

Sun-Sentinel

December 11, 2007

GOING GREEN UP ON THE ROOF

BY: David Fleshler Staff Writer

Gov. Crist on Monday inspected one company's clean-energy project that will give an assist to his ambitious plans to reduce Florida's emissions of greenhouse gases.

The governor climbed a metal staircase to the roof of Advanced Green Technologies, a company that has sprung up to take advantage of the new interest in energy-efficient construction. Under his feet was a 10,000-square-foot network of solar panels that allows the office-warehouse building to draw no electricity from Florida Power & Light Co. from 10:30 a.m. to about 4 p.m.. And crucially in the state of Florida, the solar system is hurricane-resistant.

"They're doing such great things and making such a difference," Crist said, after cutting a red ribbon to inaugurate the system. "The largest solar panel roof in Florida is obviously a great example."

The company, a subsidiary of the established Fort Lauderdale company Advanced Roofing, installed the roof at its headquarters at 2100 NW 21st Ave., and it is selling similar systems to other companies. Publix Supermarkets has bought systems, and Advanced Green Technologies is working with companies in other states to sell more, said Rob Kornahrens, Advanced Roofing's chief executive officer. The green-building subsidiary has a staff of 10 but will add 25 full-time employees next year, he said.

Later that day in downtown Fort Lauderdale, an unusual group of allies gathered to urge support for a proposal in Congress to increase auto mileage standards for the first time in 32 years.

U.S. Rep. Ron Klein, D-Boca Raton, AutoNation Chief Executive Officer Mike Jackson, marine scientists and representatives of the Sierra Club held a joint news conference at the Museum of Discovery and Science in support of a bill that passed the House but faces a veto threat from President Bush.

The bill would require an increase in average automobile fuel efficiency to 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a 40 percent increase; require the nation to obtain 15 percent of electricity from renewable sources; and make an investment of \$20 billion in clean-energy technology.

"We need to make sure that the country becomes energy-independent," said Klein, who had made energy a priority in his campaign. "We should not make another foreign policy decision based on where the next drop of oil is coming from."

Jackson said the bill would force car companies to stop using engine-efficiency improvements to just make cars bigger and more powerful and to put the improvements into raising mileage.

"It's an ambitious target," he said. "But it's a responsible target."