

## Obama claims the Democratic presidential nomination

### Hillary Clinton angles for vice presidential spot on ticket

BY TOM RAUM  
AND NEDRA PICKLER  
The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Before a crowd of cheering thousands, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois laid claim to the Democratic presidential nomination Tuesday night, taking a historic step toward his once-improbable goal of becoming the nation's first black president. Hillary Rodham Clinton maneuvered for the vice presidential spot on his fall ticket without conceding her own defeat.

"America, this is our moment," the 46-year-old senator and one-time community organizer said in his first appearance as the Democratic nominee-in-waiting. "This is our time. Our time to turn the page on the policies of the past."

Obama's victory set up a five-month campaign with Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona, a race between a first-term Senate opponent of the Iraq War and a 71-year-old former Vietnam prisoner of war and staunch supporter of the current U.S. military mission.

And both men seemed eager to begin.

McCain spoke first, in New Orleans, and he accused his younger rival of voting "to deny funds to the soldiers who have done a brilliant and brave job" in Iraq. It was a reference to 2007 legislation to pay for the Iraq war, a measure Obama opposed citing the lack of a timetable for withdrawing troops.

McCain agreed with Obama that the presidential race would focus on change. "But the choice is between the right change and the wrong change, between going forward and going backward," he said.

Obama responded quickly, pausing only long enough to praise Clinton for "her strength, her courage and her commitment to the causes that brought us here tonight."

As for his general election rival, he said, "It's not change when John McCain decided to stand with George Bush 95 percent of the time, as he did in the Senate last year."

"It's not change when he of-



CHRIS CARLSON • The Associated Press

Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. arrives for an election night rally in St. Paul, Minn., Tuesday. Obama claimed the Democratic presidential nomination Tuesday night in a long-time-coming victory speech that minced no words about his opponent in the fall campaign, Republican John McCain.

#### DELEGATE COUNT

**2,151**

Barack Obama

**1,915.5**

Hillary Clinton

**2,118**

Needed for nomination

Numbers as of 11:30 p.m. Tuesday

fers four more years of Bush economic policies that have failed to create well-paying jobs. ... And it's not change when he promises to continue a policy in Iraq that asks everything of our brave young men

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SETH WENIG • The Associated Press

Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., speaks during her South Dakota and Montana primary night event in New York on Tuesday.

## GM MAY SELL HUMMER



Automaker also closing pickup, SUV factories. STORY, A5

## Your FPL bill could rise 16% in August

Commercial customers may see 17% increase and industrial customers could see 23% increase

BY GABRIEL MARGASAK  
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Electric bills on the Treasure Coast and beyond would increase for at least five months starting in August under a proposal from Florida Power & Light Co. to pay for its rising fuel costs.

A typical residential customer who pays \$102.63 a month would see their bill rise \$16.28 to \$118.91, about a 16 percent increase, according to the company's example.

Commercial customers would see about a 17 percent increase a month while industrial, the largest electric users, would see about a 23 percent increase.

FPL officials said Tuesday that "dramatic increases" in the cost of fuels such as natural gas to run their plants means the company will need \$746 million to cover the extra expense through the end of 2008. After that, the price of fuel has not been set so the effect on bills in 2009 remained uncertain.

The Florida Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities, has received the petition from FPL but the staff had yet to review the request, a commission spokeswoman said Tuesday. Florida law allows utilities to recover the cost of fuel but the commission determines how

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## Planned FPL solar facility may be second-largest of its kind in U.S.

BY GEORGE ANDREASSI  
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STUART — Florida Power & Light Co. plans to start generating electricity with solar energy in 2009 from a facility at the utility's power plant near Indiantown that they expect to be the second largest of its kind in the nation, an FPL representative said Tuesday.

"It will be the largest solar thermal outside of California and the first hybrid facility, we believe in the world," said John Gnecco, an FPL representative. FPL's Indiantown plant also burns natural gas.

