

Utility Systems: The Stuff of Human Ecology

Seminar September 27, 2017

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Sprawled across the landscape, electricity, natural gas, wastewater, water and telecommunication utilities interact with transportation and building systems, and are vital to public health, safety, and welfare. Through the extraction and conversion of natural resources to meet human needs, utility systems are not only significant users of energy, but have other serious environmental consequences related to land use, wildlife habitat, esthetics, air quality, greenhouse gases, and water quality and quantity. Unique among other heavy industries, the planning, construction, financing, and operation of utility systems involve an extremely wide range of disciplines. These highly diverse skill sets are not only applicable within utilities themselves, but are necessary for anyone involved in any aspect of planning, design, construction, permitting, or public policy.

This seminar has three objectives, to:

1. Illustrate the relationship between utility systems, land use, urban form and development practices;
2. Introduce the continuing evolution of utility technologies and regulation, and the new problems and opportunities that are emerging as a result; and
3. Demonstrate how a deeper understanding of how utilities are planned, constructed, operated, financed and regulated will be useful to UF graduates in terms of career and employment opportunities.

The seminar will be presented by an environmental engineer with over 36 years of engineering, executive management, and consulting work for electric, natural gas, wastewater, water and telecommunication utilities. Past president of the Florida Municipal Electric Agency, he has also served on the Board of Directors for the Solar Energy Power Association and The Energy Authority and he has visited utilities throughout Europe and Japan.