



Florida microgrids valletta

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Hurricane Ian put Florida's energy grid to the test last year. When the storm snuffed out electricity to approximately 2.7 million Floridians, a handful of communities with alternate power sources shone in the darkness.

Tamara Brandt and her husband, Mark, who retired to Wimauma in the Tampa Bay area from Champaign-Urbana, Ill., in May, were able to keep their home powered during and after the storm. The 37 homes in the Medley at Southshore Bay community are testing a solar-powered back-up energy platform.

"I'm very grateful. We felt really safe and had full power," says Brandt. None of the homes in the community lost power thanks to the neighborhood microgrid system — a network of batteries at each home that stores solar power collected from rooftop panels.

Tampa Electric Co. (TECO) is evaluating the performance and cost-effectiveness of the system, called BlockEnergy, developed by Emera Technologies, a subsidiary of Nova Scotia-based Emera, which owns TECO.

"During Hurricane Ian, there were power outages in that neighborhood, but the microgrid did not lose power. They disconnected from the grid and ran off their batteries. The microgrid provided seamless back-up power to those homes," says TECO spokeswoman Cherie Jacobs.

A lot of musicians take up "residency" at a venue -- think Billy Joel at Madison Square Garden or U2 at the Sphere in Las Vegas. Miami's international recording sensation Pitbull has gone a step further, putting his name on a stadium.

The 2024 hurricane season officially ends in about a week. And according to data from the Storm Prediction Center, this season ranks 3rd for the most tropical cyclone induced tornadoes in a hurricane season.

Florida Fish and Wildlife officials were involved in a treasure-hunt-like mystery which put them a step closer to recovering 50 golden coins that were stolen from shipwrecks.



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