When completed, the Martin Next Generation Solar Energy Center will generate 75 megawatts of electricity, Gnecco said. That's enough to provide power to more than 11,000 homes.

The initiative will increase the cost for the average utility customer by 31 cents per month, said FPL spokesman Jose Suarez.

The Martin County Commission unanimously approved the plans for the \$480 million project Tuesday night after several commissioners,

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## Stranded diver recounts 22-hour offshore ordeal

Palm City man spends night in ocean after becoming separated from his boat

BY MEGAN V. WINSLOW  
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PALM CITY — Miles off shore and surrounded by a darkness that swallowed him whole in the breaking surf, Patrick Scartozzi fought exhaustion, bitter cold and the urge to peek at his watch.

Back home, his wife lay awake in bed listening to the birds and frogs outside as she waited for dawn and feared facing their children once more.

"I knew I was alive and floating, and I

knew they didn't know," Scartozzi said Tuesday, four days after he disappeared off the St. Lucie Inlet during a commercial fishing dive. "I would have rather been in my position than to have been in their position, not knowing if I was stuck under a rock, dead."

The 43-year-old Palm City resident and Fort Lauderdale firefighter spent 22 hours in the ocean, steadily kicking toward land with a bleeding, shattered hand before a Coast Guard helicopter found him almost a mile off shore Saturday. A licensed commercial diver, Scartozzi became separated from his boat during a trip to spear snapper and grouper.

Scartozzi said he emerged early from a

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ALEX BOERNER • alex.boerner@scripps.com

Patrick Scartozzi talks Tuesday about his night in the ocean, floating off the coast of Hutchinson Island. His daughter Julia, 7, is at right.



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# SOLAR

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business leaders and civic activists praised the initiative.

"This is a great project for Martin County and Indiantown," said Commissioner Michael DiTerlizzi, whose district includes Indiantown.

The leaders of the Business Development Board of Martin County, the Economic Council of Martin County and the Indiantown/Western Martin County Chamber of Commerce all expressed enthusiastic support for the project.

Construction is expected to start later this year, and the first solar panels are expected to be generating electricity by 2009, Gnecco said. The project is expected to be completed in 2010.

Replacing coal facilities with solar and other alternative energy sources will reduce air pollution that contributes to global warming, Gnecco said.

"At the company, we're looking more and more towards renewables," Gnecco said. "One

of our plans is to bring solar into the state."

"We've had a long history of incorporating environmental change," Gnecco. "We've got a good track record. FPL Group has actually reduced our emission rate by 13 percent since 1990."

FPL operates the largest solar facility in the United States, Gnecco said. It is located in the Mohave Desert in California.

Bill Thornton, a Palm City civic activist who ordinarily questions large projects, was among those singing FPL's praises.

"I applaud FPL for this move," Thornton said. "It's great."

In other business, the Martin County Commission took the following action:

- Approved a deal to televise Martin County School Board meetings on the county television station, MCTV, channel 20 on Comcast cable for three years with the School Board covering the costs.
- Delayed action until June 10 on the master site plan for the Caulkins Grove subdivi-

sion, which calls for 156 20-acre ranchettes on a 3,275-acre site on Citrus Boulevard in Western Martin County.

- Approved the final site plan for the Hobe Sound Polo Club, which calls for 50 20-acre ranchettes on a 1,303-acre site north of Bridge Road and east of Interstate 95.
- Adopted a resolution calling upon Florida's Congressional Delegation to try to continue domestic manned space flights at the Kennedy Space Center in between the ending of the Space Shuttle Program and the starting of the Constellation Program.
- Accepted a \$1.2 million grant from the state Department of Community Affairs to rehabilitate or replace 12 houses that were damaged by hurricanes that belong to low and moderate income families.
- Approved the expenditure of \$1.1 million for eight road projects in Stuart and Palm City with district money provided by Commissioners Susan Valliere and Michael DiTerlizzi.

