

Plasco to build first commercial waste-to-energy plant in Alberta

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Plasco Energy Group Inc.'s waste-to-energy operations may be temporarily halted in Ottawa, but the technology is gaining popularity out west, with the announcement of a new deal to build its first commercial waste conversion plant in Alberta.

The Ottawa-based company, which is the brainchild of local tech veteran Rod Bryden, said it has signed a contract to build, own and operate a waste-to-energy plant with the Central Waste Management Commission, led by Red Deer County, Alta.'s mayor Earl Kinsella.

The plant is expected to take in 300 tonnes of waste per day and convert it into more than 15 megawatts of green electricity for use on Red Deer's local distribution grid.

"We are extremely pleased to showcase Plasco's world-leading environmental performance and energy generation in Red Deer County in Central Alberta," said Plasco's executive vice-president Chris Gay in a statement. "After two years of diligent work by the CWMC, we are proud to be selected as the best solution for the conversion of waste."

The project is Plasco's largest such facility to date, and is a larger version of its \$27-million demonstration site at Ottawa's Trail Road landfill. However, recent media reports note the local facility has been shut down for nearly two months to perform planned upgrades, and the plant hit a small snag in July when it had to fix a problem with its sulphur dioxide emissions being higher than its regulatory allowances.

Plasco's Alberta announcement could help to move its \$125-million, fully functional new Ottawa facility forward, as city council has voted in favour of fully implementing the technology as long as the company can prove it works and passes city environmental approval.

Once the technology has been proven, Plasco plans to process almost all of Ottawa's 200,000 tonnes of solid waste annually and create enough clean electricity to light nearly 25,000 homes.

The City of Ottawa, which is a partner with the company, will receive royalties of up to \$3.5 million per year as part of the Red Deer deal.

"This has been a long time coming and is a real move forward for us in Central Alberta," stated Red Deer County's Mr. Kinsella. "We are eliminating landfills, making the planet greener and it all works in rural Canada."

Construction of the facility will begin after operation of Plasco's Trail Road facility in Ottawa has demonstrated energy efficiencies satisfactory to Plasco and environmental performance satisfactory to the CMWC and all the required permits have been obtained, the company said. This is expected to start early in 2009.