

2008



**WISCONSIN MANUFACTURER
OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

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GRAND AWARD WINNERS

MEGA COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

GE HEALTHCARE

Madison

LARGE COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

BRENNER TANK LLC

Fond du Lac

MEDIUM COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

ORION ENERGY SYSTEMS

Manitowoc

SMALL COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

SIELAFF CORPORATION

Mineral Point

SUSTAINABILITY CATEGORY

KETTLE FOODS, INC.

Beloit

SPECIAL AWARD WINNERS

DEMONSTRATION OF CORE VALUES

CRESCENT PRINTING COMPANY

Onalaska

NEW PRODUCT INNOVATION

BRUNO INDEPENDENT LIVING AIDS, INC.

Oconomowoc

LEADER IN TRANSFORMATION

NEENAH PAPER INC.

Neenah

2008 AWARD JUDGES

Jim Andresen

CENTRISYS CORPORATION

William Bassett

BASSETT INCORPORATED

John Baumann

THE SWISS COLONY

Eric Duncan

KHS USA INC.

John Emory, Jr.

EMORY & CO.

Barbara Gannon

SARGENTO FOODS, INC.

Curt Haga

LADISH CO., INC.

Jerrod Hoff

MATHEWS INC.

Bob Karnauskas

BL3 STRATEGIES

Mary Regel

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Raymond Riddle

STANDARD IMAGING, INC.

Rich Rovito

MILWAUKEE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Tom Still

WISCONSIN TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

Kelly Sullivan

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT/NORTHWEST
WISCONSIN - MANUFACTURING OUTREACH

Charles Yanke

VULCAN GLOBAL MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS, INC.

Dean Zakos

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ANNUAL WISCONSIN
MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR AWARDS
PLEASE CONTACT THE MOTY COORDINATOR AT (800) 362-7301
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.WIMOTY.COM*

2008 GRAND AWARD WINNERS

GE HEALTHCARE

Madison

www.gehealthcare.com

MEGA COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

GE Healthcare is the preeminent provider of anesthesia delivery equipment in the world, enjoying a 60 percent United States market share with a global installed base of more than 100,000 units. GE's equipment is responsible for supporting nearly half a million cases of applied anesthesia every single day.

The GE facility produces anesthesia delivery systems, critical care ventilators, vaporizers and service assemblies for GE legacy products. It also distributes and configures patient monitors. The company's products can be found in operating theatres, intensive care units, outpatient centers and office-based surgical centers around the world.

Sound financial execution is fundamental to GE, and the Madison plant is no exception to this rule. Adopting a linear production model, embracing the Kaizen philosophy and instituting lean manufacturing principals have been key to the significant improvements within the company's production operations. As a GE business, everything it does is conducted with the utmost consideration for integrity and compliance.

GE has a long and storied history, going back over 100 years, of providing innovation and safety in anesthesia delivery. Much of the company's success results from an ongoing collaboration with the University of Wisconsin and the University Medical Center. These solid and productive working relationships enable GE to develop improved clinical therapies enhanced by technology and automation.

All employees at GE play a critical role in fostering the right values and creating a compliant and integrity-based culture. The company's priorities revolve around its focus on customers, employees and financials. Each business review begins with an update on what the company is doing to improve the customer experience, which employees are driving the improvements and how those improvements affect its business metrics. Within the manufacturing and operations teams GE's philosophy represents its motivation to continuously improve its safety, quality, delivery and cost.

The GE facility in Madison takes pride in its environmental stewardship and aggressively looks for ways to reduce its carbon footprint. Since 2004 the company has invested more than \$1 million in greenhouse gas emission reduction projects. Such environmental solutions have included replacing old inefficient steam boilers with high efficiency hot water boilers, re-lamping projects, building control system upgrades and motion sensor technology. In the past four years, these projects have netted a reduction of 704 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to sponsoring medical research efforts at a number of leading hospitals and donating equipment to organizations in need, the company also actively supports employee involvement in Madison-area communities. Through programs such as Meals on Wheels and the Ronald Mc Donald house, GE's employees give selflessly back to their community.

During these tough economic times, GE has met the challenges associated with the tight healthcare markets, increasing global competition, exponentially increasing commodities costs and escalating fuel surcharges to remain an industry leader. This success has been achieved through focusing on the customer, a strong employee base and employee commitment, sound financial management practices, commitment to operational excellence and adhering to its core values of integrity and compliance.

