funded Project on Advancing Solar and Energy Storage**

Renewable energy accounts for less than 1% of Florida’s power generation capacity, projected to be up to about 2% in 10 years. And, a promising renewable energy resource, solar power, is only a small fraction of this number. Many would like to see solar grow to supply a greater portion of our energy needs in Florida, but, doing so requires effectively addressing the intermittency of the resource and unlocking additional value streams it can provide when integrated into the electric power grid.

The Florida Alliance for Accelerating Solar and Storage Technology Readiness (FAASSTeR) has been selected through a competitive process to receive $1.75 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, under its State Energy Strategies program. The team is now kicking off a three-year project to provide detailed studies and analysis, and assist in developing the strategies that can lead to successful expansion of solar, energy storage, and other distributed energy resources in the state.

This Florida-focused work is expected to reveal new value streams possible from solar energy in combination with energy storage and other distributed energy resources, and to assist utilities in strategic planning and program development based on the project results.

With Florida’s municipal and cooperative electric utilities playing a key role, the project is poised to significantly aid in the successful expansion of renewable energy in the state of Florida. Through the Dept. of Energy and the network of other State Energy Strategies teams, results and best practices arising from this Florida initiative may also have national impact and benefit.

Tallahassee energy technology firm, Nhu Energy, based in Innovation Park, will lead the effort, working in partnership with the Florida Municipal Electric Assoc., as well as the Office of Energy at the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the National Renewable Energy Lab, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, and Florida Utilities.

Florida’s municipal electric utilities, often leaders in developing innovative new programs in the energy area, will play a central role in success of the project. A *Utility Core Team* has been formed, which includes the City of Tallahassee electric utility, Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), JEA (Jacksonville), Lakeland Electric, Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) and the Florida Municipal Power Agency (FMPA). These utilities will help guide the project, provide data and could potentially pilot new strategies and ideas that emerge as the project progresses.