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## **New recycling plant is becoming reality**

**Community is taking note of Marpan Recycling already receiving attention from community**

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Marpan Supply owner Kim Williams had a dream six years ago that there could be an environmentally friendly waste recycling plant in Tallahassee. Now that plant is rising out of the ground.

“This plant is as clean as you can find for biomass,” Williams said. “This is similar to plants in Europe, but will be a first in Florida, maybe in the U.S.”

Williams calls his a “green vision,” noting that the private company he has created as a wholly owned subsidiary of Marpan Supply will have an initial capacity of 500 tons per day. The subsidiary is Marpan Recycling, and the plant is set to open in February.

The plant is designed primarily to process fiber in the form of waste from construction sites, land clearing and even cardboard. The recycled fiber has many uses, which includes producing cardboard and newsprint as well as in landscaping.

“We think putting fiber in a landfill is a waste,” he said. The advantages to recycling fiber are many,” he said, “and environmentally important.” Fiber that goes to a landfill produces methane in polluting concentrations. Recycling solves that problem, Williams said.

Marpan Recycling should not have a problem feeding the plant's appetite for material, according to Williams who said that Marpan Supply alone can supply 20 percent, or 100 tons per day, of the plant's capacity.

Williams pointed to the business model as well, noting that area landfill operations are nearing or at capacity and that Marpan Recycling's fee will be less than any government-operated waste site.

Marpan will charge a tipping fee of \$34 per ton. Leon County's fee is \$36 per ton, according to Public Works Director Tony Parks. Wakulla County charges \$85 per ton, and Quincy charges \$60 per ton (\$25 per ton for yard waste).

Wakulla County's facility already is at capacity and not accepting material. Instead, materials dropped with the county are taken either to Campbellton or Lake City, depending on the kind of waste. Leon County expects to reach capacity by 2015, and Quincy City Manager Bill Bogan said that city's landfill "has 20 to 30 years left," but noted household garbage is removed to a site in Georgia.

"Leon County is always looking for options to dispose of solid waste in lieu of placing materials into a landfilling operation," Parks said.

Already, the plant is generating attention and applause.

"For all the right reasons, Kim's recycling venture for Marpan is ambitious and visionary - a great gift to the community as the leading edge of a culture change in business recycling," said Ron Sachs, chair of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce. "In this exciting new era of increased concern for the environment, Kim Williams is our community's friendly 'Green Giant.'"

"As a community, a 100-ton-per-day recycling facility would help save our resources, increase recycling, reduce waste generation and provides an alternative to placing solid waste into a landfill operation," Parks said.

Williams said he didn't just dream about the facility. He studied the latest, "greenest" technologies available. In the process, he modified the plant's building permit to increase its size based on advice from recycling experts.

An intricate system that takes materials in at one end of the plant, separates the materials into metals, fiber (wood, carpet and cardboard, for example) and other components, filters out rocks and dirt, grinds the recycled fiber and compresses it for maximum shipping efficiency. All along the route, Williams said he has gone to extreme lengths to reduce energy requirements and build in safeguards against contamination. For example, the shredder is set to turn at only 25 revolutions per minute to allow for optimum energy efficiency, and the grinder is set to use only about \$8 worth of electricity in an hour in place of older, fossil fuel-dependent machines that cost hundreds of dollars per hour.

The plant's operating permits from government regulators like the Florida Department of Environmental Protection already are in hand.

Nancy Paul, a longtime waste management and recycling manager for local government in the area, joined Marpan Recycling last week as the plant's general manager. She said her first task is developing markets for the plant.

"A key selling point for us is that green builders can be certified using this plant," Paul said.

The 25,000-square-foot building, its land and equipment requires a \$5 million investment. Marpan has partnered with Capital City Bank to finance the project, which is located on Woodville Highway.

Initial employment will be 15 to 20, Williams said. However, as demand grows, the facility can increase up to 1,500 tons per day and 60 employees just by adding shifts, he said. Even so, worked into the plan is a later expansion.

The plant sits on a 17-acre site of which four acres have been set aside as an environmental easement.