



## Upscale Florida Development Chooses Propane to Attract Buyers

**J**uliette Falls, a new golf and spa community with 548 upscale single-family homes under development in North-Central Florida near Ocala, at build-out will feature a range of quality-of-life amenities to make most home buyers envious. Among them will be a 7325-yard, 18-hole championship golf course designed by John Sanford; a 52,000-

sq-ft state-of-the-art clubhouse and spa; and a 136-acre nature preserve.

With its casual and fine dining restaurants, media room, fitness center, community pool, saunas, whirlpools, salon, and retail establishments, not to mention fishing and boating on the nearby Rainbow River, about the only thing Juliette Falls won't have is natural gas service.

providing easements for tanks and infrastructure.

CFG recently placed the first of two 30,000-gal. Trinity tanks at the gated Western Marion County community, drawing on its parent company, Chesapeake Utilities Corp. of Delaware, for an experienced crew to lift the tank onto permanent underground piers. According to Jeff Miles, CFG's Citrus County operations manager, the underground tank was fitted with 16 sacrificial anodes to protect against corrosion, and a vaporizer will be installed to help meet the demand.

Depending on the size of the home and number of gas appliances, Btu requirements per household are expected to range from 500,000 to one million. A solar-powered remote telemetry unit

What it will have is a residential propane distribution system installed by Central Florida Gas (CFG; Winter Haven, Fla.). CFG will serve as the utility, with the developer



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—Jeff Finke, VP & CEO  
Vikings LLC, Developer of Juliette Falls





will record tank volume and pressure, and CFG will be able to retrieve live data for delivery scheduling and to track usage history. Four-inch polyethylene (PE) pipe will serve as the main infrastructure around the entire project. CFG will lay about 11,600 feet of 4-in. PE and another 3200 feet of 2-in. pipe.

Miles added that each of the more than 540 homes at Juliette Falls will feature seven to 12 piped connections to accommodate multiple indoor and outdoor fireplaces, commercial-style kitchen appliances, heating systems, Rinnai tankless water heaters, outdoor kitchens, and pool heaters. In addition, each Juliette Falls residence will be equipped with a Generac Power Systems Inc. (Waukesha, Wis.) Guard-

ian standby gas generator. CFG is installing the tanks and town system, while a subcontractor employed by the developer is handling the house piping and appliance installations.

“The town system has a lot of great features besides just fueling this weather-ready community,” Miles noted. “Besides having standby generators as standard equipment, homeowners will have the convenience of never having to change out the propane cylinder for their gas grill, and they will have the most energy-efficient way to heat their water with tankless water heaters. I guess the most important thing is the peace of mind the developer and homeowner have in knowing that the fuel supply is monitored with satel-

lite technology and metered at every house.”

Jeff Finke, vice president and CEO of Vikings LLC (Ocala), the developer of the 546-acre Juliette Falls community, said his upscale home buyers demand gas cooking and—as a hedge against Florida’s sometimes undependable electric grid during hurricane and tropical storm season—backup power if the electricity goes out.

“While we’re not on the coast here, we are vulnerable if other areas lose electricity in the major power grids,” the builder said. “If the power stays out for long periods, there are also mold and mildew damage issues.” He added that the homes’ standby generators, which switch on automatically in the



**A crew from Central Florida Gas’ parent company, Chesapeake Utilities Corp. of Delaware, directs the placement of the saddles on which the first of two 30,000-gal. tanks at Juliette Falls will rest (top photos). With the saddles secured (above and following page), a truck-mounted crane lowers the Trinity tank into place. The underground tank was fitted with 16 sacrificial anodes to protect against corrosion, and a vaporizer will be installed to meet demand.**



event of an electrical outage, first meet the demands of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, then proceed to power up the secondary and tertiary electrical demands of the homes.

“In the event of an emergency,” Finke said, “homeowners here will be able to maintain their quality of life. They will be able to store food and medicines and power medical equipment, and the community will be able to maintain a high level of self-sufficiency until the emergency is over.”

Homes at Juliette Falls average 3400 sq ft. with the smallest measuring about 2000 sq ft and the largest more than 6000 sq ft. Prices are expected

to range from about \$590,000 to \$1.5 million. Eighteen designs and varying elevations are being offered.

Finke, observing that the area’s mild weather facilitates outdoor recreation year-round, said the homes’ standard outdoor kitchens “would be a huge factor” in helping to sell the properties.

“Gas cooking is the way to go,” he said. “I’m extremely pleased with the people and the support I’ve received from Central Florida Gas, and I’m tickled to death with the dual-energy configuration of the homes. The tanks will be buried, and homeowners will have all the conveniences of a natural gas system and none of the responsibil-

ities of monitoring their own propane supply.”

Miles of CFG noted that, from a business standpoint, buyer demand for gas cooking and upscale appointments such as outdoor kitchens allows marketers entrée into the new home market in regions where there is no heat load. “In a sense the effort to sell the Florida lifestyle may be of benefit to the propane industry in these rural, previously-undeveloped areas where these larger, upscale homes are being built,” Miles said. “Our slogan is ‘gas is gas,’ and we believe in these community gas systems.”

—John Needham