BRENNER TANK LLC

Fond du Lac

www.brennertank.com

LARGE COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

Brenner Tank is a leader in the design, fabrication and service of stainless steel and aluminum tank trailers used to transport bulk liquids, including chemical, food grade and petroleum products. With more than 50 years of tank trailer experience, Brenner Tank has built its reputation on industry leading engineering, state-of-the-art manufacturing and commitment to customer service. The company is headquartered and has its manufacturing operations in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with four parts and two service facilities located across the United States.

The company enjoys the top position in the North American stainless steel tank trailer market. Brenner Tank products and services are sold to multi-national companies transporting their own goods and large common carriers, often operating fleets with several thousand tank trailers. Brenner Tank's customers include 14 of the top 20 bulk liquid transporters in the United States.

The company's philosophy is to produce the highest quality products and services. As the high-quality manufacturer in the trailer tank industry, Brenner Tank's goal is to manufacture tank trailers that can last more than 20 years in severe service with the highest reliability. It is not uncommon to see Brenner tanks utilized daily that are more than 30 years old.

Management strives for the philosophy of continuous improvement, evidenced through excellence in product design, manufacturing processes and tank trailer specifications. Brenner Tank's industrial innovations have improved the quality of products, lowered the cost while improving reliability and durability, and have improved the safety of tank trailers.

Brenner Tank's quality control process starts with the customer order, is carried through the eight day total throughput time of the typical tank trailer and beyond. Brenner Tank leads the industry in new product development, and designs and builds the most difficult tank trailer applications. The company was the first to bring automated plasma TIG welding with back up cooling bars for the purpose of welding longitudinal seams to minimize the heat distorted zone, which is critical in stainless steel tanks that haul corrosives.

Leadership in the industry is further evidenced through manufacturing processes which Brenner Tank introduced to the market, being adopted by its competitors.

In 1995 Brenner Tank started a parts and service business at the request of its customers. Customers were in need of a tank repair service that had the knowledge and abilities on par with those offered through Brenner's manufacturing. The parts and service arm of Brenner Tank has grown to become a lucrative division, and has seen the company establish itself as a leading provider of repair services for a variety of tank trailers. The company's service division is able to recondition tanks that other service facilities consider beyond repair.

Commitment to employees is a natural part of the management philosophy at Brenner Tank. The company offers a 'pay for skill' wage program for shop floor employees to recognize those employees who want to gain skills and improve their incomes. Salaried employees are offered a 'pay for performance' salary program based on a year-end performance approval rating. Key benefits are continually market tested to ensure that Brenner

Tank offers a benefit package that is above average for its region and industry. The company also provides significant training and education opportunities to all employees.

Brenner Tank employees are active members in the community and are involved with groups such as the Boys & Girls Club and the United Way. To benefit the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, Brenner Tank created a stainless steel pot for the Fond du Lac Fondue Festival's world's largest cheese fondue set. The pot holds 2,000 pounds of cheese and requires seven-foot long forks! Other community activities have seen employees run in the freezing cold to raise money for arthritis, 'adopt' families for the holidays, sponsor outside fundraisers, help local schools and teach the students important skills and personally donate time and money to help others in need. The company supports the idea that what is good for the citizens of the Fond du Lac region is good for Brenner Tank.

The company is in an excellent position to enjoy sustained growth as a result of expanding its dealer network, increasing its aluminum trailer production capacity and rapidly growing its parts and service business. Brenner Tank is positioned for continued growth as it diversifies its business through organic growth, acquisition and continuous improvement.

ORION ENERGY SYSTEMS

Manitowoc

www.oriones.com

MEDIUM COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

Orion Energy Systems is an energy technology company that specializes in the design, development, manufacture and deployment of energy management systems. Orion delivers innovative energy-saving products to the lighting and energy industry, saving customers money, while reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and working to promote environmental initiatives.

Orion's energy-saving products are changing the way companies think about paying for rising energy costs. The company's integrated phased approach includes energy-efficient lighting, proprietary energy management controls and direct renewable light pipes. Its customers include manufacturing, warehousing, commercial and institutional facilities throughout North America.

