

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

A new CNG fueling center for Rumpke

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Jim Johnson | WRN senior reporter

Aug. 8 -- Rumpke Consolidated Companies Inc. of suburban Cincinnati has been planning for quite a long time for the day when the company would introduce compressed-natural-gas-powered collection vehicles to its fleet.

Well, that day is upon the solid waste management company.

A maintenance shop at the company's Colerain Township, Ohio, headquarters that opened in 2008 was built with ventilation, heating and electrical systems designed to accommodate CNG-powered vehicles even though those trucks were years away.

Now the \$3.1 million project to construct a 16-station CNG fueling center is complete. The company has 10 CNG-powered vehicles that will serve a handful of local communities, according to spokeswoman Amanda Pratt. About \$800,000 in federal grant money helped defray the cost.

"The trucks in the streets, they are going to have less impact on the neighborhoods. They are going to be quieter," said R. Jay Roberts, director of engineering and environmental affairs for Rumpke. "It's also a cost savings on natural gas versus diesel."

Rumpke views the 10 trucks as a pilot project to see if it can expand use of such vehicles in the company's fleet of 1,600 collection trucks. Rumpke will be looking at cost, efficiency and maintenance issues during this test run.

"There are a lot of unknowns because this is [Rumpke's] first time implementing this kind of equipment," Pratt said. "This offers us a great opportunity."

"From our perspective, this just furthers our mission and our overall goal," she said, of the company's sustainability efforts. "It's a vital part of what Rumpke does. Since the company started, we have been finding ways to take waste and reuse it, recycle it and reduce waste."

Trucks will return to Rumpke's fueling station each night to refill with CNG over several hours. Enough natural gas will be pumped into high-pressure tanks to allow each truck to operate for a 10-hour shift.

Waste buried as long as 40 years ago can still create landfill gas, so trash discarded when Richard Nixon was in office is helping fuel collection efforts today.

Rumpke's fueling operation will use less than 10% of the gas being generated at the landfill to power the new vehicles. "This is probably one of the largest landfill gas-to-pipeline quality gas (systems) in the country, if not the largest," Roberts said.

Montauk Energy Capital operates the landfill gas system at Rumpke's flagship landfill, providing enough gas to Duke Energy to power 25,000 homes per year. Because of contractual obligations, landfill gas is processed by Montauk and then sent into a Duke Energy line.

Rumpke's fueling station is the first customer on the line to utilize gas. That means Rumpke can't call the project a closed-loop system, but Pratt said she has no doubt that landfill gas is being used for a good a portion of the fueling needs.

Roberts said Rumpke was deliberate in the company's approach toward CNG, allowing others to be pioneers in the approach. "We're very comfortable with it. We see it as a significant part of our fleet in the future," he said.

"We have the capacity with the existing station to add 30 to 40 trucks and it's also designed for expansion beyond that," he said.

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Click [here](#) to see a video on the CNG project at Rumpke.

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