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**Lee County Waste to Energy Facility Processes 10 Millionth Ton of Waste into Renewable Energy**

FORT MYERS, FL, Sept. 12, 2016 – Lee County is celebrating a milestone – 10 million tons of municipal solid waste has now been converted to clean, renewable energy.

The Waste to Energy Facility in Buckingham began operations in Dec. 1994 as a method of diverting the community's waste from landfill disposal. Recovering energy and metals from the waste rather than simply landfilling the material has allowed the county to:

- Generate 59 megawatts of energy every hour - enough to continuously power 30,000 single family homes
- Recycle 400,000 tons of ferrous and 44,000 tons of nonferrous metal
- Saved 13 million cubic yards of landfill space – roughly equal to waste piled 10 feet high on 720 football fields
- Offset 10 million tons of greenhouse gases

The WTE facility is the cornerstone of the county's integrated waste management system, which includes robust recycling programs ensuring only the lowest-value waste is combusted.

"Many Lee County residents are enthusiastic recyclers, but are unaware that the county also uses the trash they set at the curb in a sustainable manner – converting the waste to energy and retrieving metals from the resulting ash," said Keith Howard, Solid Waste Division Director. "This disposal method reduces the county's reliance on fossil fuels for electricity and eliminates methane emissions that would be caused by landfilling the waste."

The facility has operated 24/7 for the past twenty-two years without any environmental violations. The plant was built and is operated by Covanta in a public-private partnership with the county.

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About the Solid Waste Division

The Lee County Solid Waste Division is a nationally-recognized enterprise system providing residents and businesses safe, affordable waste disposal and recycling services. The system utilizes an energy-from-waste combustion process to create clean, renewable energy and single-stream recycling for material recovery. For more information visit our website at [www.leegov.com/solidwaste](http://www.leegov.com/solidwaste).