

ALPINE WASTE SUSTAINS BUSINESS WITH MACK

John Griffith is sustaining a business as well as the environment. Which is why the president of Alpine Waste & Recycling is converting his entire fleet of 50 collection vehicles to Mack® TerraPro™ models that run on compressed natural gas (CNG).

Based in the Denver suburb of Commerce City, Alpine has bought CNG trucks since 2009, saving money and winning praise from environmentalists and mechanics alike. Now the company is taking the next step: converting the entire fleet to CNG and partnering with California-based Clean Energy Fuels Corp., which has built a 26-pump fueling station at Alpine's site.

Founded by Griffith in 1999, Alpine is the largest privately held commercial waste and recycling collection company in the Denver area, hauling more than 130,000 tons of waste each year and recycling or composting a good portion of that. The company has grown by concentrating on two essential areas, sustainability and service.

"We listened to customer demands and focused on sustainability," Griffith said. "While competitors are filling landfills with as much garbage as they can, we drive volume into our recycling facility. We were the first company in our market to offer composting services. The CNG trucks work very well with that business model. They burn natural gas sourced here in Colorado and help our country become more energy-independent. We have recycling, we have composting and we run CNG trucks. We sell that as a package."

The other key to success is a more traditional one. "We positioned ourselves as a service-oriented company. If you think about what a waste collector might look like, you might come up with an image of a guy with no sleeves and a surly attitude. We use the model of companies like FedEx and UPS. Our drivers are uniformed. They address people professionally. Any trash lying on the ground they pick up. They keep the containers as cosmetically appealing as possible. That's our original model and it's been successful."

The dual strategy has boosted Alpine's bottom line as well as its image.

"CNG trucks cost about 20 percent more initially than conventional diesel trucks but they're saving us about \$1,200 per truck per month, and we intend to run each truck for 10 years," said Shannon Smith, Alpine's general manager in charge of fleet operations. "You have other savings, too. The engines run cleaner. They can go longer between services." The CNG fueling station will save \$140,000 a year in labor costs alone, since trucks can refuel overnight without human monitoring.

In addition to fuel economy, Smith said he's impressed with the performance of Mack's equipment and dealer, Colorado Mack Sales & Service. "The trucks develop about 95 percent of the horsepower a diesel would. They work fine at higher altitudes — we're more than a mile above sea level. They pull the weight on the hills."

He sees Mack as a partner in sustaining the business as well as the environment. "Mack understands the direction we're going. They honor their commitments. We'll continue to order Mack CNG trucks."

