

Business Energy Success Story

Alcoa Wheel Products – Beloit, Wisconsin



Alcoa Wheel Products in Beloit, Wis., is reaping the benefits of a new and improved paint process that will reward the plant with \$1.1 million in energy savings from Alliant Energy – Wisconsin Power and Light Co.'s (WP&L) [Shared Savings](#) program.

Alcoa Wheel Products' former painting method required the use of a thermal oxidizer, which burned off by-products and used a lot of energy in the process – on average, more than 7,500 therms per week.

"We knew there was a more efficient way to process, but paying for the necessary upgrade was a problem. Alliant Energy's Shared Savings program provided us with a viable alternative," says Tom Boney, plant manager at Alcoa Wheel Products.

Alliant Energy partnered with Alcoa Wheel Products to install a new waterborne paint processor that eliminated the need for the thermal oxidizer.

"Because we expect to save 379,000 therms per year, the obvious benefit is a significant reduction in gas usage on a daily basis. The immediate benefit is in energy savings, but we're also proactively protecting the environment," adds Boney.

Financing projects through energy savings

Through Shared Savings, Alliant Energy commercial, industrial and agricultural customers in Wisconsin can make significant upgrades in energy-related processes. These processes include, lighting, HVAC, variable frequency drives, compressed air – and like Alcoa Wheel Products – industrial processing equipment. Alliant Energy finances the projects through the resulting energy savings.

Jeff Adams, Alliant Energy key account manager, says the program is beneficial in a number of ways. "Our customers are able to make process improvements without spending capital up front. In turn, they repay us monthly through the energy savings over a predetermined contract term."

Alliant Energy's Shared Savings program has been extremely successful. In 2004 alone, the utility invested nearly \$34 million in customers' energy-efficiency projects. Since 1997, the company has invested a total of \$323 million.

Alcoa Wheel Products-Beloit, a preferred supplier of wheels for companies like Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Honda, Nissan, Jaguar, BMW and Volvo, is reaping \$1.1 million in energy savings, thanks to Alliant Energy-WP&L's Shared Savings program.