

Scenic Watch



News Sept
2017

"After Irma, it's time to take our power grid underground"



Photo: CNN

"Hurricane Irma took a dramatic toll on Florida's electric grid, with as many as 15 million people losing power. It struck almost 16 years after 9/11, when New York's power grid was adversely affected by the horrific terrorist attacks.

It's worth examining the differences between restoring electric power to Lower Manhattan after 9/11, which took a matter of days, and the forecast for the restoration of power to Florida, which could take close to two weeks -- at least for the western parts of the state.



Fun Festivals and Events Central

Sept 22-Oct 29 (select nights)

The Haunt At Old Town, Kissimmee

Sept 28-Oct 1

Port Orange Family Days, Port Orange

Sept 29-Oct 1

Super Boat National Championship, Clearwater Beach

Sept 29-Oct 1

Tampa Bay Megacon

Sept 30-Oct 1

There is a critical distinction between the New York City power grid and that of much of Florida. The New York City grid is mostly underground -- 93,000 miles, or 75% of the total grid. That is enough cable to wrap around the Earth 3.6 times. However, Florida's power grid is largely above ground, 60% in fact, and much of the grid damage was the result of wind gusts toppling trees and power lines strung across poles.

When all the electric power was knocked out to the underground power system in Lower Manhattan on 9/11, Con Edison laid temporary power cables on street curbs that first day, as they repaired the underground damage within the critical 72 hour window after which food and drink from refrigerators and freezers goes bad. People tend to panic after that.

Restoring power to Florida will be more difficult. It's not just that the overhead poles were damaged or destroyed, but also the overhead connections between the pole-bound transformers and heavily damaged homes and businesses were damaged as well.

Given the threat posed by putting power lines above ground, why not put power to all critical infrastructure in the United States (not just Florida) underground? While we cannot prevent every blackout, we can certainly speed up repair time and better deal with inclement weather (and terrorism) by putting these wires underground. It's worth noting that we keep much of our critical infrastructure underground already -- including pipelines, water, sewage, and natural gas lines.

After Irma we need to build better cities

The standard utility answer is that it costs too much and takes too much time to dig the trenches to bury the electric distribution feeders in the streets and make the necessary underground lower voltage connections to each house, apartment building and

Klingon Feast, Daytona Beach
Oct 1
DeLand Indie Market, DeLand
Oct 5-8
Bicycle Festival, Mount Dora
Oct 6-29 (select nights)
Lowry Park Zoo's Creatures of the Night, Tampa
Oct 6-Nov 4 (select nights)
A Petrified Forest, Altamonte Springs
Oct 6-8
Rock, Mineral, Gem and Jewelry Show, Orlando
Oct 6-8
Daytona Blues Festival, Daytona Beach
Oct 7
First Saturday Jam and Farm Swap, Barberville
Oct 7, Oct 28
Oktoberfest, Casselberry
Oct 6
Jazz Friday at Foosner Museum of Art, Melbourne
Oct 12-13
Alive After 5, Sanford
Oct 12-15
Southern Women's Show, Orlando
Oct 13-15
Oktoberfest Tampa, Tampa
Oct 13-29 (every weekend only)
Pumpkin Festival, Bradenton
Oct 13-15
BBQ and Blues Festival, Clermont
Oct 13
Main Street's Friday Fest, Melbourne
Oct 13-15, 20-22, 27-29
Boo at the Zoo, Melbourne
Oct 14
Come Out With Pride Festival, Orlando
Oct 14
Rocky Water Brew Fest,

business.

As regulated public utilities, almost all power companies in the US are "cost-plus-a-few-percent-profit" operations. In other words, utilities profit from restoring overhead power lines after each hurricane. They are allowed to increase customer bills to recover not only the cost of the repairs, but also the few percent profit as well.

Utility companies from across the United States are rushing to Florida to help local companies get their power and their overhead poles back up as fast as possible. It is a community-supporting activity that is arduous and dangerous.

But did you ever wonder why power companies put the replacement poles in the exact same positions that the destroyed poles were occupying? That restoration activity preserves the status quo until the next hurricane knocks down the new poles, and the cycle repeats, over and over again, across the US... "

--Roger N. Anderson, Center for Computational Learning Systems at Columbia University, CNN

[Read entire article](#)

Counter argument: "Would millions in Irma's path still have power if the lines were underground?"

