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Honda's Ohio transmission plant is the first to earn EPA Energy Star certification

Cool, now that plant has something in common with my refrigerator.



Andrew Krok

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No, that doesn't mean employees get the day off when the wind isn't blowing.

Whether opening the box of a new television or just opening the refrigerator door, you've probably seen one of the government's Energy Star stickers at some point, which helps buyers learn how efficient an item is. Now, the EPA has slapped that sticker on an entire building, thanks to Honda's hard work in making it energy-efficient.

Honda announced on Thursday that its Honda Transmission Manufacturing of America (HTM) facility in Russells Point, Ohio, has become the first US auto transmission facility to earn the EPA's Energy Star certification. This means that the plant is in the highest quartile for energy efficiency in the country.

HTM started this journey in 2014, when it became the first major auto manufacturing facility in the US to get a decent chunk of its energy from wind turbines -- two 1.7-megawatt turbines, to be specific, which provide more than 10 percent of the plant's power needs. HTM also scrutinizes its efficiency in other ways, monitoring utility use and scheduling everything from HVAC use to lighting.

Honda's transmission plant in Ohio is a busy bee. Every year, this 1.1-million-square-foot facility cranks out more than 850,000 transmissions for all manner of vehicles. But that's not all it builds; it also produces transfer cases, gears and differentials. That's a whole lot of metal.

While HTM deserves commendation, it's far from the only automotive plant working with renewables. After announcing its intentions last year, Bentley reported earlier in May that the solar panels on its Crewe factory's car port now produce 2.7 megawatts of power, and the whole facility generates 7.7 MW from solar energy alone. Audi's Brussels plant, which will produce the electric E-Tron SUV, will see 95 percent of its processes covered by renewable energies, with offset programs covering the final 5 percent.