



The employees of GM's Fort Wayne Assembly just celebrated a major milestone: the completion of their seven millionth produced vehicle. Innovative energy strategies have helped Fort Wayne Assembly work smarter and keep costs down.



AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

KEEP ON TRUCKING

GM'S FORT WAYNE ASSEMBLY IS QUICK, SMART, AND LEAN.
NOT BAD FOR A 30-YEAR-OLD.

It's no secret that, over the last 30 years, the auto industry has had its ups and downs. Yet General Motors' Fort Wayne Assembly has, since 1986, not only survived—it has positively thrived. The 3.3-million-square-foot facility that produces full-sized pickup trucks just received a \$1.2 billion investment from GM to support its growth.

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“The company’s been through tough times,” said Dave Shenefield, Fort Wayne Assembly’s site utility manager, who’s been there for all 30 of those years. “But we were able to prevail for the right reasons. We build the trucks at a very economical cost for the company, and we work very efficiently.”

Some of that efficiency has come through automation, such as innovations in the robotics that now paint trucks and handle sheet metal. But improved efficiencies also can be found in the way Shenefield has worked with Heartland REMC to reduce electricity expenses.

“GM always hopes to partner with utility companies to find savings,” said Shenefield. “But with Heartland REMC, the reaction time to our needs has been so quick that their work has been recognized throughout the entire GM corporation.”

That work includes the co-op’s POWER MOVES efficient lighting program, which Shenefield describes as a win-win. “Receiving incentives really helps us to implement these projects, and it helps the utility company keep their costs down by reducing our overall load and usage,” he said.

The lighting program was followed up just last year with the installation of variable frequency drive pumps for the plant’s Weld Water system, which is vital to the plant’s production process.



“We worked with Heartland REMC’s POWER MOVES team throughout the whole project,” said Shenefield. “They checked the validation up front, were with us through the installation process, and helped right through verification at the end.”

This attentiveness and service is, in Shenefield’s eyes, a feature of the co-op model.

“I call the co-op model ‘the neighborhood approach,’” said Shenefield. “They want to take care of us, and they want to do what’s right for us. Even as big as we are, they have applied every bit of their expertise to help us achieve our goals.”

And there’s more growth to come. That big investment from GM will add

a 900,000-square-foot body shop, a 400,000-square-foot pre-treatment and electro-deposition facility, more production space, and a sequence center. It’s a lot of change—and it shows what’s possible when dedicated people work together.

“We’ve got a good work force up here,” Shenefield said. “People want to work hard and do the right things.”

Learn how Wabash Valley Power uses energy efficiency rebates to support the automotive industry. Contact Brian Anderson, Director of Economic Development, at b_anderson@wvpa.com or 317-409-9806.