Honda’s Track Record of Efficiency—On and Off the Road (Marysville, Ohio)

At Honda North America, energy efficiency is not a fad, it’s a culture. According to Marysville-based Senior Staff Engineer Dirk Nordberg, that culture is noticeable in everything Honda does.

“At Honda, you don’t have to work here very long before you realize that we’re a company that really focuses on efficiency--whether it’s in our cars, our motorcycles, our power products, or even just in our operations,” he says.

Nordberg says the company has become more efficient by decreasing the amount of waste of all kinds generated by their processes. He says the company counts waste as a loss that is contrary to the culture of the company as a whole. “The beginning of Honda in America was based on the environmental performance, low environmental impact. It’s kind of a natural thing.”

That is one of the reasons that Honda has recently installed a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) with an “Energy Recovery Wheel,” reducing the amount of energy needed for production. Honda’s project received an internal company award for its success in the Marysville plant, and plant representatives from Ohio will present the wheel concept in Japan to share the benefits of the energy recovery wheel system across their global operations.

In addition to the energy wheel project, Honda of America Mfg., Inc. has also been implementing a steam elimination project over the course of several years. To accomplish their goal, the company
methodically replaced pieces of equipment that used steam with natural gas. Now, the company has completely eliminated the use of steam.

The energy recovery wheel project and the steam elimination project illustrate the desire of Honda corporate and its employee culture to “do the right thing” for the environment. These energy efficiency projects have also helped Honda achieve internal goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions intensity.

“In the pursuit of putting the right utility in the right place at the right time, in the right amount, you end up striving toward a more efficient operation. The result of all this is cost reduction and also CO₂ reduction,” Nordberg says.

At Honda, this paradigm is called the “challenging spirit,” and it charges all personnel at Honda to generate ideas for the betterment of the company and the environment. The company also has a voluntary program that allows employees to contribute their ideas of how Honda can make itself better.

Karen Heyob, facilities department manager at Honda North America Services, LLC, presented some of Honda’s exemplary practices and successes as a keynote speaker at Ohio University’s Consortium for Energy, Economics & the Environment (CE3) “Workshop for Efficiency, Emissions & Energy Choices in Ohio” in September. She says employee input is essential to the overall energy strategy because the associates are experts in their portion of the production process.

“Increasing energy efficiency in a company is far more than just fixing hardware,” she says. “A key part of any successful energy management program is increasing awareness, gaining support from your associates running the equipment or the process and the managers overseeing the operations.”

Corporate Communications Specialist Eric Mauk says contributions from every level of production complete the Honda experience. “It’s not just inside the plant where Honda is focused on reducing energy. It’s pretty much every aspect of our operations from the raw materials down to putting the customer’s keys in their hands and sending them out the door.”

For more information, contact:
Eric Mauk, Corporate Communications Specialist
Honda North America
Tel: 937-644-6493
Email: eric_mauk@hna.honda.com

-Seaira Christian-Daniels, Voinovich School Scholar, Ohio University Voinovich School (December 2013)