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Florida wasn't the first to catch the green wave – many early adaptors complained the state was painfully backward when it came to conservation – but the tide changed in 2007.

Gov. Charlie Crist's Summit on Climate Change in Miami this summer, featuring California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, kicked off an ambitious agenda to green Florida.

"We are here to take action," Crist said at the summit, following through minutes later by signing three executive orders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt energy-efficient building standards.

Crist created a 21-person action team to implement green programs, starting in 2008. The Energy Action team has already made recommendations regarding Florida's energy policy, including legislative initiatives to enhance energy and conservation, and diversify fuels used to generate electricity.

The flurry of legislative action and public interest in all things green has pushed business toward eco-friendly agendas. Architects and developers are receiving more interest for green building projects, and consultants are educating themselves about the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification system.

Adorno & Yoss land use attorney Alfredo Gonzalez is studying for his LEED certification exam so he can guide real estate clients through green building contracts and help them get the most of green building incentives.

"It'll be very important to know about



FILE PHOTO

Gov. Charlie Crist signs executive orders at the Summit on Climate Change, which featured Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

green buildings and how you can get credit for them," he said. "It's coming up with almost every new development on a national level."

## 2007 YEAR IN REVIEW GREEN

Estrellita Sibila, of Weiss Seroeta Helfman Pastoriza Cole & Boniske, P.L., is LEED certified and reaping the rewards of new business.

"This has helped both our private developer clients, as well as our municipal clients," she said. "It has helped my business, as I have been involved in consulting on various green developments throughout the state."

Local green building pioneers William Holly and Loretta Cockrum introduced major green building projects to South Florida's skyline. Holly's Miami Green office condo in Coral Gables is nearing completion, and Cockrum's 1.5 million-square-foot Brickell Financial Centre is slated to open in 2009.

LEED-certified architect Gustavo Berenblum said his firm, BEA International, has seen a surge in demand for green building services.

"A couple of years ago, it was us architects and engineers trying to convince clients to make a project green," he said. "Now, it's a

huge thing that everyone is talking about."

### ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Another area that has flourished in South Florida is the introduction of alternative fuels, primarily ethanol. The region's abundance of biomass and booming trade with Brazil have made the fuel alternative particularly worthwhile for local business.

"You've got companies and scientists coming into Florida and they see it as a stronghold for moving their renewable energy forward," said Gaston Cantens, VP of Florida Crystals Corp., which partnered with University of Florida to build an ethanol plant on the grounds of its Belle Glade sugar plant. "I think people are excited, and it's a new frontier for a lot of businesses."

As green business gathers steam, locally based groups, including the Inter-American Ethanol Commission and the American Biofuels Council, are kicking education and outreach efforts into high gear. More than a dozen local conferences were held this year.



O'Hanlon

"This year, we've done really well, considering that we started later than most other states," said Sean O'Hanlon, executive director of the American Biofuels Council. "Not only are we going to catch up rapidly, but, from what I see, we're going to wind up really taking the leadership position in biofuels and going green."