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LOCAL EPUD BUSINESS CASHES IN ON INCENTIVES AND ENERGY SAVINGS

October 20, 2010

It's not often your local utility company arrives at your doorstep with a check made out to you, but that's what happened to Pat Dodge, plant manager at the Swanson Group in Noti. Recently, the Emerald People's Utility District delivered a check for \$150,000, roughly 70% of project costs for the upgraded compressed air system. The project was subsidized by state incentives for energy efficiency projects, and will translate to an annual energy savings of 10% for the plant.

"This project was a no brainer for us," said Dodge. "With the economy the way it is, it's all about seeing a quick return on investments. This project will pay for itself in nine months and we'll begin seeing higher production and lower energy bills immediately."

The idea for the project started in 2009 when Rogers Machinery Audit Group completed an energy assessment of the Swanson facility. The report showed the

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plant was operating at low efficiency and had much to gain by upgrading the air compression system. Swanson depends on compressed air to operate the many moving parts in their highly-automated mill facility.



“We didn’t have enough air throughout the system to run the facility like we wanted to,” said plant maintenance manager Albert Diggle. “Also, if one of our compressors went down, we were in trouble. We didn’t have the back-up needed to ensure steady production.”

With the help of EPUD, Rogers Machinery, and the Energy Smart Industrial Program run by Bonneville Power Administration, Swanson purchased new compressors, mist-eliminators, and fans as part of the upgrade. They also improved existing pipes to distribute air more efficiently and minimize pressure loss. “I could feel the difference walking around the mill the day after installation. I could feel it working,” said Diggle. “We have higher production, better ability to make small adjustments to our equipment, and are less affected by cold weather. Plus, our electric bills are smaller.”

Thanks to this project, the plant will save 878,558 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, enough to power 58 homes for a full year. \$52,000 in energy bill savings.



“This is the perfect example of a team project,” said Dodge. “We had EPUD, Rogers Machinery, and BPA all working with us to make this happen. We’re all about team here at Swanson and we’re proud of what we’ve done.”