



Department of
**Environment &
Conservation**



DENSO Manufacturing Athens Tennessee, Inc.: Realizing a Sustainable Automotive Society

DENSO is a leading supplier of advanced automotive technology, systems, and components for the world's major automakers. DENSO's Athens, Tennessee facility, DENSO Manufacturing Athens Tennessee, Inc. (DMAT), is one of two operations in Tennessee.

DENSO fully embraces the corporate vision of creating a sustainable automotive society. The Athens facility employs over 1,400 associates with three production facilities that manufacture ignition system, exhaust system, and gasoline delivery system components for its global customers.

Such an enormous operation brings with it an enormous amount of challenges. These challenges include diverting material from the landfill, materials management, and engaging employees and the community.

DENSO has made significant progress in diversion and recycling at the Athens site. "We've successfully diverted 98 percent of our material from the landfill, which is 3,868 tons of recyclable material, in 2016," said Stacey Melton, Senior Specialist in Safety, Health, and Environment with DMAT.

The rate of landfill diversion, while a very important milestone to DENSO, is only one success story. Like many companies, energy and pollution prevention are significant cost

The DENSO logo in red italicized font on a white background, set against a green background.

- Established 2003
- Employs 1400+
- Member since 2004
- Pursuing Eco-Vision 2025



considerations. DMAT, a visionary company that embraces innovation in every aspect of their operation, sought a unique solution to both of these issues.



“We have what is known as a Regenerative Thermal Oxidizer unit to collect and control air emissions from the testing of our fuel injection products,” said Eddie Franks, Supervisor for Safety Health and Environment at DMAT. “We are upgrading that system to become an energy source for us.” The typical thermal oxidizer system captures and destroys volatile organics like the fuel used for the final testing for each fuel injector that DMAT manufactures. The new system would

capture that oxidized fuel, at a more efficient rate, by concentrating it and using the fuel as an energy source for itself. This will reduce the overall CO2 emissions as well as supplement the cost of energy to operate the plant. The new system should be in place by the end of 2017.

The decision to implement such non-traditional technology is in harmony with DENSO’s world-wide Eco-Vision initiative. Eco-Vision provides DENSO a roadmap to realizing their goal of a sustainable automotive society. The initiative encompasses virtually everything that DENSO does that touches the environment. One of the most visible outcomes of Eco-Vision is the EcoPark.



The idea for the EcoPark originated after Shawn Bryant, Manager of Safety, Healthy & Environment at DMAT, took a business trip to Japan in 2012, where DENSO has a similar EcoPark. After the trip, Bryant decided to ask about collaborating to create the same type of green space in Athens, Tennessee.

“DENSO grew up in rural Japan, and preserving the environment has long been a part of our heritage. The

EcoPark demonstrates DENSO’s Japanese heritage while also creating an eco-friendly and educational oasis for associates and the community,” said Bryant.

There is an EcoPark adjacent to both DENSO facilities in Maryville and Athens. It is a safe place for associates and the community to walk, learn, and immerse themselves in nature.

DENSO is committed to sustainability in their industry and their community. They became members of the Tennessee Green Star Partnership in 2004 and attended the Sustainable Industry TGSP Highlights- June 2017

Workshop in Knoxville last summer. “We would love for all the automobile companies in Tennessee to join the partnership so that we can network ideas,” said Bryant.

The [Tennessee Green Star Partnership](#) is a voluntary environmental leadership program designed to recognize industries in the state, which are committed to sustainable practices. If you are interested in joining DENSO and other sustainable industries in Tennessee by becoming a member, please contact us.