Melbourne
Oct 14
Oktoberfest on the Beach,
Indian Rocks Beach
Oct 14-15
15th Avenue Monthly
Community Pop Up
Market, Tampa
Oct 14-15
Winter Park Autumn Art
Festival, Winter Park
Oct 15
Space Coast VW Fest,
Satellite Beach
Oct 18-21
Ringling International Arts
Festival, Sarasota
Oct 19-22
Clearwater Jazz Holiday,
Clearwater
Oct 19-22
Biketoberfest, Daytona
Beach
Oct 20-21
25th Annual Haunted
Woods, Thonotosassa
Oct 20-21
5th Annual Haunted
Trails, Osprey
Oct 20-22
Necronomicon, Tampa
Oct 20-22
Upper Tampa Bay
Oktoberfest, Oldsmar
Oct 21-22
Fall Art & Craft Fair,
Cocoa
Oct 21
Downtown Melbourne Art
Walk, Melbourne
Oct 21
Classic Car Cruise-In,
DeLand
Oct 21-29
Spooky Empire, Orlando
Oct 22
Florida Harmonica
Championships, New
Smyrna Beach
Oct 22
Festival Calle Orange,
Orlando
Oct 26-29
John's Pass Seafood
Festival, Madeira Beach
Oct 28



Photo: C.M. Guerrero, Miami Herald

Severe flooding and storm surge can also put the grid out of commission after storms, according to NPR.

'You're simply trading off one type of risk for another,' Ted Kury, an energy expert at the University of Florida, told NPR. 'Yes, you've mitigated the risk of losing power because of a failure in the pole or a tree getting blown into the lines. But you've traded that risk off for outages due to storm surge or to flooding.'

Across the country, only about 20 percent of U.S. power lines are underground, the Energy Information Agency reports.

Compare that with Germany, where nearly all low and medium voltage lines are buried safely underground, providing electricity to homes and apartments across the country, according to CNN. That's led to fewer outages in Germany, CNN reports — but then again, the northern European county doesn't deal with hurricanes..

--Jared Gilmour, McClatchy via Miami Herald

Tampa Pig Jig, Tampa
Oct 28-30

Manasota Pumpkin
Festival, Bradenton
Oct 28-29

Zoo Boo Bash, Sanford
Oct 28-29

Mount Dora Craft Fair,
Mount Dora

South

Oct 4-6

West Palm Beach Antiques
Festival, West Palm Beach

Oct 5-28 (select nights)
Fright Nights, West Palm
Beach

Oct 5-8

Bird Festival, Coral Gables

Oct 6-8

Oktoberfest, Oakland Park

Oct 6-8

Pirate Festival, Fort Myers
Beach

Oct 6-8

Oktoberfest, Port St Lucie

Oct 6-10

Italian Film Festival,
Miami

Oct 7

Harvest Fest, Jupiter

Oct 8-9

Beach Town Music
Festival, Vero Beach

Oct 8

Miami Carnival Parade and
Festival, Miami

Oct 13-15

Florida International Air
Show, Punta Gorda

Oct 18-22

Humphrey Bogart Film
Festival, Key Largo

Oct 19

Alive After Five, Punta
Gorda

Oct 21

Lantern Festival, Delray
Beach

Oct 21

Mercato Brew-Ha-Ha Craft
Beer Festival, Naples

Oct 20-29

Fantasy Fest, Key West
Oct 20-22, 27-29

Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

[Read entire article](#)

[Additional counter arguments](#) in the Palm Beach Post

Photo from Jacksonville Beach



Photo: Rachel Cociolo

Citizens report that Irma took down the last billboard in Jacksonville Beach.

Orlando Placemaking: Adaptive reuse as "building owners

Oct 21-22
18th Annual Downtown
Stuart Craft Festival,
Stuart
Oct 21-22
Coconut Grove Pumpkin
Patch Festival, Coconut
Grove
Oct 21-22
Haunted Pirate Fest and
Mermaid Splash, Boynton
Beach
Oct 23
Heroes and Villains 5K,
Key West
Oct 26
The Smallest Parade in
the Universe, Key West
Oct 27-29
Stone Crab Festival,
Naples
Oct 28
9th Annual Palm City Fall
Fest, Palm City

North

Sept 29-Oct 1
Pensacola Seafood
Festival, Pensacola
Oct 1
North Central Florida
Peanut Festival, Williston
Oct 2-Oct 8
St Augustine Restaurant
Week, St Augustine
Oct 7
Founding of the Castillo,
St Augustine
Oct 6
First Friday Artwalk,
Ocala
Oct 6-7
Florida Scallop and Music
Festival, Port St Joe
Oct 6-8
Destin Seafood Festival,
Destin
Oct 6-8
Pirates of the High Seas
Fest, Panama City Beach
Oct 7
Flora-Bama's Oktoberfest,
Pensacola
Oct 7
Ocala Cultural Festival,
Ocala

weigh preservation vs demolition"



Photo: Richard Ramirez Buxeda, Orlando Sentinel

"Church Street Exchange, Grand Avenue Elementary and the former home of the Orlando Ballet are the latest Orlando landmarks to face the prospect of new identities instead of demolition.

The fate of those buildings comes into play as some developers and owners are looking at 'adaptive reuse,' a movement gaining momentum nationally.

'I think people are finally realizing that these kind of place-making buildings, you really can't re-create,' said Richard Forbes, historic preservation officer for Orlando.

