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Contact: Molly Schweers
Lee County Solid Waste
(239) 533-8932 or mschweers@leegov.com

or

Betsy Clayton, A.P.R.
Communications Director
Lee County Government
(239) 826-4606
bclayton@leegov.com

Nine million tons of trash converted to electricity in Lee County

Fort Myers, FL, Feb. 11, 2015 – Lee County residents and visitors reached a milestone recently with 9 million tons of trash converted to electricity since 1994. This waste material was diverted from landfill disposal and utilized instead to create more than 5 million megawatts of electricity – enough to power the City of Bonita Springs for 16 years.

Lee County contracts with Covanta Energy to operate the county's Waste-to-Energy plant in Buckingham. Covanta operators work 24/7 feeding the trash, which is now "fuel", into the combustion units to create renewable electric energy. Recognizing the value of this process, the State of Florida passed legislation in 2008 designating a portion of such energy toward recycling credit for WTE counties. This recycling, along with the county's exemplary history of traditional recycling, bumped the county's 2013 recycling rate to 74 percent. Figures for 2014 will be available this summer.

Florida has 11 WTE facilities – the most of any state. It is a proven system of effectively using our waste materials providing a responsible alternative to landfills in a state that continues to experience strong population growth.

The Lee County Solid Waste Department 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 leegov.com/solidwaste.