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R-Board Landfill Gas Project Produces Green Power

The Rappahannock Regional Solid Waste Management Board (R-Board) made history today as they cut the ribbon on a new renewable energy facility at the landfill. The new facility generates 2.14 MWs of renewable energy by using the landfill gas generated by decomposing waste at the landfill.

Until now, the landfill gas, which is about fifty percent methane, had been safely extracted through wells and pipes buried in the landfill and combusted in a flare. The R-Board recognized that this gas could be captured and put to beneficial use. “The landfill gas-to-energy project successfully utilizes a resource that would have otherwise been wasted, and in the process, produces benefits for the landfill, the environment, and the local community,” said Mr. Matt Kelly, R-Board Regional Landfill, Fredericksburg City Council.

To meet their goals, the R-Board signed a 20-year contract with Ameresco, an energy services company with an expertise in developing clean energy projects, to build a landfill gas generation facility. Ameresco’s project diverts the gas from the flare to the landfill gas plant, which is equipped with two specialized engines designed to burn landfill gas.

The two GE Jenbacher engines produce a combined 2.14 megawatts of electricity – enough to meet the annual power needs of over 1,300 homes. The power from this project is being purchased by Constellation Energy, a power provider that is committed to purchasing renewable energy and incorporating it into the power portfolio that they offer to their customers.

“Ameresco is proud to be a part of such a forward looking project, especially one that creates an alternative power source and offsets the need to use other locally generated power sources that use polluting fuels,” said Michael T. Bakas, Vice President of Renewable Energy, Ameresco.

Bringing this project into operation has had positively impacts for the R-Board and the local economy. "In addition to the significant environmental benefits, the R-Board will receive revenue from the sale of the gas," said R-Board Chairman Paul Milde. "This revenue will help supplement landfill operation costs. It's a win-win situation for everyone." This renewable energy project also utilized local contractors and equipment, which helps sustain green jobs in Virginia.

Developing new sources of renewable energy reduces direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 12 tons of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) a year, a local environmental benefit equivalent to removing more than 16,500 cars from Virginia's roads, or planting nearly 21,000 acres of trees annually. Andrew Mikel, the Landfill Superintendent said, "Producing green power from landfill gas is the ultimate in recycling. We are proud to partner with these companies and support this visionary project."

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