

Long-time Crookston Business is “Going Green”

Dahlgren & Company, Inc has been one of the main manufacturing businesses in Crookston, Minnesota since 1955, celebrating their 55th year in business this year! They began as a planting seed business and then entered into the birdseed industry and evolved into one of the first edible sunflower processing companies in the United States. They focus on quality sunflower products for the snack food, bakery and food-ingredient, and birdseed industries.

According to the “Positively Minnesota” web-site, manufacturing in Minnesota represents one in seven jobs and has the largest total payroll of any business sector. In Northwest Minnesota, manufacturing is the third largest employment sector with 25,730 jobs. Dahlgren employs 165 people in total between their four locations, with 141 of those positions being located in Crookston. Each manufacturing job supports another 1.3 jobs elsewhere in the economy through supplier purchases and employee spending. This means Dahlgren would support 214.5 jobs besides the 165 employees of their own. Possibly more because of the farmers that Dahlgren works with to purchase the raw sunflower product!

Dahlgren has recently joined numerous other businesses nationwide by “Going Green.” They are tracking energy usage and waste streams by building a profile of all energy users throughout the plant. The profiler is being used by employees to find ways to reduce energy usage by tracking electricity, natural gas, water, nitrogen gasoline, diesel, propane and waste streams. Dahlgren has formed Green Teams, a cross section of employees from each department that meet weekly to discuss Resource Conservation, come up with new ideas, and help with communicating to all employees the importance of conserving our resources..

Dahlgren has already implemented many projects that have developed from ideas generated by Green Teams. An ongoing project is to replace older non-energy efficient lighting with more energy efficient lighting in all process and packaging areas. Along with changing over to the more efficient lighting, they’ve also installed motion activated sensors on each light. This facility used to be lit 24/7, even when no workers were present, this will cut the electricity usage by at least half, if not more in just this area. Another initiative is the installation of a nitrogen generator. This will reduce the amount of nitrogen that Dahlgren has to purchase from an outside source. And a larger potential project is the reclamation of water used in the roasting plant to clean air that leaves our plant through steam. Dahlgren is looking at installing a filter circulation system to clean the water and send it back for use in the system again. This project would cut the water usage by an estimated 60%. In return, it saves water for the city of Crookston and the environment.

Dahlgren & Company is looking forward to working with their Green Teams in searching for other ways to reduce usage, reuse what they have, and recycle what they can!