

Stellar safety record and significant plant upgrades highlight Wheelabrator's first year of ownership of region's waste-to-energy facilities

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Wheelabrator Technologies Inc.

Media

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PORTSMOUTH, Va. - May 5, 2011 - A year after it assumed ownership of Southeastern Public Service Authority's (SPSA) waste-to-energy facilities in Portsmouth, Virginia, Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. has invested more than \$20-million in capital upgrades and in maintenance improvements while dramatically improving the plants' safety record.

Wheelabrator, a subsidiary of Waste Management, purchased the waste-to-energy facilities from SPSA for \$150-million on April 30, 2010. Wheelabrator Portsmouth is contracted to convert a half-million tons a year of municipal solid waste from eight Southside localities into steam and electricity for the Navy. It also sells power onto the nation's electric grid.

As of April 30 of this year, the two operations - the refuse-derived fuel (RDF) plant, which receives nearly a million tons of solid waste each year, and an energy production facility that converts the shredded trash into steam and electricity - have experienced 165 consecutive days without an OSHA recordable accident.

"During our first year, we have invested heavily in our plant and our employees," said John LaRiviere, general manager of Wheelabrator Portsmouth. "Most employees were previously with SPSA, and have adjusted to new management and work rules in a professional and dedicated manner. The result is our stellar safety record and a well functioning operation."

Longtime employee and Plant Operator Raymond Wesley said enhanced safety was an immediate priority. Fresh yellow paint on rails and stairs is one visible sign. "They're taking this plant up-to-standard, up-to-date in a pretty quick manner. And we all enjoy it. We're all pretty excited about it and looking forward to it," said Wesley. "They are really big on safety and rightly so. We're glad that they are."

The company has also been restoring and increasing plant performance, operational efficiencies, and environmental compliance to reach a world-class level. The focus, beyond constant safety and compliance briefings, has been on major retrofits to the plant's four high-pressure boilers. Wheelabrator has also installed new control systems to better regulate combustion and emissions.

Plant Manager Paul Grego commented: "Our goal is to provide a long-term environmental solution to meet the waste needs of our member communities. Capital investments have already improved combustion and reduced emissions, while boiler availability has risen from 72% to 80% and should be at 90% by next May. Our improvements are ahead of schedule, and we intend to remain that way."

Wheelabrator has also reduced noise levels and odors emanating from the RDF plant, made landscape improvements and is in the process of upgrading its stormwater system. It is also helping SPSA extend the life of its regional landfill in Suffolk by taking the region's non-processable waste to Waste Management landfills in Hampton and Waverly. More improvements are on the way to speed up trash deliveries on the RDF side and processing of the shredded garbage at the power plant.

Clint Stratton, a 20-year employee previously with SPSA but now with Wheelabrator Portsmouth, appreciates what the new ownership has done. “The emphasis is safety all day, every day,” said Stratton. “They brought engineers in. Now they’re upgrading all the units and it’s going very well.”

Wheelabrator Portsmouth has also become active in the civic community, having joined the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce and Portsmouth Partnership, and made contributions to the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame, Virginia Children’s Museum, Cradock Civic League, and African American History Project in Portsmouth. Wheelabrator Portsmouth is also an Elizabeth River Project Model River Star. In addition, the company is sponsoring an annual scholarship for a high school senior in the Cradock community near the plant, and is sending a dozen students from a Portsmouth middle school to participate in an environmental symposium in Florida.

“We are honored to be in Hampton Roads serving the citizens in Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Suffolk, and Portsmouth, our host community,” said Grego. “We look forward to a long and beneficial relationship with all the cities and counties we serve, and believe the improvements we have made in plant performance, reliability, and customer service, demonstrate that commitment.”

About Wheelabrator Technologies

A wholly owned subsidiary of Waste Management of Houston, Texas, Wheelabrator Technologies Inc. is a world leader in the safe and environmentally sound conversion of municipal solid waste and other renewable waste fuels into clean energy. Wheelabrator’s 17 waste-to-energy facilities provide safe waste disposal for towns and cities across the U.S. Wheelabrator also operates five independent power plants designed to generate electricity using an assortment of fuels, including waste wood, tires, waste coal, and natural gas. In addition to producing electricity, some of these facilities also produce steam sold to nearby government and commercial establishments. Wheelabrator’s 22 facilities have a combined electric generating capacity of 896 megawatts, enough energy to power more than 985,000 homes. To learn more, visit www.wheelabratortechnologies.com.

About Waste Management

Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Through its subsidiaries, the company provides collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. It is also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. The company’s customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America. To learn more, visit www.wm.com or www.thinkgreen.com.

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