



# THE RECYCLED PART OF THE BLADE

## MIDAMERICAN'S NEWEST RECYCLING PARTNER IS TURNING RETIRED BLADES INTO FUNCTIONAL ART

The emissions-free energy MidAmerican gets from wind has extraordinary environmental and customer benefits, and we want every part of the process to be as sustainable as possible. That includes repowering, our process of replacing old turbine components with newer, more efficient models to extend the lifespan of the turbine and generate even more electricity. Canvus, our newest turbine blade recycling partner, is helping our sustainability efforts with their innovative and creative new process to transform turbine blades into functional art for communities.

Founded in early 2022, Canvus aims to combine the fiberglass from retired wind turbine blades with other materials – also largely recycled – to create unique street furniture from public seating, to planters, to signage and more. The idea for Canvus started with a team working with wind energy companies wanting a better solution for old turbine blades than landfills or incineration.

“Our team was in a yard where blades were being cut so they could be shredded and incinerated in a cement kiln,” Brian Donahue, vice president of corporate affairs at Canvus, said. “Seeing the blades being cut into ‘fleets’ allowed us to see the amazing organic shapes inside the blade, and the idea was born.”

The team at Canvus realized they could use the blade’s shapes and durability to blend function and art. After going through hundreds of initial designs, Canvus has created a lineup of products designed for scalability and sustainability.

The primary material of all Canvus’s products is the fiberglass from turbine blades, with wood and other recycled or repurposed plastics, textiles and rubber completing the company’s unique, gorgeous designs.

“Our initial work with recycling blades taught us that we need to think beyond just one material if we want to make a significant impact,” Donahue said. “In response, we have made it a priority to design our products to accommodate other waste streams, allowing us to reimagine the potential of other recycled materials.”

MidAmerican has partnered with Canvus to recycle blades from two repowering projects to date, with approximately 570 turbine blades altogether set to be repurposed into thousands of products by Canvus.

“What excites me about Canvus is that not only do their products look sleek and pay homage to the wind turbine components they came from, but they’re producing these benches and planters with little processing, which reduces emissions,” Adam Jablonski, MidAmerican vice president of resource

development, said. “By finding a recycling option that uses minimal processing, Canvus is helping to make every aspect of our wind efforts in Iowa even more sustainable.”

The metal, wood and fluid components of the wind turbine parts replaced during repowering are all easily recycled or repurposed. But, it’s only been within the last few years that the wind industry has had solutions for recycling the fiberglass making the majority of turbine blades. Canvus’s unique products demonstrate how far blade recycling has come in a short time and how creativity and technology can come together to create sustainable communities.

Businesses and communities are taking notice. Tech companies, retailers, consumer goods manufacturers and renewable energy companies like MidAmerican have partnered with Canvus to recycle their materials into functional art products. Canvus launched full-scale production in March, with a lineup of cities, parks, schools and businesses set to receive the first rounds of products.

MidAmerican had the chance to tour Canvus’s production studio – the 100,000-square-foot facility in which retired blades are cut and reshaped into these unique products – in Avon, Ohio, on the cusp of its launch.

“Seeing what our retired turbine blades could become through Canvus’s recycling process was an absolute thrill for our team,” Jablonski said. “Between Canvus’s unique designs and the products we’ve seen from our other recycling partners, we’re proud our old blades are finding new purposes. We can’t wait to see what the future holds.”



*Virtual product renders of Canvus's beautiful street furniture made primarily from recycled wind turbine blades*