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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **ST. LUCIE COUNTY ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH GENERAL ELECTRIC**

FORT PIERCE – For the second time in less than two months, St. Lucie County has announced a partnership with a major organization in its efforts to create a sustainable economy. St. Lucie County and GE today announced they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) forming a strategic partnership aimed at rebuilding a sustainable economy throughout the County by focusing on energy efficiency, distributed power generation and job creation by local businesses.

The GE agreement comes on the heels of St. Lucie County's partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) to facilitate the nation's first sustainable communities demonstration project (aka the Green District).

The MoU was spearheaded by the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County President Larry Pelton, who coordinated the partnership with St. Lucie County, the city of Fort Pierce, Indian River State College, the USDA Research Laboratory, Fort Pierce Utility Authority and the city of Port St. Lucie. The project energy team members include: Economic Development Council President Larry Pelton, St. Lucie County Commissioner Doug Coward, Fort Pierce City Commissioner Eddie Becht, IRSC President Dr. Edwin R. Massey, and the Executive Director of the USDA lab in Fort Pierce Dr. Calvin Arnold.

"We are very pleased to welcome GE to St. Lucie County as a major new private sector partner in local green initiatives and programs," said Pelton.

Commissioner Coward added: "This mutually-beneficial partnership will advance our collective goals of going green, deploying cost-effective and state-of-the-art technologies, creating much-needed jobs, and providing a more efficient and sustainable community for our children."

The non-binding initial agreement with GE solidifies the initial partnership and identifies key issues that all parties will work to achieve. Primary components of the agreement include:

- Energy Efficiency Program - work with St. Lucie County's \$23 million Solar and Energy Loan Fund to help residents and business install energy efficiency upgrades
- Smart Grid Implementation - partner with the Fort Pierce Utility Authority and others to utilize energy-efficient home applications and solar and smart meters in the County's Green District
- Workforce Training Initiative - collaborate with Indian River State College (IRSC) and the Green Collar Training Center to prepare the workforce for the emerging green economy
- Local Business Development - a GE pilot initiative that leverages GE's knowledge base, global network and existing business connections to assist the growth of St. Lucie County-based small businesses

This is the second MoU that GE has entered into with a local government this year. GE entered into a similar partnership with the city of Portland, Oregon in June.

"St. Lucie County has a record of commitment to sustainable growth and we look forward to serving as their partner," said Kevin Decker, a GE government program leader. "This MOU is a first step in harnessing the full potential of GE's technology and innovative solutions and the County's sustainability leadership to benefit residents and the local economy."

"We are extremely pleased with this new GE partnership and the fact that St. Lucie County is now officially moved to the forefront of the sustainable, clean energy economy in Florida," said St. Lucie County Commission Chairman Charles Grande. "The fact that we are the first local government in the State of Florida and the second the nation to partner with GE confirms that fact that we are leading the way."

"Attracting partners like GE to be a part of the Green District in our area is critical to the overall success of the project. We are very excited to make this announcement today," said Dr. Massey. "We look forward to collaborating with GE as partners on the education and research side of the project."

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