

WastAway turns garbage into energy - Plant converts Fluff into clean fuel

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A large group of federal, state and local officials attended the unveiling of the company's new gasification process Friday.

WastAway Services, the award-winning local developer of the WastAway recycling system, recently achieved another milestone with the unveiling ceremony of its newest technology: the conversion of household garbage to clean synthetic gas.

According to company officials, the WastAway Recycling System with fluff gasification can help solve three of the biggest problems facing our country today – unsafe landfills, global warming, and dependence on foreign oil.

Warren County Executive John Pelham was joined Friday at the WastAway plant in Morrison by federal, state and local officials as he and Congressman Lincoln Davis turned off the plant's gas meter to demonstrate that operations could continue using only the green energy created from recycled trash.

Utilizing a Community Development Block Grant from the state of Tennessee, BouldinCorp, the parent company of WastAway, has integrated a gasifier that can convert excess fluff, the material produced by its solid waste recycling process, into clean synthetic gas. This process employs proven technology that has been used for decades, most notably by the Germans during WWII when other fuel sources were scarce.

The company plans to begin converting the fuel it produces into electrical energy in the near future with the installation of a steam turbine generator on site. In addition to powering its own facility, the company also plans to sell any excess electricity back to the grid for use in local electric systems.

In introducing the technology, BouldinCorp founder and major stockholder Floyd Bouldin said he appreciates the support Warren County has shown.

“We have taken your garbage and recycled it into a useful product, fluff, that can be utilized in a number of ways, but this new gasification process promises to be one of the most important,” Bouldin said. “It produces a clean, efficient fuel that can be used to produce energy from recycled household waste. I applaud Warren County for its decision to partner with WastAway four years ago, and look forward to what we can accomplish in the future.”

Congressman Davis said this project shows the support Warren County has shown for green energy, and the advances companies like WastAway are making will help America meet its energy needs while

helping to reduce pollution and greenhouse gases.

“I think one of the biggest challenges we have in our nation today is finding an energy source that will have us at least getting close to self-sustainable to where we don’t have to worry about other countries to provide our energy,” said Congressman Davis.

Davis says it’s companies like BouldinCorp, rather than large corporations, who tend to develop the kind of innovative technology WastAway Services has brought to market.

“Is this important? You bet it’s important,” said Davis. “It’s probably one of the most important things we can accomplish in our nation today is to become energy independent. BouldinCorp is helping us do that.”

According to BouldinCorp board member Mark Brown, the looming specter of global warming is becoming a major concern to countries around the world, many of which have signed the 1997 Kyoto Treaty, committing their nations to reducing the release of greenhouse gases, which many scientists feel is a major contributing factor to this phenomenon.

Though carbon dioxide has been a main focus, Brown says methane gas is many times more damaging, and one of the main sources of that gas is decaying landfills. Brown says much has been made in the news about California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s announcement that his state will try to meet the Kyoto agreement standards by 2012. Meanwhile, Warren County, with its choice to use the WastAway process, has been essentially been meeting those standards for the last four years.

“We’ve done some calculations using EPA numbers,” Brown said, “and if you look at the garbage an average household produces, and the fact Warren County has not been landfilling that garbage, they’ve been recycling it. Now, if you look at the methane the landfill would have been releasing into the atmosphere, and methane is 23 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than CO₂, so if you look at equivalent CO₂ emissions, Warren County, using average numbers from the EPA, then we’ve cut the carbon emissions from residential households by 12 percent over the past four years.

“Kyoto is only requiring that you cut your carbon emissions by 8 percent by 2008,” Brown continued. “So for four years we’ve already been doing more than what Kyoto is trying to get the rest of the world to do two years from now.”

State Rep. Judd Matheny, who attended the presentation, brought up another advantage of the WastAway system.

“As a lot of folks know I’ve been very interested in alternative fuels for a long time,” Matheny said. “It’s great when you have something that makes fuel, but it doesn’t take away from the food source, that includes human foods and animal foods both.

“Ethanol is a very good thing, but it’s made from corn and takes away from the food source,” Matheny continued. “Biodiesel is great, I support biodiesel, but it takes away from the food source too. Those are disadvantages that the gasification of this product would not have, since it is made from household waste. It’s good for us domestically, and it has great implications worldwide in developing countries which have no fuel sources. They have lots of garbage, but no food they can afford to convert to fuel. It’s pretty exciting.”