The core of Orion's energy management is its energy-efficient lighting platform that reduces energy consumption by 50 percent while providing 50 percent more light, and a better quality light. When Orion's lighting platform is integrated, its technology can save customers up to 70 percent in light-related electricity costs. The research and development team continues to produce products that help reduce greenhouse gases and improve the environment while decreasing customers' energy bills. Orion is leading the way in helping other companies reach their 'green' initiative goals for sustainability.

Headquartered in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, Orion has nearly 250 employees, growing exponentially since its inception in 1996. The company also operates a manufacturing facility in Manitowoc, with a technology center in the process of being built adjacently.

In this time of economic uncertainty, Orion's growth is expected to continue; the company recently committed to hiring 170 employees over the next three years. A financially sound company, Orion's revenue growth has been consistent since 2003, with significant revenues posted in the past year.

The company's principles lie in improving the environment through decreased energy use and production. Orion technology has displaced nearly 6 billion kilowatt-hours from December 2001 through September 2008 and has saved customers more than \$455 million in energy costs. Its technology has earned the trust of 108 Fortune 500 companies and that number is growing.

The efforts of Orion have not gone unnoticed. The company and its CEO have been a constant mark for environment, business and manufacturing recognition. Orion has been honored as one of the 500 fastest growing companies by Inc. Magazine, and received numerous local, state and national awards.

Recently, the company finished redesigning each department to be ergonomic and flexible for every individual in the department. Along with cross training, these initiatives have yielded more productivity per employee with less fatigue on a consistent basis. Orion's Quality Meetings, held weekly in each department, have further helped define problems and offer operational solutions.

Orion's fully staffed training department and partnership with Lakeshore Technical College are evidence of the company's commitment to training and development. Orion also conducts extensive training programs for its nationwide partner network.

The company has long been a supporter of community causes in Wisconsin and supports various charities through monetary donations and participation in events.

In addition to the charitable causes supported by Orion and its employees, its products help substantially reduce the amount of harmful greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere, making the company environmental stewards.

In Orion's words, "By helping reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted, Orion is helping ensure a healthy environment for generations to come."

SIELAFF CORPORATION

Mineral Point

www.sielaffcorp.com

SMALL COMPANY SIZE CATEGORY

Sielaff Corporation is a steel furniture producer in Mineral Point whose mission is to be a product development partner with its customers. Sielaff produces unbranded, private-label furniture and furniture components. The company markets its "Design, Engineer and Manufacture" capabilities, targeting large retailers and other furniture manufacturers.

In 1985, Ulrich Sielaff and Richard Hammerstrom started Sielaff Corporation in a small business incubator space in Madison. Sielaff's goal was to become a product design and development company. After an unsuccessful first attempt at a new fastening system for shelving, it became clear that a better way for the company to proceed would be to manufacture products on its own.

Sielaff's first big break came in 1986, with the STRATUS shelving system. More designs quickly followed and the business became a respected supplier of a variety of contemporary home furnishings. Ten years after starting the company, most of Sielaff's domestic competitors had converted their business from manufacturing to importing. Sales stayed flat for several years and margins slipped as the company tried to deal with overseas

competition. When its customers started buying from overseas suppliers, Sielaff knew it had to reinvent itself to remain competitive.

At a time when many manufacturers were moving their manufacturing jobs overseas, Sielaff charted a path to counteract the trend. In 2001, the company moved its operations from Madison to Mineral Point and changed its focus from supplying many small retailers to supplying a select group of higher-end retailers.

Instead of making new products on speculation, Sielaff began to produce only unbranded, private-label furniture and furniture components. As a private-label supplier, Sielaff did not need to advertise its products. This resulted in a substantial reduction of marketing expenses, which in turn significantly increased the company's profitability.

The understanding that building relationships is the best way to grow business has been the most important factor in the company's success. The company now markets its "Design, Engineer, and Manufacture" capabilities, targeting large retailers and other furniture manufacturers that can use its services. Sielaff differentiated itself from its competition by making products that are impractical to import, providing quick delivery and reducing customer inventory requirements.

Since 2003, Sielaff's profits have grown steadily every year and in 2008 the company completed a 10,000 square foot addition to its factory. Sielaff remains a family business with Alex Sielaff as president, Alex's brother Jason Sielaff focusing on product development and engineering, and Ulrich Sielaff continuing as owner, head designer and CEO.

