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Neenah Paper gets Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year honors

Environmental achievements are cited

BY PETE BACH • POST-CRESCENT STAFF WRITER • MARCH 3, 2009

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MILWAUKEE — Neenah Paper's emphasis on environmental stewardship earned it one of eight Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year awards Thursday.

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The Alpharetta, Ga.-based maker of premium paper with mills in Neenah, Appleton and Whiting garnered a special award at the event held at the Pfister Hotel sponsored by the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce.

"It is incredible to be recognized by other manufacturers and is a testament to the innovative environment at Neenah," said Gregg Aiken, mill manager at Neenah Paper.

The wintry mix of sleet, rain and snow didn't deter most event goers.

"It was a lot better than expected, about 90 percent" (attendance), said WMC spokesman Keith Hudson.

For more than a year, Neenah Paper's six flagship brands have been manufactured as so-called carbon neutral products, meaning they achieve net zero carbon emissions through the manufacturing process, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The firm performed the feat by use of renewable energy and energy saving upgrades, such as the re-engineering of the process water treatment system at the Neenah mill. Using a patented process, the WMC said, 5,000 tons of sludge from production is converted to steam to dry paper and heat the mill, and thereby reducing natural gas consumption. The mill has decreased its carbon dioxide emissions by 80 percent a year.

Neenah Paper employs about 750 people at its three mills and distribution center.

Grand Award winners were Brenner Tank, Fond du Lac; GE Healthcare, Madison; Kettle Foods, Beloit; Sielaff Corp., Mineral Point; and Orion Energy Systems, Manitowoc.

Special award winners in addition to Neenah were Bruno Independent Living Aids, Oconomowoc; and Crescent Printing Co., Onalaska.

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