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## **Highlands County Opens Landfill-Gas-Powered Asphalt Plant**

Highlands County, FL - One man's garbage is another man's treasure, particularly when that garbage can be repurposed to reduce fossil fuel use and save a county hundreds of thousands of dollars.

That's exactly what's happening in Highlands County, Florida, as the county opened the state's first-ever landfill-gas-powered asphalt plant late last year. The plant burns the methane gas produced by the landfill to heat the aggregate to make the asphalt that will pave the county's roads. And since each mile of road uses about 650 tons of asphalt—and each ton of asphalt typically takes about 2 gallons of fossil fuel to produce—that's a big savings.

What's more, the county also plans to use recycled glass to replace the sand in the asphalt mixture. This means the county can reinstitute their recycled glass program, which had previously been cut due to a dwindling market for recycled glass. And because the Highlands County glass supply will not be able to meet the needs of the new asphalt plant, other municipalities will be able to recycle more glass with Highlands County.

In another innovative move, later this year the plant will begin repurposing used roofing shingles, which will be ground up and melted down for resurfacing projects. The county had been storing the shingles at the landfill, rather than burying them. The county also plans to experiment with adding crushed bricks, ceramics, concrete, tire chips, and other wastes to the asphalt mix and further reduce the cost of paving roads.

According to PBS&J project manager, Joe Miller, "This is an example of how two county departments, Solid Waste and Roads, worked together to accomplish an innovative project. Highlands County can pave more roads with less money. The publicly owned asphalt plant will partner with the University of Florida and the Florida Department of Transportation to study and test unique asphalt mixes that can advance pavement design."

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