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WA-18

Renewable Natural Gas Project Continues to Innovate

From the record-breaking heat wave in late July to the polar vortex that gripped the U.S. just before Christmas, two major projects to enhance efficiency and reliability along with dozens of smaller performance and efficiency improvement projects, 2022 proved to be a challenging year for the team at the H.W. Hill Renewable Natural Gas Project.



Working with innovative technology company Loci Controls and Republic Services—Roosevelt Regional Landfill’s operator—Klickitat PUD installed an automated well-field tuning system. The system monitors gas quality at more than 180 gas collection wells every hour, compares the results to a predetermined set of parameters and makes a corrective adjustment up to eight times per day. Well-field tuning was previously accomplished by hand twice per month. With these upgrades plant operators and well-field technicians can better control gas quality within a narrow band through all weather conditions—improving plant reliability and efficiency. The system is also used to identify and correct problems in the well field quickly.

Another project the KPUD team brought to life was an upgrade to the landfill gas blowers in October. Two large, multistage 400-horsepower blowers complete with inlet and outlet liquid separators with gas cooling were added. This project provides increased capacity, equipment redundancy and improves gas cleaning efficiency at the beginning of the gas cleaning process. The improved gas cleaning efficiency decreased plant parasitic electrical load.

While these two large, highly visible projects are impressive, the collective results from dozens of small modifications to process machinery and automated algorithms made by the talented technicians who operate the facility are even more impressive. So impressive are the results of their efforts, that 2022 full-year operating reliability was 97.2% and revenue was nearly \$18 million.

The facility garners national attention from other project owners and developers who visit to see how a little utility in Central Washington has managed to build and operate such a facility where many others have failed. Some of these visitors go back home deciding that it looks too hard and that they couldn’t possibly make it work. Others leave inspired, determined to build their own version of the H.W. Hill RNG project. Regardless of their own decisions, for me, it is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to lead such a dedicated team that can achieve these results.

Kevin Ricks
Renewable Energy Assets Manager