The overriding philosophy at Sielaff is that employees, customers and suppliers must be held in the highest regard. Sielaff communicates daily with its customers. The company principals and managers try their best to lead by example, and all employees understand the goal of exceeding customer expectations whenever possible.

Sielaff has been a significant contributor to the Mineral Point Historical Society, and was instrumental in planning and constructing a new park on the city's main street. Sielaff employees regularly contribute their welding skills to help local artists. Ulrich Sielaff is a great believer in technical education and has served on the Southwest Wisconsin Technical College Foundation Board of Directors for three years. The company uses the College's technical outreach training services and continues to draw on their technical graduates for staffing its factory.

KETTLE FOODS, INC.

Beloit

www.kettlefoods.com

SUSTAINABILITY CATEGORY

Kettle Foods produces Kettle Brand® Potato Chips and has been part of the Wisconsin business community since 2006 when it broke ground in Beloit on the first LEED® Gold certified food manufacturing plant in the United States.

Using only the finest potatoes and natural seasonings, Kettle Brand® Potato Chips are the best selling natural potato chips in the United States. The company has been making delicious, all-natural, hand-cooked potato chips since 1982. Its products are available in supermarkets and natural food stores in all 50 states as well as Canada, Asia and Western Europe.

Kettle Brand® Potato Chips use all-natural ingredients, and do not contain trans fats, MSG, artificial flavors, GMO ingredients or gluten. The company

backs this all-natural promise with a commitment to sustainable business practices and coexisting in harmony with the environment and its communities.

Kettle Foods aims to make great tasting, all-natural snacks and help the planet in the process. The company has been able to save over 22,000 trees each year with its recent decision to change the materials and shape of its bags.

Headquartered in Salem, Oregon, Kettle Foods takes great pride that Beloit was chosen as the location for its second plant. The factory has earned accolades for innovation and leadership from the manufacturing industry, has generated local jobs and earned the appreciation of customers.

Due to the care and consideration that went into integrating green building practices in the Beloit plant, Kettle Foods is reducing its annual energy use by 20 percent. Through the use of 18 on-site wind turbines, enough energy is generated to make 56,000 bags of potato chips every year. Over 40 percent of construction materials were manufactured, harvested or extracted from within a 500 mile radius, and over 20 percent of the building materials were recycled from previous use.

At the Beloit facility, water efficiency and recycling efforts save over 3 million gallons of water annually. The water used for potato washing is recycled and some of that water is also diverted and used for flushing toilets in bathrooms. The location has reduced Kettle Foods' carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 3 million pounds, resulting from the elimination of shipping lines from Oregon. Employees were actively engaged in returning the factory's five-acre backyard to its native prairie state, including the construction of birdhouses.

All waste cooking oil is recycled locally into biodiesel, which is used to power a fleet of diesel-powered company VW Beetles affectionately called "BioBeetles". The company has an extensive ongoing recycling program which includes annual totals of more than 350,000 pounds of corrugated cardboard, 10,000 pounds of stretch wrap, 9,000 pounds of office paper/magazines, in addition to myriad metals, wood, paint, batteries, fluorescent lights, glass, plastic and more.

As part of the company's overarching sustainability commitment, it offsets 100 percent of the electricity used to operate both its Salem, Oregon and Beloit, Wisconsin factories with renewable wind power.

For Kettle Foods, sustainability goes beyond saving resources and recycling. The company donates hundreds of thousands of pounds of potatoes and thousands of cases of its products to food banks each year. In addition, the company donates cash and in-kind contributions to local non-profit organizations, and has established its ScholarChip program, to give employees' children a head start in college.

Kettle Foods donates hundreds of thousands of dollars to local nonprofit groups through a grant process and its employees also spend time and money 'giving back' to their local communities.

Kettle Foods has a very active and engaged employee base. Its employees are engaged in many sustainability efforts, and everyone at Kettle knows what the company stands for. Its mantra is posted throughout the building:

- We continuously strive to be a better partner with our communities and environment by giving back what we take away – making sustainable choices.
- We create great tasting, all natural, better-for-you snacks by offering flavors that consumers crave, using absolutely nothing artificial, having the best-in-class nutritional profile, and being obsessed with finding the best way.

