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## JBS recognized for energy savings

Local pork processor receives nearly \$145K rebate check

By: [Julie Buntjer](#), Worthington Daily Globe

WORTHINGTON — JBS is Worthington's largest consumer of energy, but recent changes at the pork processing facility have led to some major savings in energy usage, which in turn will lead to lower utility bills.

In mid-October, the company was presented a cash incentive of \$144,896 from Worthington Public Utilities (WPU) and Bright Energy Solutions for implementing three energy-saving practices. An energy audit initiated in 2007 identified five areas in which improved systems would help reduce energy usage and save the company money.

"We knew the project was worthwhile over the long term, but the BES incentives would help shorten the payback period," said Jeff Buysman, JBS assistant plant engineer. "That's what management was looking for and they approved three of the measures that would yield the best potential for savings."

The projects implemented at JBS, as recommended in the energy audit conducted by [Palen Kimball Co., of St. Paul](#), included the addition of two evaporative condensers in the ammonia refrigeration system, new condenser controls in the refrigeration system and installation of a dedicated bank of condensers to cool the compressor oil through natural convection rather than using a mechanical pump.

After the work was completed, the company noted a "significant peak demand savings" by adding the additional condensers in the ammonia refrigeration system. Most of the energy savings, however, came from installing new condenser controls on the refrigeration system.

Buysman said the efficiency measures are producing the expected results and the company is already benefitting from the savings. Since they were installed, the projects have cut JBS' energy use by 4.35 million kilowatt hours and reduced its electrical demand by 338 kilowatts.

Vida Iten, Worthington Public Utilities customer service supervisor, said companies like JBS who are willing to implement energy-efficient practices helps reduce the costs for the WPU.

"The more energy use, the more cost it is to us," she said. JBS is one of several companies the local utility has been working with to reduce energy needs.

"We are mandated by the state to save 1.5 percent of our yearly sales in energy efficiency costs," Iten said. Rebate programs like those offered through Bright Energy Services help to meet that goal.

Most recently, the WPU worked on energy-saving projects with the YMCA, and Iten said they will also be working with Hy-Vee.

"We try to look at all the building plans when they come in," Iten said. "There are certain things you have to do in Minnesota because of code, but if there are things we can do (to save energy) we go above and beyond."

The WPU has rebate programs for both residential and commercial customers, and Iten said they are available to everyone from low-income housing to large-scale businesses.

"Anybody is eligible as long as they are a Worthington Public Utilities customer," she said.

Energy savings projects that cost \$10,000 or more to implement do need pre-approval from the utility so they can make sure the rebate funds are available.

Iten said she's seeing more interest from local residents and businesses about energy-saving projects, whether that comes from more awareness about being green or more publicity, she's not sure.

"The state is really pushing it, and we're trying to push that the more energy they save, the lower the costs are," Iten said. "We're all trying to keep our costs down."

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Submitted Photo

Worthington Public Utilities customer service supervisor Vida Iten (second from left) presents a rebate check to JBS plant manager Bob Krebs. Joining them are Joni Livingston, MRES Energy Services manager (left), Chuck Tennessen, JBS plant engineer, Jeff Buysman, JBS assistant plant engineer, and Lisa Fischer, MRES Energy Services field representative.