



The cost of energy is a big part of the operating budget for metalcasting facilities, and any reduction in energy consumption results in direct bottom-line savings.

—www.castexpo.com

It Takes Energy to Go Green

If foundries are thinking about the environment, then you know green is the new reality. In the past, blast cleaning operations in foundries have been able to consume vast quantities of energy and media with little regard for the costs.

Electronics Inc. had an exhibit at the recent CastExpo '08 (CastExpo is the joint exposition of the American Foundry Society and the North American Die Casting Association). The MetalCasting Congress, held in conjunction with CastExpo, held workshops and lectures on the U.S. dependence on oil, rising fuel costs, and climate change legislation. I took away these impressions from CastExpo:

1. It's energy costs, more than anything else, that are forcing U.S. manufacturers to change the way they operate their facilities and processes.
2. Going green will take hard work with potential high costs for manufacturers, especially U.S. manufacturers.

To be honest, we didn't see many U.S. companies marketing green attributes either in their manufacturing processes or products at CastExpo. However, we were impressed with Sintokogio's booth and media presentation on their "factory of the future". Like many large Japanese companies, Sinto is making a considerable investment to create facilities and products that are environmentally-responsible. Consequently, they will be the first to reap the benefits.

We exhibited the MagnaValve at CastExpo and received a terrific response, mostly because it eliminates downtime and the subsequent high labor costs. Reducing labor costs are key to making foundries competitive and meeting production schedules. The MagnaValve reduces energy and media usage but,

interestingly, that wasn't as enticing as the maintenance reduction.

We picked up a nice flyer from Pangborn that promoted blast equipment rebuilds and retrofits and it struck me that "The Affordable Alternative to Buying New Equipment" is also environmentally-responsible because it keeps older equipment in the work cycle and the updates make the machine's operations cleaner. The subsequent improvements in production time reduces energy costs, too.

It seems to me that if your products and processes are environmentally-sound, you should start marketing them as such. A recent survey of manufacturers commissioned by Dow Corning revealed that eight out of 10 companies globally say that environmental and sustainability factors are taken into account when they select suppliers.¹

And here's an interesting concept from an online article—the high cost of fuel could affect globalization. In fact, the cost of transporting steel from China has been a boon to U.S. steelmakers. How would your business be affected if your marketplace becomes smaller?

Yes, it does take energy to go green. Just trying to stay informed can be overwhelming. *The Shot Peener* staff will continue to share success stories and insights. As supporting industries to aerospace and automotive companies, we will have to work to be viable, but I'm confident that blast cleaning and shot peening have a place in a lean, green economy. ●

¹Industry Week, December 2007



Don't forget, ICSP10 is going up soon: September 15 - 18 in Tokyo, Japan. Go to www.icsp10.jp for more information. Now is the time to make travel arrangements.