Sitting atop some of the most valuable land in Central Florida, the Church Street Exchange in downtown Orlando was recently listed for sale. Grand Avenue Elementary southwest of downtown sits vacant with school officials discussing its fate. And the Orlando Utilities Commission has started weighing options to sell or renovate an Italian Palazzo Revival-style 1920s power plant and one-time arts center overlooking Lake Ivanhoe...

Beyond preserving the charm and character of a building, reused buildings help ignite nearby

Oct 7-8
Creeside Festival, Palm Coast
Oct 7-29
Corn Maze at Sykes & Cooper Farm, Elkton
Oct 8
ButterflyFest, Gainesville
Oct 8-15
Amelia Island Jazz Festival, Fernandina Beach
Oct 13-15
Greek Festival, St Augustine
Oct 13-15
Annual St Rose of Lima International Fall Festival, Milton
Oct 14
Artrageous Artwalk, Amelia Island
Oct 14
Family Pumpkin Festival, White Springs
Oct 14-15
58th Pensacola Greek Festival, Pensacola
Oct 19-29
Pensacola Interstate Fair Pensacola
Oct 20-22
Suwannee River Quilt Show and Sale, White Springs
Oct 21
13th Annual Florida Bat Festival, Gainesville
Oct 21
Bloody Mary & Music Festival, Panama City Beach
Oct 21
Annual Haunted House Walking and Trolley Tours, Pensacola
Oct 21-22
WasabiCon, Jacksonville
Oct 25-29
Thunder Beach Autumn Rally, Panama City Beach
Oct 27
Ocala Pumpkin Run Car Show & Festival, Ocala
Oct 27-28
4th Annual Tallahassee

neighborhoods, said Orlando attorney Kimberly Ashby. She pointed to the former Orange County Courthouse's renovation as a history museum and the relocation of the Casa Feliz and Capen houses to become cultural venues in Winter Park.

'It not only repurposes the building, it repurposes the neighborhood and the whole community,' she said."



Photo: Orange County Regional History Center

"The First National Bank building (left) was designed by Orlando architect Howard M. Reynolds during the Great Depression. In 2017, a Walgreens store moved into the four-story building that once housed the downtown bank...."

--Mary Shanklin, Orlando Sentinel

[Read entire article](#)

Complete streets:
"Pedal power surges in Cape Coral."

Extreme Rodeo,
Tallahassee
Oct 28
First Coast Arts & Crafts
Fall Show, St Augustine
Oct 28-Oct 29
22nd Annual Festival of
the Arts, Destin
[For many more events and
details please visit the
Orlando Times Travel
Calendar here](#)





Photo: Randy Kambic/Special to The News-Press

"Thanks to considerable behind-the-scenes work in recent years, pedal power is stronger and safer than ever for recreational biking, putting fitness and social benefits in high gear..."

Michael Swanson and Rob Seibert are major organizers of Cape Coral Bike-Ped's 'slow-roll' events held on the last Friday night of each month. 'We have all kinds of bikers and it's leisurely paced,' said Swanson. 'The police escort us which is especially helpful going across the intersections along the way...'

It's been 'a true private-public partnership,' said Cape Coral's Conant-Adair. She recounted how seven inter-connected bike routes consisting of bike lanes, shared roads and sidewalks on canal bridges were first defined and planned in 2012. Within two years, 90-plus miles of routes were designated that border nature preserves, canals, marinas, golf courses, the Caloosahatchee River and more. Also, 1,000-plus directional and adopt-a-route signs have been installed...

In 2015, Cape Coral was designated a Bicycle-Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists and last year by the Florida Bicycle Association, and an eighth route was created..."

-- Randy Kambic, Special to The News-Press

[Read entire article](#)

"Hollywood launches Complete Streets construction project"



Illustration: City of Hollywood

"...Officials recently broke ground on construction that will develop into the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization's flagship. A two-year timeframe for completion is expected.

From City Hall to Dixie Highway, the corridor will change into an efficient multimodal transportation system. The city was awarded a \$7.6 million grant for the project..."

-- Helen Wolt, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

[Read article](#)

"Casselberry to focus on bikes and pedestrians to improve connectivity"



Photo: Sentinel

"...Known for its quiet residential neighborhoods and city-owned golf course, Casselberry is moving forward with long-range plans to transform city streets into friendlier avenues for bicyclists and pedestrians.

In the coming years, the city plans to add wider sidewalks, crosswalks, shared bike lanes and shade trees.

'We're trying to improve our community by having much more connectivity,' City Commissioner Anthony Aramendia said. 'We have a golf course that meanders through several neighborhoods, we have a chain of lakes and we have two schools. So we have to make our streets more comfortable to use for bicyclists and pedestrians. It's a quality of life issue and for the safety of our children...!'"

-- Martin E. Comas, Orlando Sentinel>

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