

# Sixty-one-year-old worker dies in horrific fall into vat of oil near Disney World

Jessica Goldstein  
18 August 2018

John Korody, a 61-year-old worker for Harvest Power, a renewable energy manufacturer, was killed shortly after midnight on Wednesday morning when he slipped on a grate and fell into a vat of oil while he and a coworker were dumping grease from a semitruck.

Workers at the facility convert grease and other food waste into energy and fertilizer, which obtains much of its material from the nearby Walt Disney World resort. Several press reports have given conflicting information as to whether or not the facility is part of Disney's property. Korody was killed at Harvest Power's Central Florida facility at 2010 South Service Lane in Bay Lake.

After Korody fell into the vat, his unnamed coworker attempted to rescue him but the fumes from the grease were so potent that both he and Korody were overwhelmed. As a result, Korody slipped further in and died. According to the Orange County Sheriff's office, Korody's body was removed from the vat and pronounced dead at the scene by the Reedy Creek Fire Department. There are no reports as to who called or how long it took authorities to arrive.

The death comes less than two months after 33-year-old Juan Alberto Ojeda was killed near the Disney Caribbean Beach Resort while working on a utility cart battery that jumped up a chain link fence before it crushed him.

Harvest Power spokeswoman Meredith Sorensen told the press: "This was a tragic incident... We are all deeply saddened by the loss of this coworker. We are in shock and grief and figuring out what happened."

Despite the public display of grief, the company is engaged in a cover-up of the conditions that caused the tragedy. After the incident, Harvest Power organized a moment of silence and emphasized safety measures, along with providing grief counselors for employees at

the Florida facility, according to the *Washington Post*. The sheriff's department reported to the press that an investigation is ongoing into the incident, but it remains unclear as to who exactly is carrying it out.

Readers who commented on the *Post* article expressed solidarity with Korody and outrage at the dangerous conditions that workers are forced to labor under for the sake of creating profit for the wealthy.

One such comment reads: "What a horrible, senseless way to die. At 61 years old he was still working hard at a physically demanding job in what sounds like disgusting conditions. And he lost his life because someone didn't think to put up safety rails or whatever to prevent a person from falling into the mixture. The man lost his life but the company goes on making a profit, after a few heartfelt words of course. Tell me again why corporations will always do the 'right' thing?"

A January 12 report issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that the rate of workplace deaths for workers aged 55 and older climbed to an all-time high of 7.2 deaths per 100,000 workers for the years spanning 1992-2016.

Several questions remain unanswered in the death of John Korody: Why were the workers not wearing protective masks to prevent them from breathing in fumes or proper footwear to prevent slips and falls? Why was a rail or guard not installed around the vat to prevent workers from falling in? How were the workers being asked to unload and empty the oil? Were they contract or regular employees, and were they properly trained to do the job they were asked to do?

Regardless of whether the conditions that led to Korody's death are ever revealed, they will not be resolved under the capitalist system. Even in so-called "green businesses"—firms employing renewable energy

as a means of profit in a time of intense economic crisis—the industry functions primarily as a source of wealth for a select few, not to the benefit of the vast majority of society who create that wealth: the working class.

The growth in profit potential for businesses specializing in the manufacture of recycled products was recognized 25 years ago in a 1993 *Harvard Business Review* article titled “Recycling for Profit: The New Green Business Frontier.”

The article suggested that companies that manufactured recycled products who wished to increase their profits should form strategic relationships with powerful firms by meeting their demands for lower prices, greater supply, faster fulfillment of demand, and higher-quality products. It also called for renewable and recycled businesses to push for “strategic alliances” with governments and public organizations to lift restrictions and develop programs to increase their ability to generate greater profits.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the consumption of biofuels and other non-hydroelectric sources of renewable energy more than doubled in the years 2000 to 2017. This has been attributed to state and federal government requirements and incentives for the use of renewable energy.

Capitalists who own the means to produce and distribute renewable and recycled energy sources have often presented themselves as proof that the capitalist system can save itself from the ills of environmental destruction, which it has created. Elon Musk, billionaire CEO of Tesla Motors and its solar energy subsidiary SolarCity is one such figure. Musk claims to be leading the transition to “100% renewable energy” and a “sustainable future.”

The idea that the capitalist system can create anything “sustainable” is a myth. As the death of John Korody demonstrates, for recycled and renewable energy companies to compete in the marketplace, they must ruthlessly exploit workers by implementing speedups, stripping back safety and training programs, and other cost-cutting measures which create dangerous conditions that lead to injuries and deaths.

The solution to the crisis in which a growing number of workers face the possibility of serious injury and death is to enter into an organized struggle against the capitalist system as a whole and to fight for the

building of a socialist society in which the productive forces of society are used to meet the social needs of the international working class, not the profit interests of the wealthy few.

To do this, workers must build rank-and-file committees at their workplaces to demand the investigation into unsafe working conditions and put forth the demand for the right to a workplace free of safety hazards and for ample resources to be spent to improve working conditions. These committees must link up across industries and internationally in a coordinated movement to establish workers’ control over the means of production worldwide.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**