

COVANTA TULSA

TRASH TO TREASURE

Tulsa's Covanta converts waste into energy

D&L Oil Tools offers a large catalog of downhole oil and gas tools it manufacturers in far west Tulsa. Oilfield products such as packers, anchors and service tools facilitate the completion of wells to get the energy flowing to the surface.

Every few seconds at Covanta's far west Tulsa location, a giant hydraulic crane and "claw" picks up tons of trash and deposits it into a hopper. The mound of trash moves its way into a fiery furnace where it is combusted at temperatures approaching 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

The burning rubbish heats water and creates high temperature, high pressure steam that is delivered to a refinery across the street and turns a turbine that generates electricity for the customers of the Public Service Co. of Oklahoma (PSO).

It's a high-tech process called energy-from-waste where virtually everything consumers in Tulsa and surrounding communities toss into their non-recyclable garbage is converted into renewable energy.

"Our mission is to ensure that no waste is ever wasted," said Matt Newman, Covanta's director of business management for its Tulsa location. "We receive all the residential, post-recycled waste from the 118,000 households in Tulsa. This is post-recycled trash from under your kitchen sink."

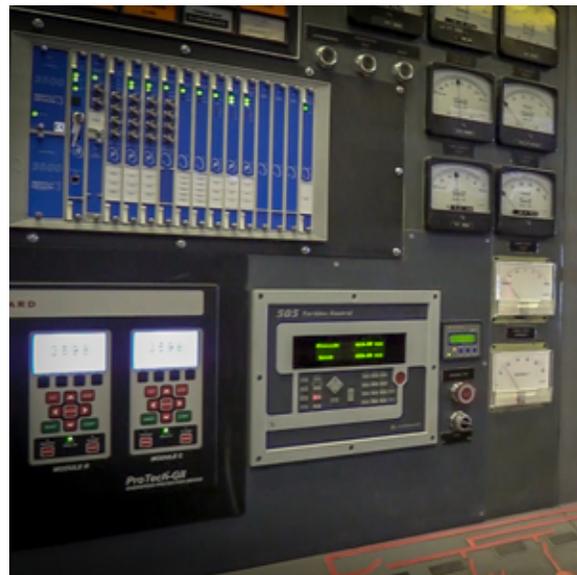
Covanta also serves the cities of Sand Springs, Owasso, Broken Arrow, Coweta and other surrounding areas. It has contracts to dispose of waste from manufacturing entities and commercial enterprises.

On this day in early January, a fleet of trucks awaited their turn to drop off their load of garbage for incineration. Covanta processes about 1,000 tons of trash per day, around the clock, all year long, Newman said.

Covanta Tulsa is the only energy-from-waste facility in an eight-state area. So, it even disposes of waste from commercial and industrial clients in Colorado, New Mexico, Louisiana, Texas and Missouri who are focused on sustainability.

"They use us as the final destination for their unwanted, off spec, outdated or proprietary materials to assure that they are destroyed, and we create clean, renewable energy with their waste streams," Newman said. "Our service can help them achieve their sustainability goals."

A publically traded company based in Morristown, N.J., Covanta has pioneered dozens of innovations relating to recycling, sustainability and environmental remediation over the past three decades. Nationwide, all of Covanta's locations will process about 20 million tons of trash annually and produce power for one million homes.



“Usually you don’t put the words innovation and trash in the same sentence,” Newman said. “But, we are very focused on continuous improvement. We have a very strong research and development team that’s’ always working to improve our process and performance.”

Each year, Covanta recovers and recycles approximately 550,000 tons of iron and more than 35,000 tons of nonferrous metals, including aluminum, copper and brass; enough metal recycled yearly to build about six Golden Gate Bridges and more than a billion soda cans.

In addition to recovering energy from trash, Covanta also provides destruction of unused drugs service for both the state of Oklahoma as well as federal law enforcement. Through a partnership with the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, 200 drop boxes have been placed around the state where residents can drop off their unused prescription medicines, many of which may contain opioids (<https://portal.obn.ok.gov/takeback/default.aspx>)

“In just a handful of years we have received and destroyed over 300 million pills,” Newman said. “Not only are these pills out of the hands of our youth, but out of our waterways, because they are not disposed of down the sewer system. So, it’s a win-win. I’m very proud of that program.”

Covanta also has established strong relationships with both the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance (OMA) and the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST), two organizations that work closely with researchers, manufacturers and innovators like Covanta.

“A very large portion of our workforce here in Oklahoma works in small and medium size manufacturing,” Newman said. “So it makes a whole lot of sense if we can help our small to medium sized manufacturers with continuous improvement, become leaner and meaner and more profitable.”

A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Newman sits on the OCAST governing board of directors.

“We’re proud to have such an innovative leader on our board of directors and one who is associated with a company that is making such a difference in critical areas such as recycling, sustainability and renewable energy,” said Michael Carolina, OCAST executive director.

Covanta Tulsa also participates in OCAST’s Intern Partnerships cost-share program in which it employs a mechanical engineering student as an intern.

“People don’t really like to talk about trash, but talking about it focuses people on the whole sustainability spectrum,” Newman said as we watched the claw drop another few tons of trash into the hopper. “By definition, it’s people, planet and prosperity. That’s the triple bottom line of sustainability.”

[Read the article in the 2-9-18 Oklahoman](#)

[Watch the video](#)

[Go to the Covanta website](#)