- We employ and develop people committed to mutual success who lead and act with passion and humility, take initiative and willingly accept accountability, are driven to continuously improve, treat each other with respect, and provide support and challenge.

Kettle Foods is a gem for Wisconsin and a leader in sustainable business practices.

2008 SPECIAL AWARD WINNERS

The following Manufacturer of the Year special awards recognize Wisconsin companies making considerable contributions in specific areas of manufacturing.

CRESCENT PRINTING COMPANY

Onalaska

www.cpcprints.com

DEMONSTRATION OF CORE VALUES

The founder of Crescent Printing Company acquired his first printing press for \$50 in the 1940s, when he began imprinting labels for the Onalaska Pickle and Canning Company. In 1956 Everett B. Lund founded Crescent Printing Company, and it has operated under continuous family ownership to this day.

Crescent Printing is a technologically advanced, commercial web and sheetfed printing company, specializing in catalogs, magazines, manuals, inserts, tourism guides and direct mailers.

The vision of the company is to provide the best workplace for its employees and world-class performance for its customers. Crescent Printing's core values are the essence of all that it does, and reflect its beliefs and strategies as it focuses on customer satisfaction and continued growth.

Respect is the foundation of what the owners strive for. Respect for employees, customers, suppliers, communities and the environment are all part of the culture at Crescent Printing. The essence of the company's fundamental values is spelled it out in a succinct, easy-to-remember manner:

- R espect for those we serve
- E nvironmentally responsible
- S ervice as a competitive advantage
- P erformance as a Lean enterprise
- E xcellence in customer satisfaction
- C aring for our communities
- T eam driven

These fundamental values are seen in practice throughout the workplace. Crescent employs 51 people, who treat each other more like family than work associates. The company is committed to employee excellence in wellness and offers programs such as reimbursement for smoking cessation classes and hosting Free Fresh Fruit Friday where a variety of fruit is brought in for all to enjoy on the first Friday of each month.

Crescent Printing believes in open communication and it shares company news and financial performance at quarterly all-employee meetings. Crescent is a lean and green company. It excels at lean manufacturing and displays sincere commitments to being an environmentally sustainable company. The company recently celebrated ten years with no lost time work days, a significant achievement denoting its stellar safety standards.

When staff changes occur within Crescent Printing, the company communicates the change through a full-color employee roster poster which shows all of the employees' photos, names, and departments. This not only helps new employees and different shifts get better acquainted with their peers, it improves employee morale because every photo shows a happy person proud to work at Crescent. The poster does not have the owners at the top and everyone else underneath. The owners are added to the mix, listed alphabetically just like every other employee, demonstrating that every employee is important to the company's success.

Caring for the community is a year-round effort for the employees of Crescent Printing. Employees have raised more than \$73,000 in seventeen years to help the Children's Miracle Network and they work tirelessly with the local food pantry and other local charities.

Crescent Printing believes that its people drive the company's success. Since losing its largest client in 2002 due to that client's downsizing, Crescent has refocused and in the last three years has experienced significant sales increases and profits. Crescent Printing has come a long way from pickle jars!

BRUNO INDEPENDENT LIVING AIDS, INC.

Oconomowoc

www.bruno.com

NEW PRODUCT INNOVATION

The mission of Bruno Independent Living Aids, Inc. is to be a leading provider of solutions for an independent lifestyle. Helping to provide a full and active life for those challenged by mobility issues, the company has grown to become the world leader in the production of vehicle lifts and Turning Automotive Seating (TAS™), and is the North American leader in the production of stairlifts.

Headquartered in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, Bruno distributes its products through a global network of approximately 1,000 independent dealers.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009, Bruno has a history of creating a consistent and broad range of innovative, durable medical products. The company has won many awards for its product innovation, including two Governor's New Product Awards in each of the last three years. The most recently recognized products include the Bruno® Curb-Sider Lift and the Bruno® Electra-Ride Elite™ Stairlift, both of which help people to live independent lives.

Recognized innovative success is the result of key changes with a foundation based on innovation. Over the past five years, Bruno has worked to make significant changes to promote the ongoing health and growth of its business. During this time the company has seen steady growth in revenue, which has been accomplished through product strategy and innovation.

