



Customer Pipeline

Emerald Coast Utilities Authority

A Message From the Executive Director



In recent months you've no doubt heard reports of discussions and negotiations between ECUA and the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners related to solid waste management in our community. ECUA has been committed to recycling since the launch of our program in January 2009, and we continue to expand and enhance our program, while seeking innovative ways to contain operational costs and rates. The Pensacola News Journal (PNJ) published an editorial in their Wednesday, July 03, 2013 edition related to West Florida Recycling (WFR), the firm with whom ECUA contracts to accept and process the recyclables that

we collect from our customers. In our opinion, this opinion piece contained inaccuracies, and inferences that were quite misleading. As such, I am compelled to address each issue and provide to you the following information:

- Recyclable materials collected by the ECUA are indeed being recycled: WFR is sorting and baling these recyclable materials for shipment to end users. WRF is a recyclables processing facility, not a disposal or landfill site. If waste were being disposed of on this site, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) would have made note, they did not.
- **WRF receives no fees from the ECUA for the materials delivered to its facility, the only revenue they receive is through the sale of the recyclables it sorts and ships out. They are motivated to recycle as much material as possible.**
- WFR did not receive a citation or fine from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for their operations. Rather, they received a letter in 2012 concerning the site conditions, which have been, and are being addressed currently. Some of the issues are a result of WFR outgrowing the facility much faster than expected due to the success of the ECUA's recycling program.
- ECUA is not **the only agency utilizing the West Florida Facility for recyclables processing.** In fact, Escambia County, the City of Pensacola, the Escambia County School Board, Santa Rosa County, and many private haulers deliver recyclables to WFR.
- West Florida Recycling is the only facility providing these services in the region. Were their services not available, the only alternative would be to bury these materials at the County-owned and operated Perdido Landfill. Why bury the materials



Mark Your Calendars!

ECUA offices will be closed on **Monday, September 2**, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

Sanitation Schedules for the Labor Day Holiday will NOT be affected.

Have a Safe and Happy Holiday!

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when they can be recycled -- at a much lower cost?

- The conditions at WFR were likely reported to the PNJ by Escambia County; however, at no time has Escambia County Code Enforcement cited WFR for *any* violations, according to the West Florida staff. In fact, Escambia County is a West Florida customer and therefore utilizes their facility.
- ECUA staff had no knowledge of alleged operational issues at the West Florida Recycling (WFR) Center. WFR is a private company and the ECUA is a public utility company, not a government of general jurisdiction. We have no inspection or regulatory authority over private business operations. Rather, WFR and the Perdido Landfill are both vendors to ECUA. Neither organization is contractually obligated to advise ECUA of FDEP concerns regarding their operations.
- Stormwater issues at the the WRF facility are the main concern of the FDEP. These issues are currently being litigated between the property owner and the contractor. WFR is leasing the property and is not a part of the suit.
- WFR manages approximately 135 tons of recycling materials on a daily basis. The “garbage” on the ground (recycling materials), which the PNJ was concerned about, is a normal component of recycling operations. WFR is cleaning the area as much as possible until their move to a larger facility, The current WFR facility was always meant to be a temporary one, and was therefore only leased for three years. That lease is at an end and West Florida is preparing to move to a new, larger facility. Unfortunately, that move is being complicated and delayed due to legal action Escambia County has taken against West Florida Recycling, related to materials from Santa Rosa County.
- The West Florida Recycling facility is not linked to the recent SWR agreement with ECUA. Southern Waste Recovery (SWR) will build a facility from the ground up that will be designed to meet the requirements of the SWR/ECUA contract. SWR has indicated they would prefer to hire local employees and construct one large facility in Escambia County, which would be based on the design of the Rainbow Environmental Services’ facility in California, with the capability to process both the dirty and clean waste streams in a centralized location. However, Escambia County has made it clear that no such facility would be permitted in Escambia County.

I want to impress upon you to not give up-- please do not stop your diligent recycling efforts. Your participation in the program is vital to its success, and to the positive environmental benefit to our community. We have also posted a video on our website that provides more indepth information on WFR, SWR, and ECUA’s recycling activities. I hope you’ll take the time to visit at www.ecua.fl.gov and view it. We will continue to keep you updated on all developments related to this matter and urge you to continue your enthusiasm and participation in recycling. Our community is better for it.



Stephen E. Sorrell, PE, MPA
ECUA Executive Director