

## **Marion County Waste to Energy plant employee testimonials**

### **Don't trash my good, union job**

I've worked at Covanta for twelve years with my father, Ed Burckhardt. I'm the control room operator, part of a team that oversees the conversion of Marion County's garbage into local, renewable energy for 9,000 homes each year. This plant provides my dad and I and more than 40 others with good jobs, reliable hours, union health and retirement benefits.

Without this plant, more than 500 tons of waste would be loaded on semi-trucks and shipped more than 100 miles through the Gorge to a landfill in Eastern Oregon. Think the traffic is bad on I-5 today? Add more than 9,800 semi-truck loads on I-5 and I-84 each year. Another 500 tons of waste would be added every day to regional landfills. Instead of producing energy, the buried waste produces methane that adds even more greenhouse gas emissions.

Without this plant, Marion County residents could potentially see higher garbage rates. That's because our county government would lose the revenues from the energy the plant generates. In the past, those dollars have been invested in county services and those dollars make it possible for Marion County to have some of the most innovative waste reduction and recycling programs in all of Oregon including Save the Food (food waste reduction) and Master Recycler training.

Additionally, our plant recovers 8,000 tons of metals each year. That's enough metal to build more than 6,500 cars.

Rather than forfeiting good union jobs and dismantling one of the most progressive systems for handling solid waste and recycling in Oregon, I think lawmakers ought to be doing everything they can to support a local energy resource that keeps garbage out of landfills, preserves land for higher use and eliminates greenhouse gas emissions.

Most people I talk to are glad to hear that our plant is a cleaner alternative to coal-fired plants. They appreciate that waste to energy facilities like ours are recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the European Union for mitigating greenhouse gases.

To me, recycling, recovery and renewable energy is what the Oregon environmental ethic is all about. I'm proud of the work my dad and I do. And I hope that my 4-year-old daughter will someday be proud of the contribution her dad and grandfather made to our state.

- David Burckhardt

### **Save Marion County jobs**

I have worked for more than 3 years at the Covanta Energy-from-Waste plant in Brooks, where I am a utility operator. It's a good job with good pay and benefits.

Every day I see as much as 500 tons of garbage come into our plant and converted to energy. Most people have no idea how much waste there is or what happens to it. I am proud of the role I play to manage our waste and improve our environment.

I ask Oregon legislators to do everything they can to support me, my coworkers, and the jobs we do.

- Peter Alayon

## **Marion County Waste to Energy plant employee testimonials**

### **Best place for our garbage to go**

I've worked at the Covanta Waste from Energy plant in Brooks for 32 years. At 63, I'm the oldest among my union brothers. The youngest is 21.

This has been a great place to work and to raise my family. That's why I'm not happy to hear that a bill pending in the Oregon Legislature threatens my job as well as the plant. It makes no sense.

Every day, Covanta turns 500 tons of Marion County's garbage into clean energy. Would it be better to send that garbage up I-5 in semi-trucks through the Gorge and to the landfill, where it will rot and emit greenhouse gasses? I don't think so.

Are we really going to stop making garbage? I don't think so. At least not anytime soon. The Covanta plant is a good solution. And, in my opinion, a far better option than either landfills or generating energy from coal.

- Todd Hatfield

### **Proud of what we do**

I've worked for the Covanta Energy from Waste plant for 29 years. The employment office sent me there after I left the U.S. Navy and I never saw any reason to leave. Today I'm an operations foreman.

The people are great. The union wages and benefits are good. And the plant continues to become ever more efficient turning Marion County's garbage into clean energy. Our plant recycles metals that would otherwise have been sent to landfills.

I'm proud of the plant, my union coworkers and the environmentally responsible way we handle the county's waste. I invite our state lawmakers to come by for a tour.

- Troy Maxfield

### **Energy from Waste better than landfill**

I have worked at the Covanta Energy from Waste plant in Brooks for more than two decades. I like my job and like talking to people about what I do. Most people drive by our plant off of I-5 and have no idea that every day we are turning as much as 500 tons of Marion County's garbage into energy. We recover 8,000 tons of metal every year, enough for 6,500 cars.

Isn't that better than sending 500 tons of garbage *every day* to the landfill? Covanta is one of the county's largest employers. It's important for Oregon lawmakers to support family wage, union jobs and the good work that we do for the environment.

- Mike Keck