

GM – Energy Savings Begins in the Plant

General Motors is participating in a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) program to reduce energy costs per unit of production at 25 of its U.S. facilities.

The result is an anticipated 25 percent or greater combined reduction in energy use at the plants by 2018.

The Better Buildings, Better Plants program is a national initiative in which the DOE works with industry partners to promote greater energy efficiency in the U.S. industrial sector.

“We continue to prove the business case for better energy management,” said Al Hildreth, General Motors Corporate Energy manager. “Spreading the word about these benefits and sharing best practices with like-minded organizations will go far in reducing our nation’s energy consumption, and working with the DOE and EPA Energy Star enhances this effort.”

The program provides commercial and industrial building owners with assistance and proven solutions to enhance energy efficiency. It also encourages collaboration among companies to discuss lessons learned.

“General Motors’ efforts are helping the nation benefit from energy efficiency. Together with

the other partners in the Better Buildings, Better Plants program, GM’s actions will save billions in energy costs, create new manufacturing jobs, strengthen the nation’s economic competitiveness and help protect the environment,” said Kathleen Hogan, deputy assistant secretary for Energy Efficiency, U.S. Department of Energy.

GM and the United Auto Workers work together to achieve the energy-reduction targets. Employees at Fairfax (Kan.) Assembly identified cost savings totaling more than \$200,000 per year after attending a four-day compressed air training event conducted by the DOE.

“The UAW is proud to play a part in helping General Motors reduce its impact on the environment,” said UAW Vice President Joe Ashton, who directs the union’s GM department.

“By giving our members the proper energy management training, we can ensure that the facilities where they work will be up to speed on industry-best practices for cutting carbon emissions.”

Two hundred and eighteen energy-savings opportunities have been identified, which GM has

taken advantage of for more than \$7 million in savings.

This is one of two collaborations between GM and the U.S. DOE, said Sharon Basel, GM’s Communications manager for Environment, Energy and Safety.

GM recently became a founding partner of the DOE’s Workplace Charging Challenge, pledging to help increase the number of employers providing workplace vehicle charging tenfold within five years.

The automaker is at the forefront of workplace vehicle charging, with more than 230 charging stations available to employees in the United States.

Worldwide, GM is dedicated to energy efficiency and is working toward a goal to reduce energy intensity from its facilities 20 percent by 2020, Basel said.

The automaker is the number one automotive user of solar power in the United States and received an EPA Energy Star Partner of the Year Sustained Excellence award for its energy management.

Recently, 54 GM plants met the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star Challenge for Industry, cutting energy intensity by 26 percent in less than three years, Basel said.

Homann Named to Lead Hirschmann

Frank Homann has been named president of Hirschmann Car Communications Inc., a supplier of transmitter and receiver systems for M2M (machine to machine) and automotive communications.

Homann will be based at the firm’s regional headquarters in Auburn Hills and will be responsible for guiding Hirschmann’s strategy to develop M2M solutions for the North and South American markets. His scope of responsibilities include sales, engineering, quality control and operations.

As M2M solutions become increasingly important in the commercial trucking and logistics industries, Homann is expected to lead the charge to expand Hirschmann’s global M2M leadership position.

In particular, Homann has indicated he hopes to increase

Hirschmann’s market share in applications. These would include remote monitoring of work processes, using GPS for tracking of mobile objects and communications between industrial machinery and smart metering solutions.

He brings to the table years of experience at various technology-driven businesses, including a solid background in global supply chain management, operations and business development.

Homann holds an electrical engineering degree from the University of Paderborn in Germany. Prior to coming on board at Hirschmann, he served as senior vice president of product development for United Solar Ovonic, and as vice president of interior electronics for Siemens VDO and Continental.



Frank Homann

Check Insurance Coverage Before You Vacate House For Extended Time

Homeowners in Michigan have a lot to do when they go on extended vacations or head South for the winter, and it’s very easy for them to overlook little things like how their trip affects their homeowners policy.

Ann Zurenko, an account manager for the Ann Arbor-based insurance agency Armstrong Robitaille Riegle, said that if someone is going to be out of his or her house for an extended period of time, they should know how that affects his or her homeowners policy.

Most homeowner policies have something called a vacancy clause, Zurenko said. It’s there because it’s much more expensive to insure empty houses. So insurance companies, in an effort to reduce unintended risk, usually include an “occupancy requirement” and they include wording in policies that automatically reduces or ceases coverage if the property is not occupied for a certain period of time.

Zurenko said that while each company’s policy is a bit different, it is standard that after 60 consecutive days of vacancy (30 days for some companies), the policy is either canceled altogether so that there is no insurance in place, or if the policy does remain in force, all additional coverages are terminated, except for loss by fire or lightning.

So if someone is going on an extended vacation for a month or two, that person should check with his or her agent to see what, if anything, should be done, Zurenko said. “It’s always good to be informed of your rights and responsibilities.”

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