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BMW Using Recycled Methane Gas as Energy Source

EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman on Hand

Spartanburg, S.C. – BMW Manufacturing Corp. fully began recycling methane gas as an energy source, it was announced today. The recycled methane gas, drawn from the Palmetto Landfill near Spartanburg, will supply BMW with 25 percent of its energy needs. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Christine Todd Whitman participated in the announcement.

“This is a win-win for everyone. It avoids the need to burn methane. It yields significant amounts of clean energy. And, by avoiding 55,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year, it results in cleaner, healthier air for everyone to breathe,” said Whitman.

“BMW wants to do whatever it can to make Upstate South Carolina a better place to live,” said Dr. Helmut Leube, president of BMW Manufacturing Corp. “This project allows BMW to take a wasted source of energy and use it to generate electricity, which benefits the environment and area residents through lower emissions.”

BMW’s project is unique in that the methane gas is used to fuel four turbines at the BMW factory, which produce electricity and hot water. Most other landfill gas projects produce electricity at the landfill and use it only for electricity or direct heating. The efficient cogeneration of electricity and hot water has been a part of BMW’s overall plan since construction began on the plant in 1993.

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“Cogeneration is used at many of BMW’s worldwide facilities,” said Gary Weinreich, BMW’s Manager for Environmental Services. “We are pleased to add a ‘Green Power’ component by using this renewable energy source. We strive to be a good environmental partner with the community by simultaneously improving energy utilization and regional air quality.”

BMW’s Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project supports the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) efforts in the Landfill Methane Outreach Program (LMOP), which began in 1994 as a means of converting landfill gas into clean-burning, cost-effective, useable energy. Landfills are the largest man-made methane source in the United States. Methane is produced as trash decomposes. When released into the air, it is a greenhouse gas and contributes to local smog conditions.

BMW’s landfill gas-to-energy project will reduce carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to driving 105 million miles per year or more than 4,000 times around the earth. The project will also recover sufficient energy to heat the equivalent of 15,000 homes per year.

To utilize the gas, a 9.5-mile pipeline was built from the landfill to BMW Manufacturing. Construction on the Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project began in July 2002 and was completed in December 2002.

BMW’s partners in this multi-million dollar project are Ameresco Energy Services and Waste Management Inc.

Ameresco designed, built and owns the pipeline, gas processing and gas compression facilities, as well as manages the overall operations of the project.

The company’s project experience includes energy conservation activities with Fortune 500 aerospace and automotive manufacturers, public and private school systems, state and municipal governments, large universities, and government agencies.

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"We are very excited to support BMW in meeting its energy and environmental goals through this renewable energy project. This project means cleaner air, a healthier environment and a better community for all," said George Sakellaris, Ameresco president and CEO.

Waste Management, which owns and operates the Palmetto Landfill, has been developing landfill gas-to-energy projects for more than 15 years and currently supplies landfill gas to 69 gas-to-energy projects in 21 states.

"Landfill gas represents an important source of renewable energy," said Barry Caldwell, senior vice president of Government Affairs and Corporate Communications. "Waste Management was a pioneer in landfill gas recovery and reuse programs, and our affiliation with BMW and Ameresco on this project is more evidence of how harnessing this resource for energy can help the environment and provide a valuable fuel."

"Our commitment to capturing and using landfill gas has helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our landfills by 50 percent." Caldwell said. "Primarily as a result of our methane gas recovery projects, Waste Management has become one of the largest private holders of greenhouse gas emissions reduction credits in the U.S."

BMW is a charter member of the EPA's National Environmental Performance Track that recognizes companies for their environmental stewardship and performance. The company is also a member of the South Carolina Environmental Excellence Program. The company is on the Dow Jones Sustainability Group Index, which rates environmentally friendly companies.

BMW Manufacturing Corp. is a subsidiary of BMW AG in Munich, Germany. Its website address is www.bmwusfactory.com. In addition to the South Carolina manufacturing facility, BMW's North American subsidiaries include sales, marketing and financial services operations in the United States, Canada and throughout Latin America; an information technology consulting and systems

integration firm in South Carolina; a production facility in Mexico;
and a design firm in California.

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