

## **Nothing will influence the future more**

Contributed by Carl Moody, SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS of Brevard, Inc.

Nothing will influence the future of our planet, the security of our nation, our economic stability, or the health of our air, land and water more than the way we choose to produce and consume energy.

Everyone involved with energy usage and conservation has heard people say things like this over the last few years, and even the last decade. Some of us live and die by this thinking. Some of us dip a toe into energy conservation and sustainability, doing the usual aluminum can recycling, turning off lights and employing reusable bags to carry our groceries around. Some of us just go on with our lives and our current way of doing business thinking that somehow, magically, someone is going to solve our state's energy issues and we don't really need to get involved. And then there's the swimming pool industry...

Within this organization (FSPA) there is arguably the most diverse group of professionals ever to work cooperatively. They are service professionals, pool contractors, pool heater manufacturers, pool and spa retailers, owners and sales reps for pool and spa distribution centers, pool equipment manufacturers and sales reps, and then there are those solar contractors! All from different backgrounds, all with different skill sets, all with varying points of view. They make up the Energy and Sustainability Committee and support government relations efforts of the FSPA.

The Energy and Sustainability Committee has gone beyond being instrumental in helping to steer the direction of policy making where energy use and our industry is concerned. We are not finished by any means, nor will we probably ever be. As the years go by, and our fossil fuel resources become depleted, utility costs will continue their steady upward trend. If we weren't here doing what we're doing to raise efficiency standards, and increase awareness of the availability of energy efficient pool and spa options, where would this industry be headed? At some point, it would become so expensive to operate a swimming pool that we would see a steady, rapid decline in the number of homeowners interested in building pools; and that would no doubt hurt us all. My point is simply this: No matter who you are or what you do in this organization, energy usage and conservation will become an ever-increasing component in the success of your business. We don't have to watch the millions of gallons of crude gushing into the waters of our Gulf to know that we are at a critical juncture in this state. The direction we choose to go legislatively over the next few months and years and what our local, state, and federal governments choose to spend our money on will decide the fate of Florida's energy future for decades to come.

If you're not currently involved, get involved! If you don't know where your representatives stand on energy issues, find out! These people are not celebrities with a velvet rope around them. They are everyday Floridians like you and me; and it is their job to be accessible to their constituents. Access them! Tell them what you think and how their policy making affects you, your family and your business directly.

The Energy and Sustainability Committee and FSPA are here to represent your interests. Go to the meetings and get involved! You know you can take a little time to help improve your business. Join or re-join your local Chapter. Volunteer some of your time to your fellow businessmen and women in the industry. And remember, you don't have to be a Board member to attend the state committee meetings. The people in these committee meetings are making decisions on your behalf; and the meetings are open to all Florida pool and spa professionals. Go and find out what's going on. You'll either be glad you did or you'll wish you had.