



## Port Hope energy-from-waste plant has hurdles to jump

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The announcement about an energy-from-waste conversion plant planned for Wesleyville is certainly welcome news for the Port Hope community.

In the current less-than-stellar manufacturing environment and with growing concerns over what to do with the ever-expanding mountains of garbage we produce every day, a technology that boasts a 98 per cent diversion rate for municipal waste is good news for the environment. According to Renewable Energy Management Inc. (REM), the project's proponent, the plant will use advanced technology to convert waste into a synthetic gas, largely methane, which is burned in a standard steam boiler to produce energy, while excess heat is used to dry the next batch of waste. The resulting ash is clean and can be sold as a construction material, which could render landfills unnecessary.

Over the past few years, Port Hope has experienced its share of exciting new industry attraction announcements. In the fall of 2007, there was much fanfare about the multi-media company Digital Infomedia Canada Ltd., that planned to set up shop in Port Hope, with 75 new jobs. But the company and the jobs never materialized. Then there was the April 2009 announcement by Sunbay Energy Corporation for an \$85 to \$110 million energy-from-waste gasification power plant on a 23-acre site west of Wesleyville Road south of Hwy. 401, in the same area as the proposed REM facility. It was estimated the project could provide 200 jobs during construction and employ 50 people once the plant was operational. Although construction was supposed to start in early-2010, to date, the company has not purchased any land in the area and cannot be reached for comment.

Therefore, it is important to note that REM has a steep hill to climb before celebrations can begin. There's the Environmental Assessment screening process, where the company must prove its technology can operate within provincial regulations, limits and restrictions through its operations. Although REM does operate waste conversion plants of differing technologies in Poland, Malaysia and Singapore, these countries may not have as tough environmental standards as exist here in Ontario.

If all the company's ducks fall into line, it would be fantastic news for Port Hope, which could be recognized as the first municipality in Canada to embrace this new technology. But for now, it's just too early to bring out the brass bands and sharpen the scissors for the ribbon-cutting.