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## ConocoPhillips refinery 1st to get Energy Star recognition

Award says plant is using less energy for producing energy, By CLAIR JOHNSON  
of The Gazette Staff, April 12, 2007

From <http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2007/04/12/news/local/30-refinery.txt>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized the local ConocoPhillips refinery Wednesday with its Energy Star award for energy efficiency. The oil refinery is the nation's first to receive the award.

The Energy Star program encourages businesses and consumers to save energy. The Energy Star blue logo appears on many household appliances that have met strict energy-efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and the Department of Energy.

ConocoPhillips can now add the Energy Star to its Billings refinery.

Robert E. Roberts, EPA Region 8 administrator from Denver, presented a plaque to Mike Wirkowski, refinery manager, and Larry Ziembra, ConocoPhillips president of U.S. refining, during a refinery luncheon. The plaque is heavy, and Roberts advised them to use long bolts.

"This is a big deal," Roberts said. "This is not just another award EPA gives in the hopes people will love EPA."

Ziembra said the company's 12 U.S. refineries aim to reduce energy use 10 percent by 2012. A heat-recovery project at the Billings plant is being employed at the company's other refineries, he said.

ConocoPhillips is committed to lowering emissions, Ziembra said, and "the company wants to take the lead role."

"We all have a responsibility to use energy wisely," Wirkowski said.

Also on Wednesday, the Houston-based company joined several major corporations in urging Congress to require limits on greenhouse gases tied to global warming. The company is the first major U.S. oil company to take such a position.

ConocoPhillips said it has joined the U.S. Climate Action Partnership, an alliance of big business and environmental groups that in January sent a letter to President Bush saying mandatory emissions caps are needed to reduce the output of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere.

The Billings refinery is in the top 25 percent of refineries of its size category for energy performance in the United States, Roberts said.



*EPA Regional Administrator Robert E. Roberts, right, chats with ConocoPhillips Billings Energy Coordinator Dave Wittorff, left, and ConocoPhillips Billings Refinery Manager Mike Wirkowski as Roberts presents the Energy Star award for the Billings refinery Wednesday.*

"You simply use less energy to produce energy than most refineries do," he said.

Evaluating the efficiency of large industries such as oil refineries is a relatively new part of the Energy Star program, Roberts said. ConocoPhillips' Billings refinery was the first to qualify through an independent analysis of the nation's refineries by Solomon Associates of Dallas.

Wirkowski attributed the plant's energy savings to sound operations and emphasis on energy efficiency over the years. The techniques the refinery uses to save energy are not uncommon, but the extent to which they are applied gives the Billings plant the edge, he said.

One of the latest projects is a new co-generation system. The refinery will capture waste heat from a boiler, convert it into steam to run a turbine to generate electricity. The refinery will use that electricity to help run operations, thereby reducing the amount of power it has to buy, Wirkowski said.

Waste heat from the boiler otherwise would have gone into the atmosphere.

The ConocoPhillips refinery also has been reducing its pollution in recent years through a consent decree with the EPA to settle alleged violations of the Clean Air Act. The settlement was the result of a nationwide investigation into oil refineries. The CHS refinery in Laurel and the ExxonMobil refinery in Billings also have entered similar settlements with the agency.

ConocoPhillips is using its consent decree requirements to cut pollution as an opportunity to install energy-saving equipment at the same time, Wirkowski said.

The refinery is shut down for regularly scheduled maintenance in what Wirkowski described as "an energy tune-up so we can run efficiently for the next four years."

The Billings plant last year refined 21.2 million barrels of oil, which was close to a record year. ConocoPhillips is the second-largest oil refiner in the United States, owns or has interest in seven international refineries and has a combined refining capacity of 2.61 million barrels of oil per day.