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Kettle Foods wins major state award

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Published: Friday, February 27, 2009 11:29 AM CST

Kettle Foods, Inc. was honored with the Grand Award in the Sustainability category as part of the 2008 Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards. The eight winning companies were announced at a black-tie awards dinner and program at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee on Thursday.



Fallon

The Sustainability category rewards a manufacturer which successfully implemented sustainable manufacturing practices that are environmentally and economically sound.

"This is great recognition from the state and reaffirms Kettle's commitment to sustainable business practices. We are proud of the Beloit operation and all the people that work there," said Tim Fallon, president and general manager of Kettle Foods North America.

Fallon added that Kettle Beloit will be expanding capacity by 50 percent in April and will be hiring more people. Despite the economy, he said Kettle is one of the fastest growing potato chip manufacturers, and business is strong.

"This year's sustainability award winner clearly excelled in demonstrating that they recognized environmental stewardship and social responsibility as corporate assets that contributed to their bottom line." said Bob Karnauskas, President of BL3 Strategies, and Founder of Wisconsin Sustainability Foundation, and one of 15 judges who selected the eight winners for this year's event. "Kettle Foods' business philosophy and values are a model for any company seeking enhanced operating efficiencies, employee morale and brand reputation."

The 21st annual Manufacturer of the Year Awards recognize Wisconsin companies demonstrating a commitment to business excellence, which has a positive impact on the company and the state, making Wisconsin a better place to live, work and play.

Kettle Foods produces Kettle Brand Potato Chips, which are the best selling natural potato chips in the U.S. The company has been making potato chips since 1982. Its products are available in supermarkets and natural food stores in all 50 states as well as Canada, Asia and Western Europe.

In 2006 Kettle Foods broke ground in Beloit on the first LEED Gold certified food manufacturing plant in the U.S. Kettle Foods is reducing its annual energy use by 20 percent.

Through the use of 18 on-site wind turbines, enough energy is generated to make 56,000 bags of potato chips every year. More than 40 percent of construction materials were manufactured, harvested or extracted from within a 500 mile radius, and more than 20 percent of the building materials were recycled from previous use.

At the Beloit facility, water efficiency and recycling efforts save more 3 million gallons of water annually. The water used for potato washing is recycled and some of that water is also diverted and used for flushing toilets in bathrooms. The location has also reduced Kettle Foods' carbon dioxide

emissions by an estimated 3 million pounds, resulting from the elimination of shipping lines from Oregon. All waste cooking oil is recycled locally into biodiesel, which is used to power a fleet of diesel-powered company VW Beetles called "BioBeetles."

The company also donates hundreds of thousands of pounds of potatoes and thousands of cases of its products to food banks each year.

The statewide recognition program is co-sponsored by Michael Best & Friedrich LLP, a Midwest-based law firm; Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP, the nation's 17th largest accounting and consulting firm; and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the state's largest business association.

A total of 55 Wisconsin businesses were nominated for the 2008 Manufacturer of the Year Awards for manufacturing excellence. Companies were evaluated in areas such as financial growth or consistency, technological advances, product development, environmental solutions and sustainability, operation excellence/continuous improvement, commitment to employees and effective research and development.

More information about the Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards program can be found at www.wimoty.com

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