# OBAMA

FROM PAGE A1

and women in uniform and nothing of Iraqi politicians."

In a symbolic move, Obama spoke in the same hall — filled to capacity — where McCain will accept the Republican nomination at his party's convention in September.

One campaign began as another was ending.

Clinton won South Dakota on the final night of the primary season; Obama took Montana.

The former first lady praised her rival warmly in an appearance before supporters in New York in which she neither acknowledged Obama's victory nor offered a concession of any sort.

Instead, she said she was committed to a united party, and said she would spend the next few days determining "how to move forward with the best interests of our country and our party guiding my way."

Only 31 delegates were at stake in the two states on the night's ballot, the final few among the thousands that once drew Obama, Clinton and six other Democratic candidates into the campaign to replace Bush and become the nation's 44th president.

Obama sealed his nomination, according to The Associated Press tally, based on primary elections, state Democratic caucuses and support from party "superdelegates." It takes 2,118 delegates to clinch the nomination at the convention in Denver this summer, and Obama had 2,144 by the AP count.

Obama, a first-term senator who was virtually unknown on the national stage four years ago, defeated Clinton, the former first lady and one-time campaign front-runner, in a 17-month marathon for the Democratic nomination.

His victory had been widely assumed for weeks. But Clinton's declaration of interest in becoming his ticketmate was wholly unexpected.

She expressed it in a con-

ference call with her state's congressional delegation after Rep. Nydia Velazquez, predicted Obama would have great difficulty winning the support of Hispanics and other voting blocs unless the former first lady was on the ticket.

"I am open to it" if it would help the party's prospects in November, Clinton replied, according to participants who spoke on condition of anonymity because the call was private.

Clinton's comments raised anew the prospect of what many Democrats have called a "Dream Ticket" that would put a black man and a woman on the same ballot, but Obama's aides were noncommittal. "We're not in the presidential phase here. We're going to close out the nominating fight and then we'll consider that," David Axelrod, Obama's top strategist, told reporters aboard the candidate's plane en route to Minnesota.

# DIVER

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95-foot deep reef dive to find himself about 75 yards away from his boat. A swarm of fishing boats had suddenly emerged on the reef and Scartozzi's friend and business partner, Clay Brandt, was trying to shoo them away so Scartozzi wouldn't get hurt.

Scartozzi's head disappeared from sight in the rough waves, and he drifted away with the current. Before long, he began shedding his expensive dive gear, including a weight belt and a speargun. He kept his small dive scooter and steered it toward shore until the batteries died and then used it as a float.

Hours passed and he watched the Coast Guard heli-

copter and planes buzz overhead.

"I guess the desperation started when it started to get dark, about 8 o'clock at night," Scartozzi said. "I realized I would be spending a considerable amount of time out there."

And then he shot himself.

As a last-ditch effort to attract the Coast Guard helicopter, Scartozzi fired the .357 Magnum attachment from his speargun into the scooter and hoped someone would see the muzzle flash. Instead, the steel powerhead recoiled and pierced his right hand between two fingers.

The noise was deafening but still not loud enough to hear above the helicopter's whirling propeller.

Scartozzi yanked the powerhead from his knuckles, marveled at the hole it left behind

and the blood that ran down his arm. And then he swam on.

As the condominiums on Hutchinson Island grew larger, Scartozzi met curious dolphins and clouds of glowing plankton but never any sharks. He watched the sun rise on a cloudless, clear day. About 10 a.m., he saw the Coast Guard helicopter fly north up the beach, and this time, it stopped.

A trip to the hospital and one hand surgery later, Scartozzi is recovering at home with his wife, Chris, and their three children, Patrick Jr., 16, Marisa, 12, and Julia, 7, by his side. He returns to firefighting on June 21, and despite his recent ordeal, diving is sure to follow.

"He's never going to stop diving — I know that," Chris Scartozzi said. "He's not done."

