

# Rick Meeker

NHU ENERGY | PRESIDENT | TALLAHASSEE

## Startup Founder Leads Transformation to a Cleaner Power and Energy System

Our current energy grid was designed and organized for our fossil fuel-driven past. However, our future relies on clean, renewable energy, in the form of solar, wind, and hydropower. To accelerate this energy transition, we need a more connected and intelligent energy system. Rick Meeker and Nhu Energy are designing those systems and that future.

Meeker has over 35 years of experience leading in the engineering and energy industry, from research and development to manufacturing. That experience shapes his current role as President of Nhu Energy, a company working to optimize and innovate new energy technologies that can integrate with our current energy grid while also transforming it. “The electric power grid has been called the largest and most powerful machine man ever built,” Meeker says. “It is a big complex machine, and we are getting ready for an even bigger and more complex future.” Meeker and Nhu Energy work daily on the future of energy.

Nhu Energy specializes in distributed energy resources—smaller scale energy production and storage resources, like solar panels, battery storage, or EV charging stations, as well as microgrids, small energy grids made up of those distributed energy resources that provide energy for specific locations, like a university or a hospital. Meeker has a background in control systems, so he understands both the complexity of the grid and the critical need for intelligent systems that allow everything to work together. Nhu Energy’s expertise is paving the way forward for both businesses and governments; they developed the first renewable energy microgrid in a California hospital and have partnered with the Department of Energy through Florida State University.

Continuing research in this area is essential. In 2019, the group participated in a natural accelerator called the Clean Team Open and leads the Florida Alliance for Accelerating Solar and Storage Technology Readiness (FASSTeR) to “assist in developing pathways for the successful expansion of grid-integrated solar, energy storage, and other distributed energy resources in Florida in a way that maximizes value and reduces risk,” he explains. Forging a partnership of Florida’s world-class academic talent, Meeker and his team created the first Florida statewide university energy consortium, the Florida Energy Systems Consortium (FESC). FESC “promotes collaboration among the energy experts at Florida’s 12 supported universities to share energy-related expertise and assists the state in the development and implementation of an environmentally compatible, sustainable, and efficient energy strategic plan.”

Where there is need, entrepreneurship has an opportunity to be the solution. With its strong industry leadership, it is easy to forget that Nhu Energy is a startup. Establishing a startup is demanding; establishing a startup bent on transforming the energy grid can seem like an even more daunting prospect. “The hill to climb to transform the power and energy systems is challenging,” Meeker says. “It’s this massive infrastructure that is worth nearly five trillion dollars—it is bigger than aerospace, and it is bigger than pharmaceuticals, so trying to play a role in this space is giant.” However, Nhu Energy is more than equipped for that challenge, and Meeker recognizes the tremendous opportunities in this sector. Establishing a network of cleaner and more efficient energy resources protects bottom lines, makes our systems and institutions more secure, and gives us cleaner air and water. “We buy into the philosophy that you can be profitable and do the right thing for the environment and the community around you. You can be more profitable if you do these things right,” he adds.



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