

Personally Speaking:

Customer Tools From a Familiar Source

One of the benefits of natural gas most prized by industrial customers doesn't flow through pipelines and meters - it's the service and assistance that comes packaged with the energy. Here's one example:

Progressive Powder Coating of Mentor, OH handles a wide range of products, varying in size, weight and thickness. Larger, thicker pieces were taking longer to cure in Progressive's convection oven, creating a bottleneck. That was serious enough, but other concerns arose as well. Slowing the speed of the 128-foot oven (two 60-foot zones plus an eight-foot wraparound section) to 4 fpm accommodated heavier pieces but raised the energy cost - and lowered the finish quality - of thinner items. What's more, extra time was needed to change the oven's temperature when changing runs.

John Sikora, the firm's General Manager, consulted its utility, East Ohio Gas (now Dominion East Ohio) for assistance. "We saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits

BENEFITS OF IR OVEN:

- Gas consumption lowered 15.5% per piece/6.8% per pound
- Minimum line speed increased from 4 fpm to 6 fpm
- Production increased by 50+%
- Pre-gel improves product quality (better gloss finish)
- More flexibility of product size and weight
- Less powder loss due to conveyor vibration

"This is the first issue of GAS TECHNOLOGY brought to you by Energy Solutions Center Inc. In the past, this magazine has been produced by The Industrial Center, and our new title describes the broader services we're providing. The new Center now provides technical and educational information regarding innovative energy and process solutions for both industrial AND commercial energy users.

GAS TECHNOLOGY will continue to be published on behalf of more than 30 energy companies across North America, all of them members of the Energy Solutions Center. As in the past, we welcome your comments and suggestions on the magazine. Please feel free to address them to me personally, or to an Industrial Sales Representative with your gas or energy utility."



David Weiss, Executive Director,
Energy Solutions Center Inc.

of using a gas-fired catalytic infrared oven to pre-gel the powder coating," says Tim Roshetko, Industrial Sales Representative at Dominion East Ohio. "The forty-foot oven, designed and engineered by Vulcan Catalytic Systems, was installed between the powder coating booth and the existing convection unit."

The utility assisted Progressive with financing of the unit, installed full-service metering of both gas and electricity consumption to quantify savings. "Gas usage per piece dropped by 15.5 percent," Roshetko notes, "or by 6.8 percent per pound of product." That was impressive enough, but other benefits were noted as well (see inset). Following installation and start-up of the IR unit, Progressive management enclosed the corridor between the IR and the convection ovens. "In effect, we created a third zone to retain heat on the surface between the two ovens," explains John Sikora. "All in all, the utility did an excellent job in providing technical advice and helping us to meter the usage and collect data," Sikora adds.