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Toyota garners honor for energy management

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There's a lot more to Toyota's conservation efforts than the Prius.

In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has named Erlanger-based Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America its 2005 Energy Star award winner for "leadership in energy management."

And while Toyota won't say which North American plant the company might pick to build its popular fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles, executives there were happy to share their strategies for saving energy and money with internal conservation efforts.

"The uniqueness of what we do is there is a complete tie-in to the core business," said Kevin Butt, general manager of environmental affairs for Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America. "Managers are evaluated, not only on how many great cars they make, but also on how they did, environmental performance-wise, at the same time."



Butt

That's something that makes Toyota stand out among the companies that compete for the EPA's Energy Star awards, said Stanley Meiburg, deputy regional administrator for the EPA's Region 4.

"They're in the energy business, and energy really is a core business," Meiburg said. "They have taken very seriously their commitment."

With each new plant the company designs, it aims to shrink the space needed to manufacture vehicles, said Bruce Bremer, manager of facility engineering.

The company's new plant in San Antonio, Texas, for example, will have about 2 million square feet under roof to produce an estimated 150,000 Tundra trucks each year, Bremer said. That's about the same size as Toyota's truck plant in Indiana built a few years ago, but the Texas plant also includes room for some suppliers, too.

Toyota's Georgetown plant, its first wholly owned manufacturing facility in the United States, has a whopping 7 million square feet under roof.

Reducing the space needed means more efficient operations and less space to heat, cool and maintain, Butt said.
