

Commissioner Mike La Rosa Hits the Ground Running

Mike La Rosa was appointed to the Florida Public Service Commission by Governor Ron DeSantis for a four-year term beginning January 2, 2021. Commissioner La Rosa wasted no time and studied the agenda items for his first Commission Conference on January 5.



Commissioner La Rosa (*right*) kept the momentum going by providing the keynote address at the University of Florida's 48th Public Utility Research Center Meeting in February. His theme was our ability to adapt and the importance of "looking at the path we have traveled, so we'll better understand the path of where we're going."

The son of a Cuban immigrant with three young boys, Commissioner La Rosa said, "Everything I do is wrapped around my family and my faith." Commissioner La Rosa said he was interested in serving in the Florida Legislature, as the result of his political science classes. In 2012, his predecessor dropped out of the race, so he ran for Florida's 42nd State House District that covers parts of Polk County. He won the seat and held onto it until he was term limited in 2020.

One of the important lessons he learned from being in the Legislature is "how to communicate your point of view and understand others' point of view. Compromise is how you get things done, sometimes for the short-term and sometimes for the long-term."

During this COVID-19 environment, Commissioner La Rosa had a few observations. He talked about resiliency, with businesses starting to adapt, and how we learned to co-exist with the virus, while also keeping our families safe and defining new ways of doing things. He also mentioned our ability to adapt, incorporating technology and being better planners.

For the regulatory perspective, Commissioner La Rosa noted that utility executives are having to adapt, so they can better understand the challenges of their customers and how to keep them active in the process of service delivery. "In this pandemic, as with any emergency, things surface that have always been there," said Commissioner La Rosa. "With the emergence of technology, we've learned how to pivot and adapt." The deadly coronavirus may have shut down a large number of businesses and forced many people to work from home, but Commissioner La Rosa observed it's the driving force behind the acceleration of technological adoption, a textbook example of making the best of a bad situation and moving forward.

"Our homes are no longer simply a dwelling place but our home is the workplace," he said. "Emerging from this pandemic, we'll bring more green technology into homes, making more environmentally friendly work spaces."

First elected to the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 42, in 2012, Commissioner La Rosa served until he was term limited in 2020. During his legislative career, he served as Chairman of the House Commerce Committee and also on the Appropriations and Rules Committees. As Chairman of the Commerce Committee, he oversaw Energy and Growth Management Policy during times where Florida's growth and economy was growing at a rapid pace. He received his B.A. degree in Interpersonal Communications with a minor in Political Science from the University of Central Florida. He also served as Chairman of the Public Service Commission Nominating Council.