

Company keeps cool while saving energy

Heeding the government drive to reduce energy consumption, the Jervis B. Webb Co. in Farmington Hills is installing an air conditioning system expected to save more than 77,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year.

The new system reduces the energy used by a centrifugal chiller, the largest energy consuming component of an air conditioning system made to handle a large building.

The new system, called a turbo-motor, reduces the chiller's energy consumption up to an average of 30 percent annually.

"The Webb building is expected to do even better according to our computer predictions," said Vic McCloskey, vice president of engineered machinery marketing for the York division of Borg-Warner Corp., developer of the new technology.

The system is expected to save \$3,000 in the first year of operation, said Lee Zwally, vice president of finance for the Jervis B. Webb Co.

The company expects the system should pay for itself in five years.

The system saves energy by varying the motor speed of the chiller to precisely meet cooling requirements, McCloskey said.

CONVENTIONAL chillers are designed so the air conditioning system can operate satisfactorily on the hottest days of the year, McCloskey said.

On cooler days, the chiller's capacity is reduced by throttling the flow of refrigerant gas through inlet vanes in the chiller's compressor.

"But this wastes energy. It's like driving a car with the accelerator pressed to the floor while using the brakes to reduce its speed," McCloskey said.

The new system takes the fixed 60-cycle frequency from the power company and reduces that frequency to vary the speed of the compressor, which doesn't need to work at full force on cooler days.

By matching compressor speed to cooling load, the chiller works only enough to satisfy the limited demand for cooler air.

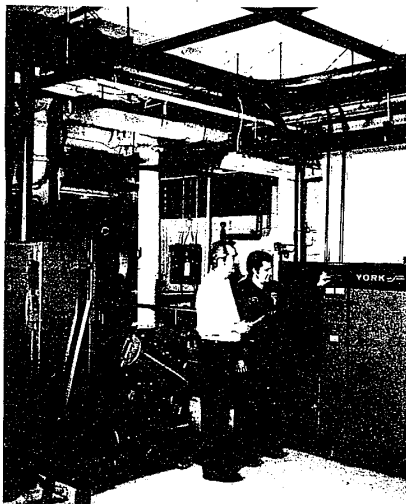
In most places around the country, the cooler doesn't need to work at full capacity at least 95 percent of the time. Extremely hot weather occurs during relatively few hours of the year, McCloskey said.

The new cooling system isn't the first act of energy conservation for the Jervis B. Webb Co. When its building on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills was built, energy conservation was demanded of the design.

THE 180,000 square-foot structure was built with a large overhang so that windows are protected from direct sun. The windows have bronze tinted glass to filter sunlight.

On especially hot days, the draperies are pulled to shield the rooms from extra heat.

The building houses engineering and administrative staffs for the company. Jervis B. Webb manufactures materials handling systems for the steel, coal and automotive industries.



Richard Burrows, left, supervisor of heating and cooling for the Jervis B. Webb Co. and Peter Nowowski, right, a service representative from the air conditioning manufacturer check over the building's new cooling system designed to save energy.

Thursday, June 28, 1980

(F)13A



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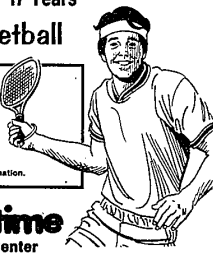
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