

National Automobile Dealers Association
McLean, Va.

When energy costs started to spike a few years back, the National Automobile Dealers Association (nada.org) knew it had to do something to help its members. The trade group's mission is to serve as a voice for the more than 19,000 new-car and truck dealers it represents in the U.S., tapping its resources to help them with initiatives they might not have the ability to tackle independently. "They are constantly concerned about reducing their overhead costs," says Doug Greenhaus, director of environment, health and safety.

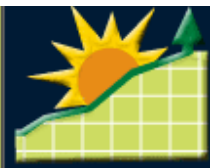
So NADA began looking into ideas to help them streamline their energy bills. In 2007, after two years of work, it unveiled a partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program. Known as the Energy Stewardship Initiative (nada.org/energystar), the project is designed to help dealers improve the energy-efficiency of their operations by at least 10% a year. To that end, it recommends steps that they can take to retrofit older facilities and build new construction to include lighting, climate controls, equipment and building design that optimize energy usage.

The initiative offers a variety of free resources to dealers who want to go green – or greener. An online publication the EPA created in conjunction with NADA, "A Dealer Guide to Energy Star: Putting Energy into Profits," provides a handy reference. Tools such as Energy Star's Portfolio Manager help the dealers track their energy usage. An online database helps dealers locate professionals and suppliers who share their commitment to saving energy. Another points them to information on state incentives on renewable energy.

Greenhaus says more than 700 members have signed up for the program. It hasn't hurt that NADA received a 2007 Energy Star Special Award for Excellence in Energy Efficiency. NADA also partners with *USA Today* on the annual Dealer Innovation Award, which recognizes those who have taken steps to save energy and conserve the Earth's resources.

As an added incentive for participation, NADA also helps its members – like three that recently won Energy Star Small Business Awards -- publicize their efforts. The goal is to give them a marketing return on the money they invest. At a time when the sale of hybrid automobiles is up 38% in the U.S., customers like to know that the dealerships they patronize are making efforts to reduce their environmental impact. "Customers have been increasingly paying attention to things like that," says Greenhaus. By next year, NADA aims to have a rating system in place to indicate how compliant dealerships are with Energy Star guidelines, he notes.

NADA, which was founded in 1917, has taken steps such as helping members comply with environmental regulations over the past 30 years because it's good business, says Greenhaus. "We don't get into things unless we believe there's a significant return on investment," he says. "There's a direct relationship between reducing their energy costs and their global warming footprint."



Indeed, after getting its dealers started on creating higher performance buildings, NADA is now turning an eye to the several office buildings it owns on Capitol Hill and McLean. “We’re doing the same things we’ve suggested it would be wise for our members to do,” he says.

Energy Saved: The NADA’s 10% goal may seem modest. But if all dealerships in the U.S. were to reduce their energy consumption by just 10 percent, they would save approximately \$193 million in energy costs and eliminate more than 1 million tons of greenhouse gases every year, says Steve Bell, program manager at the Energy & Security Group, a consulting firm in Reston, Va. that helps government, nonprofit and business clients expand the use of clean energy and environmental technologies and practices.

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