

Supplier FEV Plugs In to EPA Energy Star Challenge

by Irena Granaas

FEV, a major developer of advanced powertrain and vehicle technologies, is looking to earn recognition for another achievement – saving energy and reducing greenhouse emissions at its Auburn Hills location.

The global supplier has accepted the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Challenge, which calls for improving the plant's energy efficiency.

The goal of the EPA's Energy Star Challenge is to see at least a 10 percent improvement in energy efficiency for the more than five million industrial and commercial buildings across the United States.

And, since energy to power and heat these structures is usually obtained from burning fossil fuels, the expectation is as each business finds ways to boost energy efficiency, the fuel-burning reductions will help lower the amount of greenhouse gases these buildings emit into the atmosphere.

"As an engineering services provider focusing on the energy efficiency of powertrains and vehicles, the improvement of FEV's facility and operations is a natu-

ral step," said FEV spokesperson Mark Harlow. "The Energy Star Challenge offers numerous tools that can help to identify sources of energy waste and proposes ways to minimize it."

Benefits of implementing these suggestions can be significant.

Energy Star was introduced by the EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency.

According to EPA data, American families and businesses have saved nearly \$230 billion on utility bills while preventing more than 1.7 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere with help from the partnership.

The EPA estimates that if the energy efficiency of all commercial and industrial buildings went up by 10 percent, Americans would cut greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from about 30 million vehicles while at the same time saving about \$20 billion in utility costs.

"Many of us are taking steps to improve energy efficiency at home but may not realize that there are opportunities to save where we work, play and learn as

well," said Gary Rogers, FEV president and CEO in announcing FEV's acceptance of the Energy Star Challenge.

"By making energy-efficient choices, we preserve our natural resources by reducing our energy use and save money while protecting the environment."

Harlow explained that FEV's approach has three tiers. The first tier consists of energy improvement steps that can be taken without any additional cost to FEV.

"In this phase, FEV's employees are encouraged to apply common sense in the day-to-day energy use. This means that energy-depleting devices that are not needed to conduct business are disabled," Harlow said.

"A simple example is the lighting in work areas after hours or vacant conference rooms. FEV encourages employees to turn the lights off when they are not used."

Second tier actions require a modest investment by FEV, and include things like motion-activated light switches in areas that are not constantly used, enhanced thermostats and improved building insulation.

"FEV is also evaluating reduc-

ing energy consumption through advanced techniques such as waste heat recovery systems," Harlow added.

"These require significant investment, so this third tier calls for careful review of the return of investment. FEV's leadership is driven to make the goal of maximizing the building's energy efficiency and reduce energy cost."

Saving energy is not a new concern for FEV, which Harlow said has always considered reduced energy consumption as an important element in their daily business.

The increased awareness among employees of the sources of energy waste have helped them to be active partners in the drive to conserve energy.

Harlow said that improving the building's insulation and decreasing the need for lighting during off-shifts and weekends have already saved a considerable amount of energy and mon-

ey, but how much is unknown.

"As more of the changes are implemented, the real savings can be evaluated far more accurately and will be reported through the Energy Star Challenge portal," he said.

"While all employees are strongly encouraged to participate in the Challenge, FEV's senior leaders have provided a very clear guideline to avoid any impact on existing business or slowdown projects through any savings activities – first and foremost, we are committed to serve our clients to the best of our abilities."

Since employees' active participation is a key part of FEV's strategy, Harlow noted employees are organized into Energy Star Challenge Teams, composed of members of each department, ensuring that the information pertaining to the Challenge is carried through all areas of the organization.

AAA Warns Drivers About Fuel Dangers

A recent survey by AAA finds a strong likelihood of consumer confusion and the potential for voided warranties and vehicle damage as a result of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent approval of E15 gasoline.

An overwhelming 95 percent of consumers surveyed have not heard of E15, a newly approved gasoline blend that contains 15 percent ethanol, and nearly half (44 percent) said they did not know if the fuel was approved for use in their primary vehicle.

AAA is urging regulators and the industry to stop the sale of E15 until drivers are protected.

Only about 12 million out of the more than 240 million light-duty vehicles on the roads today are approved by manufacturers to use E15 gasoline, based on a survey conducted by AAA of auto manufacturers.

AAA automotive engineering experts also have reviewed the available research and believe that sustained use of E15 in both newer and older vehicles could result in significant problems such as accelerated engine wear and failure, fuel-system damage and false "check engine" lights for any vehicle not approved by its manufacturer to use E15.

"It is clear that millions of Americans are unfamiliar with E15, which means there is a

strong possibility that many motorists may improperly fill up using this gasoline and damage their vehicle," said Kevin Bakewell, AAA Chief Public Affairs Officer, The Auto Club Group.

"Bringing E15 to the market without adequate safeguards does not responsibly meet the needs of consumers."

Unsuspecting consumers using E15 could end up with engine problems that might not be covered by their vehicles' warranties.

Five manufacturers (BMW, Chrysler, Nissan, Toyota and

Volkswagen) are on record saying their warranties will not cover fuel-related claims caused by the use of E15. Seven additional automakers (Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz and Volvo) have stated that the use of E15 does not comply with the fuel requirements specified in their owner's manuals and may void warranty coverage.

The only vehicles currently approved by automakers to use E15 are flex-fuel models, 2001 model-year and newer Porsches, 2012 model-year and newer GM vehicles and 2013 model-year Ford vehicles.

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