

WRAL Tech Wire

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Raleigh biogas energy firm lands contract in Rhode Island



Orbit's pilot plant in Clinton (Orbit photo)

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By WRAL Tech Wire

RALEIGH, N.C. — Orbit Energy, a Raleigh-based company that has developed technology to turn food waste into biogas for electricity production, has landed a 15-year contract with a utility in Rhode Island.

The Providence Journal newspaper reported on Monday that Orbit had made the deal with National Grid. Once Orbit's \$15 million project is in operation it will provide 3.2 megawatts of power, or enough energy for some 2,000 homes, the newspaper said.

Orbit calls its technology "high solids anaerobic digestion." It is used to recycle food, municipal waste and animal manure as well as yard trimmings into biogas for use in producing electricity. The waste is mixed with bacteria and heated to 131 degrees to produce the biogas. Some 120 tons of waste could be processed a day, according to Orbit.

The deal must still be approved by the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission.

"I was amazed that you can do this," a utility executive told the newspaper. "Your waste product can turn into power."

Orbit's pilot plant in Clinton is using food waste gathered from Wal-Mart and Fort Bragg, according to Anwar Shareef, Orbit's chief executive officer.

The company also hopes to build 15 plants in North Carolina and elsewhere in the U.S., he said.

"For too long as a society, we've treated food waste as a liability," Shareef told the paper. "Societies are beginning to recognize that that is not the right way to conduct business."

Read the Providence Journal report [here](#).

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