



Press information

Volvo Trucks in Umeå showcases its successful environmental commitment

The Volvo Trucks cab factory in Umeå, will soon be an entirely CO₂-neutral factory. This is being achieved by replacing propane with DME and by cutting energy consumption through the use of an ice-cold underground river to cool the production machinery. At the same time, considerable environmental improvements in the paintshop have helped create the world's cleanest and most energy-efficient paintshop.

In conjunction with the meeting of the European Ministers in Umeå, Sweden on October 14-16, Volvo Trucks showcased its highly successful pro-environmental work at the cab factory in Umeå. For several years now, the company has been making major investments in improving the efficiency of its energy usage and the goal is to have a carbon dioxide-neutral factory with locally produced energy within a couple of years. Energy consumption has decreased by 30 percent per manufactured cab over the past ten years, at the same time as there has been a record increase in production volumes.

Umeå's green focus echoes Volvo Trucks' over-riding environmental goals, which among other things means that all the company's large production plants are to be CO₂-neutral by 2010.

"For us, Umeå is a shining example and a symbol of our environmental commitment. The factory has for many years worked very successfully with environmental issues, generated highly innovative solutions and shown in concrete terms that this commitment benefits both the company and the environment," says Lars Mårtensson, environmental director at Volvo Trucks.

Halving of propane consumption

Today 90 percent of the factory's energy consumption is renewable. The target is 100 percent. Of the 106 GWh of energy that the Umeå factory consumed in 2008, 13 percent still consisted of propane, even though propane consumption has been halved compared with 2006. The propane used for the painting ovens has been replaced with district heating and today propane is the only fossil fuel being used. The district heating system has also replaced oil as a fuel, and all total emissions of CO₂ have been cut by 8000 tonnes a year. Today energy is recycled to the tune of 80 GWh per year. Now propane is



being replaced by DME produced from biomass. This is taking place in a joint project bringing together Umeå University, Umeå Energi, Ö-vik Energi and Volvo Trucks. "The DME project is a good example of how research, business and society work smoothly together to find solutions that really work," continues Lars Mårtensson.

Cooling from an icy underground river

The most spectacular energy saving is seen in the factory's cooling system. Close to the Ume River and the Volvo factory there is an underground ice river that maintains a constant cold temperature come summer or winter. The icy water from this river is pumped via a two kilometre long pipe into the factory's own system. This water is used in various cooling systems and has replaced many of the cab factory's refrigeration plants which otherwise used cooling agents such as freon. The biggest consumer of cooling water is the dehumidification of the air that is fed to the paint-boxes in the paintshop. The first supply of ice-river water reached the factory about a year ago, and its cooling effect corresponds to 3000 kilowatts.

The world's cleanest paintshop

Work on reaching the environmental targets has also prompted energy savings and environmental improvements in the factory's paintshop. The paintshop has been modernised and production has been streamlined in several stages, thus also cutting the consumption of paint and solvents and slashing emissions to the surrounding air. In 1988, solvent emissions to the air were about 70 grams per square metre of cab surface. Today emissions are below 10 grams, which is way below the EU's limit of 55 grams per square metre.

"We are now the world's cleanest paintshop as regards emissions of solvents to the air, and it is our aim to maintain this lead in the future too," says Anders Olausson, plant director at Volvo Trucks in Umeå. "We intend to continue our drive to be even regarding both environment-impacting emissions and energy consumption. We can see that what we're doing is good for the environment, and also that it leads to better production economy for us," he concludes.

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Facts

Volvo Trucks Umeå

Volvo Trucks in Umeå, in the north of Sweden manufactures cabs for Volvo's FH and FM truck models.

Production volume 2008: 62,000 cabs

Number of employees: 1,300

Max capacity: 90,000 cabs in three-shift production

Total area: 300,000 m²

Heated area: 163,000 m²

Energy consumption 2008, total: 106 GWh

Abot energy savings:

Project "Ice-River Cooler" was developed by Volvo Trucks in cooperation with the Umeå Municipality's water supplier, UMEVA. The project has resulted in environmental improvements and considerable cost savings in terms of both investment and operation.

Other energy-saving measures in the factory:

Installation of energy-efficient electric motors.

Frequency control of fans and pumps.

Requirement-controlled lighting in the various premises.

Electrical plant optimised for loss minimisation, reactive effect, in the mains network.

Electrical power is produced locally and is renewable, using hydropower from the Ume River.

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