



FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

354th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, 354 Broadway Ave Unit 15A, Eielson AFB AK 99702-1895

Comm: (907) 377-2116; DSN: (317) 377-2116; Fax: 377-1412

REFUSE-DERIVED FUEL

Mission: Recycle trash into fuel

Eielson Air Force Base's refuse-derived fuel facility plays a key role in the base's effort to preserve and protect the environment. The facility converts recyclable paper, cardboard, wood and light-weight plastic into fuel pellets that, when burned along with coal, help provide power and heat to the base community. Eielson's RDF facility is the only one of its kind in the Department of Defense or the Alaskan Interior.

The process of converting trash to fuel begins with base consumers separating the recyclable paper, cardboard and plastic from their ordinary trash, then depositing it in one of the many recycling bins located across the base. Recycling this bulky solid waste dramatically reduces the flow of base trash into local landfills.

The recycled material is collected from the bins daily and transported to the facility, which processes about seven tons of it each day. Workers there must first sift through the mountains of material to remove all unusable foreign debris, such as hard plastic, metal and textiles. Using a small forklift equipped with an industrial grapple, the "cleaned" material is then loaded onto a pit conveyor which feeds into a warehouse-sized machine that mulches and compacts the material into small burnable pellets. Finally, the finished fuel pellets are trucked to the base power plant where they augment the 11 rail car loads of coal the base burns daily for heat during the frigid Alaskan winters. The pellets are environmentally friendly, burning cleaner than coal, and nearly as efficiently.

The RDF facility not only helps reduce Eielson's solid waste stream, but also helps the Fairbanks North Star Borough do so; the neighboring community of nearly 85,000 people also contributes recyclable material. In exchange for the base accepting the borough's recyclable material, the borough reduces the base's bill for dumping its non-recyclable trash into its landfill. Everyone wins in this environmentally friendly exchange.