

Dear Friends,

This week I met with business leaders in West Palm Beach and St. Petersburg to hear their ideas about how we can enhance Florida's business friendly environment. We discussed ways to make sure Florida has world-class schools so we can continue having a world-class workforce - and ways to keep Florida affordable by bringing down property taxes and lowering property insurance.



I also visited Scripps Florida, on the campus of Florida Atlantic University, and Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies. Scripps is using state-of-the-art technology to conduct much-needed medical research. Their work contributes millions to Florida's economy each year. Florida is ranked among the top ten largest biotechnology centers in the nation based on the number of our biotech companies. The research being done at Scripps Florida and Torrey Pines brings us one step closer to being a national leader in biotechnology.



Expanding trade with international partners will also strengthen our economy, as will opportunities in climate friendly technologies. Renewable energy such as ethanol, solar energy, wind, and biomass have potential for providing gold in green, as well as reducing the cost of energy for our families and businesses. Today, I visited my alma mater, St. Petersburg High School, to unveil a solar energy system. It is the first to be installed as part of Progress Energy's SolarWise for Schools program. Progress Energy customers can participate in the EnergyWise program, which uses a power-saving system to lower energy costs during peak periods, and then donate the savings to the SolarWise program.

Tourism continues to grow our economy because Florida is the world's premier destination. New numbers show that 21.1 million people visited Florida during just the third quarter of this year. That's an increase of almost five percent from last year. Many visitors who travel to our state stay and buy homes or condos, which strengthens our housing market.

In less than two months, the people of Florida have the opportunity to approve a \$12 billion property tax cut over next five years. On top of the \$15 billion in tax cuts already made this year, the total comes to a \$27-billion in savings for Floridians. On January 29 of next year, the people of Florida can lower property taxes and ignite our housing market even more.



Today marks the close of the 2007 Atlantic Hurricane Season, and we have truly been blessed by a quiet one. I pray for continued protection of our homes and Florida's beautiful environment. As I visited with the children of Shriners Hospital for Children in Tampa today, I was again reminded of how important it is to make a safe and prosperous environment for the future of our state. Florida is a great place to live, work, learn and play, and I am working hard to make our state even more business friendly, environmentally freindly and affordable.

God bless each and every one of you and the great state of Florida. Thank you.

*Charlie Crist*