

Yorkville textile plant a model of energy efficiency

Aurora Specialty Textiles Group hosts workshop for industrial association

By Shaw Media

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Officials at the Aurora Specialty Textiles Group plant on Route 47 in Yorkville had the opportunity earlier this year to show off the plant's state-of-the-art water reduction and energy saving measures to members of the Valley Industrial Association.

Aurora Specialty Textiles Group launched a massive program in 2009 to integrate sustainability measures into the company's facilities, operations and manufacturing processes. That project involved investing over

\$1 million in new equipment, moving its Aurora plant to Yorkville, and spending millions more retrofitting and redesigning the new plant with sustainability upgrades.

Today, nearly a decade later, the Yorkville plant features sustainability components designed to reduce water use, power consumption and pollution. The measures have also involved significant cost savings.

Company officials detailed the plant's many energy efficient features by hosting a sustainability workshops at the plant for VIA members. The VIA services manufacturing firms throughout the northern Illinois region.

At that workshop, Aurora Specialty Textiles Group managers Paula Kirby and Kevin Shroba shared details of the sustainability plan and provided tips and advice to attendees on how to begin reducing energy consumption, pollution and environmental impacts at their manufacturing plants. The workshop, which took place in August, included a Q&A session where Aurora Specialty Textiles Group managers helped attendees address sustainability issues in their plants.

The presentations also discussed other sustainability benchmarks at the new plant. For example, the new plant uses LED lighting, which is both energy-efficient and long-lasting and reduces landfill waste. This includes 75-plus exterior lights and 500-plus interior lights.

Water usage in the new plant is currently 50 percent less than the amount of water used annually in the firm's former Aurora plant. In addition, measures are being taken to reduce or eliminate pollution, including programs to recycle water, reduce effluent, reduce landfill waste and find additional ways to reduce energy consumption and water consumption.

"We are very proud of the work we have done here building a sustainable plant and the active role we are taking helping other manufacturers in northern Illinois learn how to make similar upgrades to their operations," said Dan LaTurno, president of Aurora Specialty Textiles Group. "It's taken a great deal of work and a deep commitment on the part of all of our employees to get to this point. But it's very gratifying."

He added that the company's Yorkville plant is better for the environment than, say, a plant in a country with no similar laws and guidelines.

"The Aurora plant operates under an EPA-regulated and approved air permit designed to protect air quality. This includes significant limits on volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants that might be released by a manufacturing operation," he said. "The plant also operates under a water discharge permit, which sets strict standards for the content and amount of effluent discharged."

Aurora Specialty Textiles Group's sustainability program also benefits its customers, he said.

"Increasingly, consumers are looking for products made by manufacturers who are committed to using manufacturing processes that are enhanced to protect the environment," said LaTurno. "In turn, many brands are looking for supply chain partners that have verifiable sustainability programs. Aurora is a supply chain partner with a verifiable sustainability commitment our customers can count on."