



## **Waste Facilities in Sun Valley, Rialto Leading Efforts to Turn Food Scraps into Fuel**

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

California has required people and businesses to separate food and kitchen scraps from the rest of their trash for almost two years hoping to keep organic waste out of landfills.

In spite of good intentions, organic waste is still contaminated when it's picked up, says Mark Grady, area director of recycling operations for Waste Management.

"If your trash container fills up, some people just overflow into the next container and you're further contaminating that recyclable waste stream," Grady says. "It's a challenge that we face and we want people to recycle, right? But we also know people need to get rid of material at their house and we see the challenges with that."

In the past, tossing plastic bags, glass or metals in with your food waste made it useless, but Waste Management in Sun Valley now has OREX, technology that works like a garlic press and is able to remove plastic film and grit from mixed solid waste so the extracted organic waste can be used to produce renewable natural gas.

"This is transformational...what's happening now in organics is what happened in recycling in the '80s and '90s and what's prompting all of this infrastructure and all this investment and all of these jobs that are being created is a desire to try to attack and address climate change and mitigate methane emissions," says Shayne Petkiewicz, business development manager for Anaergia.

The Waste Management facility in Sun Valley processed 90,000 tons of organic food waste last year.

Waste that five years ago would have gone to the landfill is now separated and transported to Anaergia's Rialto Bioenergy Facility, a \$185 million project that is one of North America's largest organics processing facilities.

Organic waste is converted there to biogas which is then upgraded to pipeline quality standards.

"This is a robust system. It's doing things that other systems can't do, meaning it can take it on. We're allowing the technology to do the work - recapture that material, process that material and actually use it for something else," says Kevin Vaughn, the materials recovery facility manager for Waste Management.

The renewable natural gas created is then used as transportation fuel in heavy duty trucks and buses, making this collaboration a chance to use organic waste to help solve issues with climate change instead of contributing to it.