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Brithinee Electric Launches Motor/Environment Initiative

Electric motors use an astounding 63% of all industrial power, and are the largest single end use in the US economy.[i] To highlight how motors can save energy, Brithinee Electric launched its first Motor/Environmental Initiative at the Business Press- Inland Empire Economic Briefing, on Tuesday April 4th, in Ontario, California. The initiative is focused on educating financial decision makers on how much energy can be saved through informed motor decisions.

Brithinee Electric is a full industrial motor resource for new or repaired motors and generators, as well as customized motor control systems.

The Economic Briefing was used as a venue because the attendees are generally upper management, economic development, and public officials who make long-term energy decisions. The US Department of Energy says that the level of knowledge and implementation of a systematic approach to motor efficiency is low.[ii]

With over 40 years of experience in all aspects of electric motors, Brithinee Electric well understands the practical issues of how motor buying and repair decisions are made. The Brithinee Motor/Environmental Initiative seeks to better educate decision makers on how lower energy usage and more efficient motor operation can reduce CO_2 and other emissions.

Better motor energy management could result in a potential greenhouse emissions savings of 15 to 26 million metric tons of carbon per year. These savings are equivalent to removing over 3,200,000 cars from the road![iii]

One such issue is the use of premium efficiency motors instead of standard motors, which operate under the same basic design principles as when they were first invented 125 years ago. The energy to operate an electric motor each year can cost 20 times more than the initial price of the motor. Therefore, the relatively small increased cost for a premium efficiency motor is easily paid for in only a few months of operation.

This equates to a return on investment of over 125% each and every year of operation! But the environment also wins, because the same motor creates about 20% less waste energy. This in turn means that fewer new coal-fired plants have to be built, putting fewer hydrocarbons into the air we breathe.

Brithinee Electric strongly supports NEMA[iv] premium motor usage by maintaining one of the largest premium motor inventories in the Inland Empire and Southern California.

When motors fail, they must be replaced immediately to keep factories or pumps working. Having a large inventory allows a quick decision to be made in favor of premium motors. “This is a commitment as much to the environment as to selling more motors, because our inventory is really larger than the profit return might justify. But it is one way we can help support good motor decisions that are better for the environment.” says Wallace Brithinee.

Other issues of importance are the way that motors are controlled. Large motors don’t just turn on and off with a switch; they are controlled with variable speed drives (industry language for computerized control of motor performance) that increase efficiency while saving power and wear and tear on the motor. Brithinee Electric builds custom control panel systems that adhere to high standards for safety and motor efficiency.

“Strong energy savings can be realized through good control systems,” says Don Brithinee, “augmenting the savings from premium motors. Our Motor/Environment Initiative is a long-term effort to get both the plant manager who buys the motors, and the controller who pays the electrical power bills to work together on budgeting - both capital and repair costs, as well as current energy costs/savings …a long term strategy for motors will help the environment.”

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[i] US Department of Energy, US Industrial Motor Systems Market Opportunities Assessment, 1998, page 1 & 6.

[ii] US Department of Energy, US Industrial Motor Systems Market Opportunities Assessment, 1998, page 8.

[iii] US Department of Energy, US Industrial Motor Systems Market Opportunities Assessment, 1998, page 10.

[iv] NEMA is the National Electrical Manufacturers Association. The member companies of the NEMA Motor and Generator Section established a NEMA Premium® energy efficiency motors program to provide highly energy efficient products that meet the needs and applications of users and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) based on a consensus definition of "premium efficiency”.