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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



ST. LUCIE COUNTY ANNOUNCES PROJECT ENERGY: A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY

FORT PIERCE – St. Lucie County and the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) have jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the nation's first sustainable communities demonstration project, which will include energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, green building technologies and more. To this end, ORNL will collaborate with St. Lucie County and the City of Fort Pierce to define a specified district to be known as the "Green Mile."

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a non-binding initial agreement that solidifies the initial partnership and identifies key issues that all parties will work to achieve. Primary components of the agreement include: "the Green Mile" and assistance with the County's new \$20 million solar and energy loan fund.

"We are very pleased to be partnering with the prestigious Oak Ridge National Lab," said County Commission Vice Chair Doug Coward. "Our goal is to promote bottom-up economic recovery in the green sector, kick-start the emerging clean energy economy and create an assortment of green jobs and industries. The program is designed to reduce energy use and lower energy costs, which will provide financial benefit to taxpayers and property owners alike."

The partnership with ORNL comes on the heels of St. Lucie County's \$2.9 million energy block grant award from the U.S. Department of Energy. This highly competitive grant was the only program selected in Florida, and is intended to assist with the newly developed \$20 million

solar and energy loan fund. This program was created in partnership with four financial institutions (PNC, Sun Trust and Oculina banks, and IBM/PGA Credit Union), who signed a letter of interest and pledged \$5 million each.

Bob Schlicher, senior researcher for Sustainable Campus Initiative at ORNL, and Randy Overbey, consultant to ORNL, have been working with St. Lucie County over the past few months on creating the partnership with officials from the County and the City of Fort Pierce. The pair's latest visit to St. Lucie County on July 20 included a tour of the Fort Pierce area with City and County officials looking at possible commercial structures, public and educational facilities and industrial and manufacturing facilities for inclusion in the Green Mile district.

ORNL wants to further demonstrate the environmental and economic benefits of sustainable technologies and practices. The research group is excited about pursuing new partnerships and collaborations with the Treasure Coast Research Park, USDA and numerous other scientific institutions in the area. For example, discussions are underway to bring leading scientists from around the nation into classrooms at Indian River State College (IRSC) and its new alternative energy center.

"The timing of this partnership couldn't be better as we are embarking on a new 65,000-square-foot alternative energy center. It's a great time to align this partnership with those programs at IRSC and provide real-world experience to our students by way of having top scientists in our classrooms," said Dr. Ed Massey, president of Indian River State College.

ORNL may also be used to assist with quality control measures for various green initiatives implemented by both the public and private sectors.

"There are so many ways that we complement one another. Every time we talk we find another opportunity for us to create a new partnership," said Fort Pierce City Commissioner Ed Becht. "This will be such a wonderful resource for the local governments, educational institutions, research facilities and residents here. I'm very excited about this partnership."

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings and Congressman Tom Rooney have all endorsed St. Lucie County's "Project Energy" initiative and they are supportive of the positive attitudes of the community leaders in establishing a sustainable municipality.

"I am very pleased by this announcement. Clearly, this is an exciting opportunity for St. Lucie County and will create much-needed jobs in Florida," said Congressman Alcee L. Hastings.

“This partnership will help bring much-needed jobs and investment to St. Lucie County. Investing in renewable energy sources is a critical piece of an 'all-of-the-above,' comprehensive energy solution, and I’m glad to see St. Lucie County leading the way," said U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney.

St. Lucie County has also received support from Gov. Charlie Crist's Office, which recently asked the County to be one of five Florida counties to partner with the State of Florida in submitting a grant application for \$5 million to the U.S. Department of Energy.

"This is an exciting new opportunity for St. Lucie County and the State of Florida to push forward with emerging opportunities in the green sector," said Florida Gov. Charlie Crist.

ORNL is a facility of the U.S. Department of Energy, managed and operated by UT-Battelle. ORNL is implementing sustainable design and development practices at its campus in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The aim of its program, the Sustainable Campus Initiative, is to reach benchmark levels of sustainability in facilities and research work. Environmental, as well as economic and social, elements are being integrated into architectural and programmatic plans for the construction of new buildings, the renovation of older facilities, and a host of other initiatives. Cutting-edge technologies are being implemented, as well, in areas such as transportation electrification and power grid performance.

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