



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT FOR HOME

Growing season is every season for TECO and FWC as Suncoast Youth Conservation Center debuts in Apollo Beach

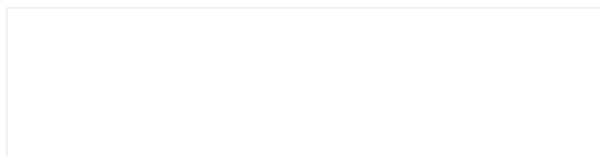
BY BRIAN LOTT JUNE 27, 2016

From fantasy not so many years ago to fact today and well into the future, the Florida Conservation and Technology Center (FCTC) is growing in Apollo Beach – and excitement is budding with it.

The [Suncoast Youth Conservation Center](#) is the first [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) (FWC) facility to open to the public at FCTC. The two-story, 6,000-square-foot building will welcome students and educators from throughout the community to learn, for free, about Florida’s diverse local habitats and ecosystems. During the school year and summer, programs will take place indoors and outdoors and will include saltwater fishing, kayaking through the mangrove-shrouded restored [Newman Branch Creek](#), education about natural resource protection and much more.



Kathy Guindon, director of FWC’s Suncoast Youth Conservation Center, cuts the ribbon on the new building.



It’s part of an ongoing investment by community partners that, in addition to the FWC and TECO, includes the [Florida Aquarium](#) – which last year

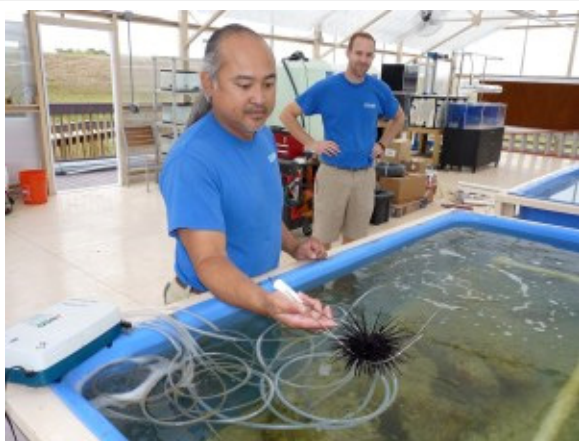


The Suncoast Youth Conservation Center: ready for environmental education.

opened an aquaculture lab at FCTC to study a variety of animal and plant life. Among them: the long-spine black urchin, which plays a critical role in controlling algae in coral reefs.

“I’m an unabashed TECO fan; they’re doing a great job in this community ... This whole facility, going from the Manatee Viewing Center over to here and everything in between is spectacular,” said FWC Chairman Brian Yablonski at the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center ribbon-cutting ceremony in April. “The Suncoast center is a great win for

Florida’s youth and for its fish and wildlife resources, and it’s made possible by this strong partnership, whose mission is helping to create the next generation that cares.”



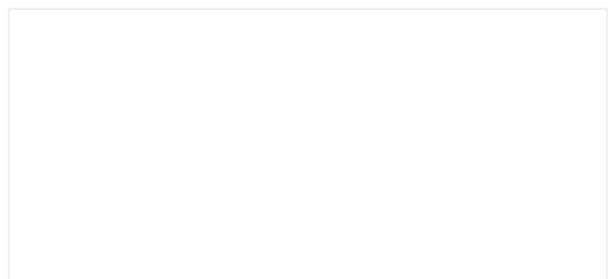
Elsewhere at the Florida Conservation and Technology Center, with the Florida Aquarium, are John Than, foreground, and Craig Johnson in this photo from 2015. Than is holding a long-spine black urchin, one of many species that will be at the center as the facility grows.

FCTC is just to the south of [Tampa Electric’s Manatee Viewing Center](#), site of award-winning environmental education and a place where hundreds of Florida manatees find [lifesaving protection](#) from cold water during the winter. That clean, warm water comes from Tampa Electric’s Big Bend Power Station, where Unit 3 can now use 100 percent natural gas to generate [reliable electricity](#) for the community. And across Dickman Road from the power station and the Manatee Viewing Center, Tampa Electric will build its [largest solar array](#) – 23 megawatts and about 200,000 thin-film solar panels – on 125 acres of company-owned land.

For **Tom Hernandez**, vice president of Energy Supply with Tampa Electric, FCTC is part of an era- and

area-defining commitment to the environment, sustainability, education and more by the project partners, working in concert.

Of the Tampa Electric Manatee Viewing Center, he said, “We’ve actually had a million visitors over the last three and a half seasons and a total of more than 5 million over the last 30 years since we opened the facility – this thing is escalating. Some of the estimates we’ve had are that [with FCTC] we’ll more



than double that. So we could easily see 750,000 to a million visitors a year – researchers, students at all levels, including the university level, just learning about the technology, the research; it’s going to be fantastic.”

He added, “This is just the cusp, this is a turn in the road, with much more to come over the next few years.”

Visit our [YouTube channel](#) (in the **Tampa Electric** category) for videos from the dedication ceremony.

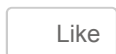


Tom Hernandez at the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center dedication.

Share this:



Like this:



Be the first to like this.

#EDUCATION #ENVIRONMENTAL #FCTC #FLORIDA AQUARIUM
#FLORIDA CONSERVATION AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER
#FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION #FWC #MVC #STEWARDSHIP
#SUNCOAST YOUTH CONSERVATION CENTER #TAMPA ELECTRIC #TOM HERNANDEZ





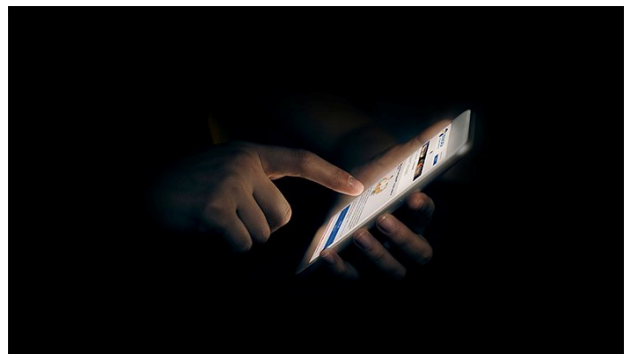
Brian Lott

f    

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

Join TECO at America Recycles Day at Lowry Park – and bring your household items to recycle!

NOVEMBER 13, 2014



Get updates on outages from anywhere

OCTOBER 10, 2018

Zap Cap Systems® honors Coach of the Month

JANUARY 10, 2017

NO COMMENTS FOUND

RECENT POSTS

Customer feedback influences web enhancements

Zap Cap Systems honors Coach of the Bay

Home energy conservation checklist

POPULAR POSTS



You're about to pay a lot less for your electric service

November 7, 2018



Don't get scammed!

February 8, 2019



Stay in the know while you're on the go with Power Updates

June 13, 2014

SUBSCRIBE TO BLOG VIA EMAIL

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

SUBSCRIBE

FOLLOW US



CATEGORIES

Select Category



ARCHIVES

Select Month



Copyright © 2018 Tampa Electric. All rights reserved

⌵