

Orlando Businesses Save Waste Fees Through Disney-Supported Biofuel

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(Photo: Harvest Energy Garden In Central Florida. Credit: Harvest Power)

Businesses in Orlando, Florida, are saving dumpster fees by sending their food waste to a biofuel facility serving Walt Disney World. The city's green bin program is available to any local business, WOFL Fox 35 reports.

Kaley Winters, manager of Juice Bar in Orlando, told the news outlet's Matthew Trezza that previously they paid to send their organic waste to the city dump. Now the business pays a lower fee to put compost in a green bin, which goes to an anaerobic digestion facility in Central Florida.

"We thought it was going to going out to be composted and help gardens," Winters told the outlet. She added that she was excited to find out that it's helping EPCOT and creating energy.

The \$30 million biofuel facility was built by Waltham, Massachusetts-based Harvest Power, Marc Gunther reported for the Guardian in 2014. The facility was designed to

process about 120,000 tons of organic material per year and produce 5.4 MW of combined heat and electricity, Harvest Power's chief executive told Gunther.

American Biogas Council noted last month that the anaerobic digester currently processes 130,000 tons of biosolids, fats, oils, grease, and food waste annually. Walt Disney Resort is among the local partners along with Reedy Creek Improvement District, Reedy Creek Environmental Services, and local participating hotels, restaurants, food processors and haulers, the council says.

The City of Orlando's Commercial Food Waste Collection program has diverted more than 2.25 million pounds of food waste from the landfill since the fall of 2014, according to a 2018 update. The city has committed to becoming a zero waste community that stops sending solid waste to landfills by 2040.

Disney Diverts Waste

Reducing waste continues to be a priority for the Walt Disney Company. By 2020, the company aims to achieve 60% waste diverted from landfills and incineration, their 2017 CSR report says. Last year the company achieved a 46% diversion rate of operational waste generated from their theme parks, resorts, ESPN, studios, and office locations.

The Disney resorts diverted twice as much food waste from the landfill last year than in 2013, the company says. They also focused on maintaining emissions at the 2012 level. "At Walt Disney World Resort, the conversion of the guest transportation bus fleet to renewable diesel made from used cooking oil and non-consumable food waste cut the fleet's emissions in half."

Recently the Reputation Institute published their 2018 Global CR RepTrak rankings and put Walt Disney Company near the top. These global rankings are based on more than 230,000 individual ratings.