

# SUBSTANTIAL “GREEN” PARK PROPOSED FOR DOVER

## *Jobs, Alternative Energy and More*

By Jim Frankowiak

“The Imperium Companies want to bring a new type of ‘green’ to Dover,” said Kyle Mowitz, president. This green would be a renewable energy park, a large scale alternative energy and eco-industrial research park to be developed on a reclaimed phosphate mining site in the southeast quadrant of East State Road 60 and South Dover Road. The park would comprise approximately 3,100-acres and its boundaries are roughly SR 60 to the north, Durant Road to the south, South Dover Road on the west and Turkey Creed Road to the east.

“The overall theme for the project is Clean Energy, Clean Fuel, Clean Food and Clean Water,” said Mowitz. “The project will be developed as a privately-funded world-class showcase of alternative energies, sustainable development principles and practices, plus a research component.” The selection of Dover for this project was the result of many factors. “Nowhere else in the county could we find a large contiguous land area of 3,100-acres that was outside required hurricane evacuation zones with direct access to urban and agricultural employment base and resources,” he said. “We anticipate 500 – 600 green legacy jobs in the county as a result of the park, plus hundreds more during the construction process, with others as a result of indirect impacts. The Park will also add to the county tax base,” said Mowitz. Mine reclamation activities continue on the site and are anticipated to roll into construction of the Renewable Energy Park starting by the end of this year.

“Some of the existing topography makes portions of the site the highest natural ridge in the county with rail access via the CSX mainline, power grid accessibility to TECO transmission lines, a natural gas main, direct access to major roadways and truck routes, as well as a viable reuse of a former heavy industrial phosphate mining operation,” said Mowitz. He noted there is also the potential for “Brownfield” status for the site which would offer additional incentives.

The proposed site also offers access to municipal water, sewer and reclaimed waste water via the Valrico Advance Waster Water Treatment Plant, which is less than two miles to the northwest.

The proposed Park would offer a range of renewable energy technologies, including:

- A biomass-to-energy system able to process 200,000 tons of yard and tree waste annually, sufficient to generate 30 megawatts of clean power
- Two, 60 Megawatt Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to energy systems that would process some 2,500 tons per day of MSW into recyclable metal and plastics, clean conditioned water, clean cellulose fiber and sterilized inert waste. This will be sufficient to produce an additional 120 megawatts of green electric power or millions of gallons of catalytic ethanol while decreasing landfill needs for the processed waste
- Solar Energy generated from a 100-acre field of photovoltaic panel modules, producing 10 megawatts
- Wind energy producing 10 megawatts
- Production of biofuels from living organisms or from organic or food waste products

The Park may include both algae and aquaculture systems, the former as a biodiesel fuel and the latter to produce fish stock, such as fresh tilapia. Both systems would use the same infrastructure, including the

sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions from the biomass production process. The Park also plans to work cooperatively with the adjacent agricultural community to grow products needed for research and use as feedstock.

Imperium and its team filed an application to create a new Land Use Category, Energy Industrial Park (EIP), with Hillsborough County this past August. This new category, along with the expansion of the Urban Service Area Boundary, would permit the Park to tie into county water and sewer systems, vital needs for a project of this type. Although the county has publicly stated its desire to foster green development along the I-4 corridor, the Imperium team was unable to find a site along the corridor that met the required infrastructural needs specifically suited for a Renewable Energy Park having multiple renewable energy technologies requiring large tracts of contiguous land area.

The EIP use designation that has been requested for the Park will consist of a mix of alternative energy production and research type facilities with supporting educational and employment uses to create a much needed sustainable, viable economic base in the western Tampa Bay area.

County planners want Imperium to prove why it is necessary for this project to be located outside the county’s Urban Service Area, an area specified for development. The proposed site’s western boundary abuts the current Urban Service Area boundary for almost two miles and fronts SR 60 for about 1.2 miles. The site is across the street from the county fairgrounds in eastern Hillsborough County. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on Imperium’s land use application to the Board of County Commissioners, the ultimate decision makers. A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for February 22. County Board action is anticipated this April.

In the meantime Imperium is scheduling meetings with local citizens groups and residents of subdivisions adjacent to the proposed Park. “I, and members our team, will be at every one of these meetings. To me it is vital that the president and partners of the organization proposing this project be present to answer the hard questions and earn the trust of prospective neighbors,” he said.

