

Foley Plant Widespread Economic Impacts

When Buckeye Technologies' Foley Pulp plant came to Taylor County, Florida in 1951, it was drawn by wood, water, labor, rail access – and the 1947 designation of the Fenholloway as an industrial river. As planners hoped, the Foley plant became embedded in the economic fabric of Taylor County. The plant combines a unique, proprietary process with locally planted pine trees to produce specialty fibers that generate millions of dollars in annual revenues. The plant supports numerous jobs in an area that otherwise has limited employment opportunities. It also provides thousands of acres of forested recreation area for hunting.

Despite its decades of successful operations, the plant found itself in violation of Florida's surface water transparency standards. When engineering assessments determined that no available technology would reduce the pine tannins that cause discharge discoloration, the plant's operating status, and therefore the viability of communities in Taylor County, were under threat. Buckeye sought a variance based on the "widespread economic impacts" that would accompany closing the plant.

Veritas used economic data and interviews of suppliers, plant personnel, and local community officials to conduct an Economic Impact Analysis using input/output modeling in IMPLAN. Veritas used its input/output model to develop a detailed representation and reporting of the Foley plant's role in the local community. This representation is based on economic linkages from the plant through employees and local suppliers. Veritas used this approach to produce quantitative estimates of the metrics that now appear in USEPA's spreadsheets on the topic of adverse widespread economic impacts. Veritas' analysis evaluated changes in each of the following:

- Job loss
- Annual loss in US\$ in the local economy
- Taylor County's unemployment rate
- Share of residents living below poverty
- Taylor County expenditures on public welfare and
- Taylor County's tax revenue.

The results of this analysis were incorporated in a report that also presented data and methods in a clear and convincing manner. The plant was granted a variance and continues to operate providing jobs, recreation land, opportunity, and various unique pulp products used in numerous consumer products.