

Crystal River Power Plant

In the small retiree community of Crystal River, the 2013 decision to close the economic powerhouse¹ was sudden. The announcement was made prematurely, following discoveries of tears in containment walls for hazardous materials, with repair costs estimated between \$1.5 and \$3.4 billion. The closure created a harsh economic shortfall, as the plant was the county's largest employer and was responsible for 25% of the tax base.² For the past few years, life has been depressing without CR-3, as school budgets are tightened, small businesses are suffering, and cutbacks are beginning to occur.³ To county administrator Brad Thorpe, "It changes everything. We're in a new era. It's a wake up call to everyone who wants quality of life."

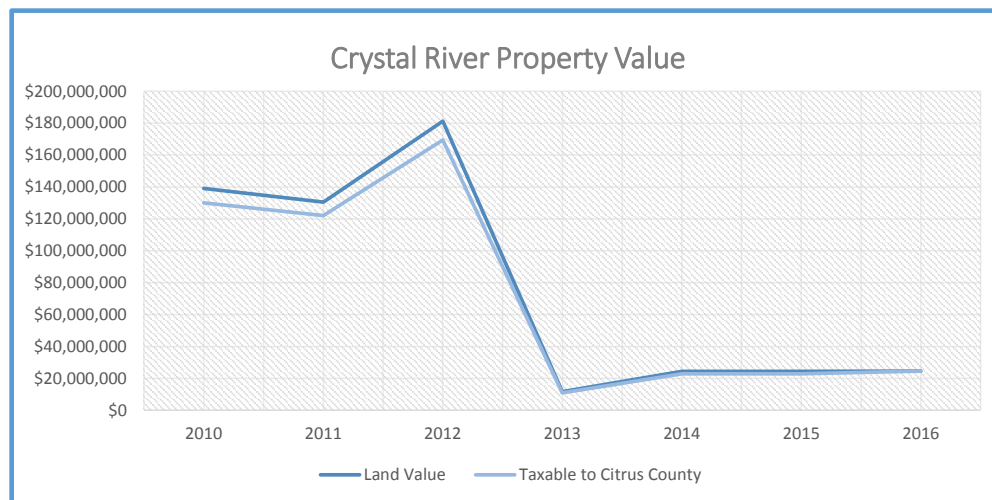
Quick Facts

- Tax contribution goes from \$35m → \$13m
- Property taxes increased by 31%
- \$8 million has been carved from school budgets and municipal repairs
- Citrus County GDP dropped by 7.5% in 2014
- Multiple libraries and community centers have closed
- Duke Energy has opted not to create a community advisory panel based on their formal and informal research done on how the community would prefer to receive information



Figure 1: Crystal River 3

"When you thought of Crystal River, you thought of the nuclear plant. It's hard not to be depressed." – Andy Houstin, Crystal River City Manager



The Future of Crystal River

Following the closure of the power plant, many residents and lifelong employees of Crystal River were asking themselves the question, ‘what’s next?’ By the time the decommissioning is fully complete, 600 of these worried employees could be released from Duke Energy, potentially having to relocate their families. Fortunately, Duke has worked tirelessly to provide alternative options for these people. Already, 400 have been re-employed within Duke Energy, who services large areas in Florida, the Carolinas, and Indiana. This is in part due to the emphasis Duke placed on it’s employees during the beginning of decommissioning. According to Crystal River Communications Manager Heather Danenhower, “Our number 1 priority was safety and after the employees were taken care of, we focused 24/7 on meeting 1-on-1 with them to discuss clear preferences.”

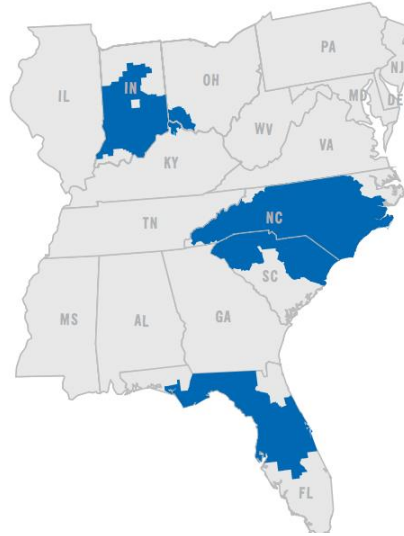


Figure 2: Serviced areas by Duke Energy

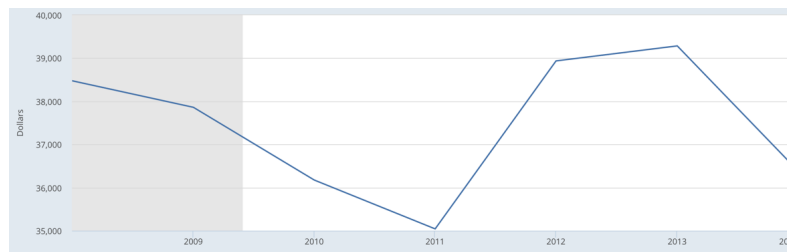


Figure 3: Median household income of Citrus County since 2008.

As seen in the graph above, the household income in Citrus County had been declining for years before the closure, and heavily decreased. Since the closure in 2013, the median had fallen by 10%, down to \$10,000 below the Florida state average. Although Crystal River is primarily a retirement community in demographic, the declining income combined with the exit of “small armies of laborers that kept small businesses alive” has the potential to slowly ripple out and create serious issues.