

A LOOK INTO THE PINELLAS COUNTY FLORIDA WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY: HOST TOUR SITE

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INTRODUCTION

Pinellas County Utilities – Solid Waste Operations was formed in the mid-seventies as a partnership between Pinellas County and the 24 cities within the county. Under this partnership, the County took responsibility for the management and disposal of all solid waste generated within Pinellas County.

Solid Waste Operations is located on a 705-acre tract in central Pinellas County, known as Bridgeway Acres. The components of Solid Waste's multi-faceted programs includes a scalehouse, a hand unload area, an inspection pad ("hot pad"), a waste-to-energy (WTE) plant, an ash processing facility, a municipal solid waste Class I landfill, a bulk waste/construction and demolition debris (Class III) landfill, a yard waste recycling area, a household electronics and chemical collection center (HEC3), a recycling drop-off site, and associated environmental management facilities.

Additional services include an on-site Inspection and Safety Unit and an extensive public education program promoting residential and commercial recycling and waste reduction. Solid Waste Operations also has various off-site programs including an ocean reef construction program, recycling collection centers, mobile household electronics and chemical collection events, and mulch pick-up sites. Solid Waste Operations is

currently implementing franchise collection in a portion of unincorporated Pinellas County.

Solid Waste Operations is an enterprise system, operating like a business, and receives no funds from the Pinellas County's tax base. Solid Waste Operations is funded through user disposal fees, capacity payments from Progress Energy Florida (PEF), and the sale of electricity and recovered metals. The current tipping fee of \$37.50 per ton has been held constant since 1988. In 2005, over 1.2 million tons of waste were managed at Bridgeway Acres.

WTE BACKGROUND

When Pinellas County, Florida took the bold step in the late 1970's to pursue an alternative to traditional solid waste landfill disposal, their vision into the future would result in one of the largest and most cost effective waste to energy facilities in the world. With the 705 acre Bridgeway Acres (BWA) property available, the County entered into one of the very first "full service procurements" for a major domestic WTE facility. As a result of that procurement process, the County selected United Oil Products (UOP), later to become known as Wheelabrator Pinellas Incorporated (WPI), for a turnkey project to design, build, and operate two 1050 tons per day mass-burn waste-to-energy units. The steam production from these combined units was used to power one 50 MW turbine/generator (TG). Commercial operation began in 1983. At approximately the same time,