

## Company Focuses Rebuilding on Sustainability

**B**rowse the local hardware store and you'll find dozens of gadgets and reworked products that promise eco-friendly results.

But it doesn't take a shiny new widget to be green. One of the most basic home features – insulation – is the true hero in energy efficiency, asserts Scott Miller, Knauf Insulation's director of sustainability.

Consider this statistic: Miller calculates that in a 2,500-square-foot home in Washington D.C., the insulation in one year "saves equivalent of about 2,300 gallons of gasoline in equivalent energy. That's about 50 barrels of oil."

"We believe insulation is perhaps the most important part of the green building equation," he asserts.

With that philosophy in mind, the Shelbyville company is rebuilding its product and process development facility (a February 2007 fire destroyed the previous structure) to reduce energy consumption. *BizVoice*® spoke to Knauf Insulation President and CEO Robert Claxton last year to learn how the company quickly recovered from the fire.

Construction on the new facility will finish in September, and it's expected to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The building is believed to be the first in Indiana designed to earn the gold certification, Miller states.

Features that will help earn that title:

- Energy efficiency that is at least 30% better than a traditional building
- A reflective roof to reduce heat
- Daylight harvesting, which dims artificial lights inside the building based on the availability of natural light (all offices will have an outside view)
- Native trees shading the parking lot to reduce "heat island" effect
- Thirty percent reduction of water use (captured rain water will be used to water plants and waterless urinals are being installed)
- Locally sourced building materials to reduce embodied energy
- Electric cars available for employees to travel between buildings on Knauf's campus

The building will demonstrate "Knauf is actually walking the talk of being a sustainable company," Miller boasts.

In all, the added features increased the building costs by about 10%, but Knauf expects to recover those expenses from lower energy payments in about eight years. "Sustainable building is a very important part of our business model," Miller asserts.

While the new building (less than 30,000 square feet) does not represent a large part of Knauf's sprawling manufacturing facility, it was a logical move to make the new construction eco-friendly, he explains.

Miller officially became Knauf's director of sustainability and product affairs in April, though work toward sustainable business practices began before that appointment. He now serves as the leader for the Shelbyville plant's eco-efforts and coordinates with the company's European operations.

"Just improving energy efficiency, which is what we sell, is the most important thing you can do to reduce carbon. And if you reduce carbon, simultaneously you'll reduce energy consumption because they track together," he adds. Not only does Knauf's product reduce energy consumption in homes and businesses, much of the insulation is made from post-consumer glass bottles.

"Obviously it's good business for us as an insulation company to promote energy efficiency."

To view the November/December 2007 *BizVoice*® story on Knauf Insulation, go to the archives section of [www.bizvoicemagazine.com](http://www.bizvoicemagazine.com).



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Scott Miller guides Knauf's environmental efforts as director of sustainability.

### INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Scott Miller, Knauf Insulation, at [www.knaufusa.com](http://www.knaufusa.com)

Story by Candace Gwaltney

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