Innovation has been at the foundation of Bruno's success through its products, processes and strategies. A strong emphasis has been placed on applied research and continuous improvement of its formal new product development process. The ongoing pursuit of innovation has resulted in the

addition of 27 employees in the past two years, with more planned for 2009.

Bruno is the world leader in the production of over 20 different kinds of vehicle lifts. These products lift and stow personal mobility devices, including scooters, wheelchairs and power wheelchairs, into virtually any kind of automotive vehicle. The company is also the leading producer of Turning Automotive Seating (TAS™), a revolutionary product that rotates out of a vehicle and is powered up and down to any desired height for easy access. This product completely eliminates the traditional turning and twisting necessary to enter and exit vehicles.

Home accessibility is the other major component of Bruno's product line. The company is the North American leader in the production of stairlifts. These products are durable chairs that ride up and down on a straight or curved rail to provide simple and safe access to every level of the home. Bruno has recently started producing Vertical Platform Lifts, used primarily to provide access to a porch or deck.

The constant refinement of existing products and innovation for new solutions demonstrates Bruno's commitment to all individuals who face mobility issues.

When a company's products perfectly align with its mission statement, and the spirit of its employees permeate the manufacturing process, magnificent things can happen. It is Bruno Independent Living Aids' mission to be the leading provider of solutions for an independent lifestyle, and they are just that.

NEENAH PAPER INC.

Neenah

www.neenah.com

LEADER IN TRANSFORMATION

Neenah Paper is a leading global manufacturer of premium, performance-based papers and specialty products used in a variety of applications. The company is dedicated to minimizing its environmental impact through the use of renewable energy sources, sustainability of fiber inputs and land-holdings, productivity improvements and energy-efficiency upgrades.

For more than a year, Neenah Paper's six flagship brands have been manufactured Carbon Neutral, meaning that they achieve net zero carbon emissions throughout the manufacturing process. Manufacturing Carbon Neutral is part of a growing movement among corporations that are working to reduce greenhouse gases. In doing so, Neenah Paper is responding to needs of the business world and helping its customers reduce their own carbon footprint.

Neenah has achieved Carbon Neutrality through net reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

This achievement was based upon the use of Green-e certified renewable energy and other renewable energy sources, and the implementation of energy saving upgrades. One such upgrade was the reengineering of the process water treatment system at the Neenah mill. As a result of the upgrade, the mill operates at significantly reduced noise levels and has seen an increase in treatment efficiency while consuming less energy.

Green e-certified renewable energy comes from clean, environmentally preferable sources such as wind, solar, low-impact hydro and biomass. This renewable power replaces energy produced by traditional fossil fuels. Three

of Neenah Paper's brands are made entirely with Green-e certified renewable energy at the Neenah mill.

All recycled papers from Neenah Paper are Green Seal Certified, which means that mill processes, including packaging, have been verified to be environmentally preferable. To date, 67 percent of premium papers from Neenah Paper contain a minimum of 30 percent post consumer recycled fiber – up from 53 percent just two years ago.

As the Neenah mill continued to reduce its loadings to the Waste Water Treatment Plant, the full capacity of the treatment plant was no longer required. Using a patented and award-winning method, 5,000 tons of sludge from the company's paper production is converted to steam and electricity every year. The primary purpose of this process is to reduce the load on landfills which carries out a corporate environmental directive to eliminate land filling.

Neenah Paper then purchases the steam back to dry paper during manufacturing and to heat the Neenah mill, thereby closing the loop and avoiding the use of fossil fuels. By reducing natural gas consumption, Neenah has decreased its carbon dioxide emissions by 80 percent annually. In 2008, Governor Jim Doyle presented Neenah Paper with the Pulp and Paper Energy Efficiency Award.

Neenah is not only invested in creating value through innovative environmental solutions, but also in its employees who are ultimately responsible for creating this value and driving the company's success. It is the company's policy to promote and support the safety and welfare of its employees through a company-wide focus on corporate social responsibility reporting and prevention.

Neenah is also invested in community support and involvement and invests significant time and resources annually in improving its community. In 2007, Neenah Paper was recognized by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin for its contribution to the State Natural Area's Program. The company's efforts towards conserving green spaces include many projects in the communities in which it operates. Neenah is a firm believer of "Think Globally, Act Locally" and invests significant time and resources to improving the community in which its employees live and work.

The awards program is sponsored by:

