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NOTE: Artwork and photos available

DEP ENCOURAGES GREEN RESOLUTIONS FOR 2008

-Small changes can make a big difference to the environment-

TALLAHASSEE - The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging residents to make “green” resolutions for the New Year. Each week, a new “green” tip is posted on DEP’s Web site to help Floridians make their homes and offices more environmentally friendly.

“As the fourth most populous state in the nation, the people of Florida play a critical role in preserving our environment,” said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. “There are simple steps that we can all take in our daily lives to help protect and conserve Florida’s natural resources for future generations.

Even small things like changing one incandescent lightbulb to an ENERGY STAR® qualified bulb can have a big impact,” said DEP Secretary Sole. “For example, if all the households in Florida changed just one lightbulb to a compact fluorescent bulb, the combined effort would save enough energy to light all the households in Tallahassee for more than two and a half years.”

To help you get started, here are 10 simple resolutions that will make your 2008 cleaner and “greener”:

- **Turn off your screen saver** - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that using a computer's “sleep mode” reduces its energy consumption by 60 to 70 percent. A screen saver that displays moving images causes your monitor to consume as much electricity as it does in active use. The best screen saver is also the best energy saver: turn off your monitor when you’re not using it. Turning off your computer will decrease the amount of energy it uses, reduces its mechanical stress and prolong its life.
- **Eliminate paper waste** - Did you know that every year enough paper is thrown away to make a 12 foot wall from New York to California? Each ton of paper recycled saves 17 trees and 7,000 gallons of water. Recycled paper also saves 60 percent energy in comparison to new paper and generates 95 percent less air pollution. Since one-fifth of all wood harvested in the world ends up in paper it just makes sense to recycle and conserve this valuable resource.

- **Stop junk mail** - There a variety of vendors online that you can register with to reduce the amount of junk mail you get. Each year, the average American household receives about 1.5 trees' worth of junk mail.
- **Recycle** - One recycled aluminum can saves enough energy to power a television or computer for 3 hours or a 100-watt light bulb for 20 hours. A six-pack of recycled aluminum cans saves enough energy to drive a car five miles.
- **Purchase reusable shopping bags** - According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. consumes about 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps a year. Fewer than five percent are recycled. However, paper bags are also a problem. Paper sacks generate 70 percent more air pollutants and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic bags. And while paper bags do eventually biodegrade, an estimated 14 million trees a year have to be cut down to make 10 billion paper bags. A sturdy, reusable bag needs only to be used 11 times to have a lower environmental impact than using 11 disposable plastic bags.
- **Slash the packaging** - Buying food and other products in reusable or recyclable packaging can reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 230 pounds a year. Recycling all of your home's waste newsprint, cardboard, glass and metal can reduce emissions an additional 850 pounds a year and approximately 410 pounds of garbage from entering a landfill.
- **Use "green cleaners"** - Americans generate 1.6 million tons of waste each year from common cleaning products with potentially hazardous ingredients. Purchase green cleaners – or make your own. Here are some sample recipes for simple, effective cleaners:
 - Drain cleaner: Pour a half-cup of baking soda down the sink and add at least a cup of vinegar. Cover the drain and wait a few minutes, then rinse with a mixture of boiling water and salt.
 - Window cleaner: Mix two ounces of vinegar with a quart of water in a spray bottle.
 - Silver polish: Put a sheet of aluminum foil into a plastic or glass bowl. Sprinkle the foil with salt and baking soda and fill the bowl with warm water. Soak your silver in the bowl and tarnish migrates to the foil. Dry and buff.
 - Brass cleaner: Cut a lemon in half, sprinkle it with salt and rub the lemon on the metal. Buff with a cloth.
 - Rust remover: Use vinegar to remove rust on nuts and bolts and other mineral deposits such as calcium deposits.

- **Get involved** - Florida's natural resources belong to its residents. Voice your questions, comments and suggestions regarding the state's environment by contacting DEP's Office of the Ombudsman and Public Services at (850) 245-2118 or citizensservices@dep.state.fl.us.

DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole and the DEP staff wish Florida citizens a safe and happy New Year. For more "green" tips, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/tips/. For more information on water conservation, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/drought/tips.htm.