

Serious About Saving Energy

Hot running water and electricity. Both are items which most of us take for granted. Seldom do we imagine life without hot running water or electricity. Proudly enough, American Water Heater Company (AWHC) is a leader in the market making roughly 8,300 water heaters each day. Just to clarify, that's 8,300 water heaters made daily at the A.O. Smith Company, Johnson City location. (A.O. Smith is the parent company of AWHC). In regards to electricity, JCPB works hard to maintain an overall service reliability of 98% to its 72,000 meters served. So, chances are good these luxuries of reliable hot running water and electricity will remain reality.

Rising fuel costs and "green thinking" have forced all to save and conserve wherever possible. AWHC prides itself in finding new and innovative ways to lower costs and improve efficiency. AWHC management decided that an automated system could allow for even greater efficiency and cost savings. After much evaluation and consideration, AWHC chose InduSoft web-based software. AWHC manufacturing engineers quickly got to work using the InduSoft Software and were able to customize monitoring and controls throughout the company's ventilation system in just a matter of weeks.

(Continued on page 4)



In April 2008, JCPB Chairman William "Bill" Coleman (far left) and JCPB General Manager Homer G'Fellers (far right) presented a certificate to Andy Demski, General Manager (second from right) and John Dreher, Manufacturing Engineering Manager (second from left) in acknowledgment for the numerous energy savings measures recently implemented by AWHC.

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Saving Energy

(Continued from page 1)

AWHC Manufacturing Engineers Rebecca Grizzle and Nathan Timbs successfully coupled the ventilation system to 17 temperature systems throughout the plant. Grizzle said, "I was able to create an application that visualizes the entire plant and monitors temperatures in key areas that were trouble spots before. And in the event of a burner or other air makeup failure, an alarm is set so that the appropriate individual can be notified -- a must have for something as critical as a ventilation system. Furthermore, Grizzle claims the software gives "us a way to make us more productive, by allowing a machine to monitor a very critical system."

Not wanting to stop just there, John Dreher, Manufacturing Engineering Manager pushed the staff to further investigate innovative ways to utilize the software. Saying good-bye to manual switches, AWHC now has the capability not only to control its ventilation system via computer automation, but now has the ability to control lighting, heating and cooling, and compressed air. Furthermore, these measures have enabled AWHC to coordinate management of production rates and downtimes.

Continuing beyond automation, AWH has implemented additional energy saving measures; such as, switching from propane to electric fork trucks and installing energy efficient lighting. Dreher claims, "One of the major benefits of our factory monitoring system is a sustainable energy management program. We gain direct value in the venue, as we can actually demonstrate savings by turning off lights and lowering the use of other electrical components. By actively involving supervisors and maintenance personnel in this program, we have been able to increase our savings and facilitate the use of this monitoring system. JCPB has been an active partner with AWHC, assisting with the expansion of the program and allowing AWHC to obtain even more savings."

JCPB congratulates AWHC on its aggressive approach to Energy Conservation. You have set a wonderful example for us all!