CEO interview: BCCK wants to grow in renewables

Texas-based **BCCK** is moving on renewables, leveraging its natural gas expertise and forging partnerships to drive growth. **Molly Burgess** sits down with its CEO **Kevin Blount**

© BCCK

or over 40 years, BCCK has been a leader in natural gas processing, with 80% of the US nitrogen rejection market. Its next step? A move on renewables, with plans to make green energy half of its business.

"BCCK is well positioned for growth in renewables," the company's CEO Kevin Blount tells gasworld. "We've already had some great successes in this space, most notably in landfill gas, but we expect to see significant growth in the next couple of years."

Blount says the company hasn't been targeting the renewable markets as aggressively as it would have liked, primarily due to large demand for its nitrogen rejection expertise.

BCCK is headquartered in Midland, Texas, which is a great location to capitalize on gas processing in highnitrogen basins such as the Permian, and has a sales and engineering satellite office in Houston, Texas, which with its energy pedigree, and commitment to be at the forefront of the energy transition, is the ideal location with regard to renewables.

"We have plans to grow renewables to as much as half of our business, which would be more than double our position today," Blount says. "Our priority when it comes to renewables is to deliver value

and be a vital part of the supply chain, just as we are in nitrogen rejection."

Natural gas expertise fuels growthPennMany of the skills that BCCK'sa seconstructionengineers have developed for naturalBlockgas processing, together with BCCK'sdriverself-perform fabrication and constructionhere.

capabilities, transfer well into renewables. "We've just been so busy with serving our customer's nitrogen rejection needs

that we haven't been able to pursue renewables as aggressively as we would have liked," Blount admits. "We have the platform, I now want us to commit and capitalize."

"Our focus is on identifying the right partners. We're bidding on several landfill gas opportunities, along with carbon capture and storage, and hydrogen projects," he says.

"We have a driven but realistic approach, with a five-year strategic plan for growth."

Forging key partnerships

BCCK has made some notable inroads in renewables already, with one collaboration being announced on the day we sat down with Blount.

"One notable success was when we worked with Archaea, now part of bp, to deliver the nitrogen rejection unit and ancillary gas treatment equipment for the world's largest landfill plant at the Keystone Sanitary landfill in Dunmore, Pennsylvania. And we've since delivered a second plant for them."

Blount says building technology driven partnerships holds the key from here.

"BCCK has a pedigree in developing and commercializing technology, it's that background that makes us a good partner."

BCCK's partners so far have a US flavor, being either US companies or global players targeting the US.

"Our recent partnership with Carbon Clean is an example. It is a UK-based company targeting the US market," Blount says. "The agreement will see BCCK and Carbon Clean jointly pursue opportunities for Carbon Clean's CaptureX carbon capture technology." The partnership will support industrial decarbonization efforts in oil and gas, gas processing, air separation, power generation, landfill gas, biogas, and hydrogen. The CaptureX technology is 80% modularized and containerized, offering an alternative to traditional open-plant construction.

"Carbon Clean was looking to enter the US market with a US engineering and fabrication partner," Blount notes. "We fit the bill and can open doors that they can't open themselves, and they've got the technology to make it happen. It's a perfect combination."

Unfolding hydrogen opportunities

Similar things are happening in the hydrogen space. BCCK is working to establish a partnership with a European company with electrolyzer technology that is looking to the US market.

Domestically, one partnership is with Kaizen Clean Energy.

"In that case, BCCK delivered containerized green methanol to hydrogen generator unit systems for power generation," Blount says. "It utilizes a methanol-to-hydrogen technology that is provided by Element1, based out of Oregon. The technology mixes de-ionized water with methanol to form green hydrogen via a reformer."

BCCK built and assembled the reformers in Midland, combining them with a fuel cell, battery pack, hydrogen buffer tank, interconnecting pipework and controls. BCCK has delivered two complete units to date, and expects to deliver additional units moving forward When it comes to hydrogen, Blount is

less sure what the future holds.

"While there is a lot of interest and activity in hydrogen, I don't think anyone really knows exactly how hydrogen will fit into the future energy mix. Many companies have worked on hydrogen technology for years without success," he says.

"A lot of the larger companies are either acquiring or investing in these smaller firms as an entry point in the market, but they're essentially buying a lottery ticket. There will be winners, but they're not all going to be successful. BCCK's challenge is picking the right partners."

Natural gas in the energy transition One pathway that Blount has no doubt about is natural gas. "What I am certain about is that future energy demand will be met via a mix of energy sources and technology, not one single source or technology, and natural gas will be a major part of that mix."

"Natural gas is by far the cleanest fossil fuel," he notes. "I honestly believe that natural gas will play a major part in the energy transition and the move to a cleaner energy future."

"I always talk about natural gas and LNG as part of the energy transition. Not everybody agrees with me, but I am absolutely convinced that natural gas, which is already a major part of the energy mix, will play an even bigger part in the future."

"To me, natural gas and LNG are absolutely key to the energy transition, and not just a bridge. BCCK will continue to support our traditional gas processing customers while simultaneously supporting customers in the renewables space."

EPA fines spark action

Almost every country has made a commitment to reduce emissions and decarbonization, and the U.S. now has several policies related to the effort. "These efforts can't be stopped," Blount says. "There is too much momentum. And, quite frankly, there is too much of a need to clean up the environment for it to stop."

There is a lot of focus on policies such as the Inflation Reduction Act in the US, which offer tax credits, but fines and penalties play a big part – and are not always spoken about.



Agency (EPA) US has been introducing penalties that are going to help towards a cleaner future," Blount says. "Sadly, it's often the case that the fines are what will really make people clean up their act." In this vein, BCCK has developed its own NiTech* Ultra Low Methane (ULM) technology, which reduces the methane in the vent to 10 parts per million

"The Environmental Protection

"Every nitrogen rejection unit has a vent that exhausts nitrogen to the atmosphere, but within that nitrogen is also methane. While the amount of methane in the nitrogen vent is very small, it is still subject to an EPA fine," Blount says.

"The fines are substantial and hence the reduction in methane emission is meaningful and also good for the environment." gw

EPA fines

The EPA's waste emission charges are part of broader environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act (CAA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). The laws were enforced to limit pollution and hazardous waste emissions from industrial activities.

The laws were first introduced foundationally in the 1970s but have been updated recently to address emerging environmental challenges. Exceeding air pollutant limits is subject to civil penalties, with big potential fines for each violation.

gasworld.com