## FPL CUSTOMER PROGRAMS

- Home Energy Surveys:** A personalized analysis of home energy usage, along with a report providing energy-saving tips and recommendations.
- On Call(r):** A program that automatically turns off major appliances when electricity demand is at its highest. Customers can save up to \$8 a month.
- A/C Buying Program:** Because air conditioning alone can amount to more than half of total energy consumption in the summer months, FPL offers customers an incentive to install high-efficiency heating and cooling systems for homes.
- Duct System Test and Repair:** For a nominal fee, FPL will inspect a home's cooling and heating ducts for costly leaks and even help pay to have them repaired.
- Photovoltaic Systems:** FPL is committed to helping environmentally conscious customers offset some of their electricity costs by providing the means to interconnect their small photovoltaic systems to FPL's power grid.
- Energy Savings Toolkit:** Customers can learn about common causes for high bills and solutions to help control energy usage and lower their bills.
- Building Envelope Program:** FPL will pay incentives to reduce the cost of installing new insulation on homes built before 1982 and to install a roof that reflects the sun's rays.
- BuildSmart(r):** FPL certified new construction homes save up to 30 percent on energy bills when built to the FPL BuildSmart standard.

## TIPS FOR REDUCING ELECTRICITY USAGE

- Cool your home at 78 degrees or warmer with the thermostat fan switch on "auto." For additional savings, raise your thermostat to 82 degrees or warmer when you're away from home.
- Install a programmable thermostat to adjust the temperature automatically and maximize your energy savings.
- Clean or replace your air conditioner's filter monthly to trim your cooling costs.
- Turn off your ceiling fan when you leave the room. A fan that runs constantly can cost up to \$7 a month depending on size and age.
- Avoid pre-rinsing dishes before putting in dishwasher. It can save nearly \$6 a month.
- Limit the time you run your pool pump to six hours a day in summer and four a day in winter.
- Adjust the water level on your washing machine to match the load size, especially when using hot water. Always use a cold rinse.
- Clean the lint filter in your dryer before every load to dry your clothes faster and save money.
- Use the auto sensor function on your dryer, if you have one, to conserve energy by not over-drying your clothes.

FPL

# BILL

FROM PAGE A1

the increase is put into practice.

"The important thing for customers to understand when it comes to fuel, fuel is a cost of producing electricity that has always been borne by the customer," said FPL spokesman Randy Clerihue. "It's not something we make any money on."

Clerihue said the company also passes on the savings to customers when the price of fuel drops.

But in this "energy crisis that's gripping the entire economy," he said, the price of natural gas has risen 32 percent while the price of fuel oil has risen 54 percent in less than a year.

A \$118.91 monthly power bill, Clerihue said, breaks down to about \$4 a day.

"Four dollars is also less than a single gallon of gasoline," he said.

Bev DeMello, a spokesper-

son for the Public Service Commission, said electric companies have asked for bill increases outside the normal rate cycle because of fuel prices, known as mid course corrections.

"The fuel costs are set. They have contracts," she said. "The company has to have fuel to turn on the lights."

The next step would be for the commission staff to make a recommendation to the board, which would then vote.

A commission meeting is scheduled for July 1, but it was unclear whether the FPL request would be discussed then, as the company has requested.

FPL Group Inc., the parent of FPL, reported a first-quarter profit of \$249 million, or 62 cents per share. That was up from \$150 million, or 38 cents, in the first quarter of 2007.

"I have a hard time finding any outrage about them asking for this," said Mike Twomey, founder and president of the nonprofit Florida Utility Watch. "The larger question should be is this going to

get any better? Is it going to get any worse?"

Twomey, who served as an attorney with the Public Service Commission in the 1980s, said the increase request should come as no surprise when premium gas is well over \$4 a gallon.

"We're likely to see more of these natural gas increases than fewer," he said.

The Fort Pierce Utilities Authority said they have already made increases and will not be raising rates at this time.



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