

Making the Green Switch

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HAMPTON — Brazonics is starting to ride the green wave and Stratham biofuels provider Simply Green is helping them.

The Hampton-based aerospace supplier switched to Bioheat after a single worker raised the issue of biofuels with managers just a month ago. Brazonics employee Steve Horton had been using biodiesel in his two vehicles and a tractor at home, and was so pleased with its performance that he felt compelled to bring his employer on board.

"When I first learned that we had an alternative to using foreign oil for heating and vehicles, I looked into it," Horton said. "I thought, 'OK, American-produced soy oil, easier on the environment, the same price or less than regular fuel — and here is the kicker — my engines/furnaces run smoother, more efficient and cleaner — I wanted to spread the word.'"

Horton, a quality assurance manager at the electronics packaging and thermal management producer, was attending a training session given by one of Brazonics major customers where there was a strong pro-environment, energy conservation message. Horton realized that Bioheat, a mixture of home heating oil and soy oil, was just what Brazonics needed.

He approached the company's president and the maintenance manager, asking them to consider using biofuels to heat its 44,000 square feet of assembly space. The managers embraced the idea, called biofuels supplier Simply Green and shortly thereafter were heating with Bioheat.

"It was real simple," says Brazonics Facility Manager Ray Jelison. "Here was an opportunity to use an American-made product, lessen our company's greenhouse gas emissions and actually pay less for it!"

Jelison discovered that with the price of oil approaching nearly \$100 a barrel, biofuels have become extremely competitive with their foreign-produced crude.

"We ended up paying 20 cents less per gallon for our Bioheat, and we use a substantial amount of oil (approximately 5,000 gallons a winter), so Brazonics is realizing substantial savings, while reducing carbon dioxide emissions," he said.

Brazonics has been operating for nearly 50 years, making aluminum brazed assemblies such as enclosures and chassis for airplanes. They also manufacture cold plates, and heat exchanges for military and commercial industrial markets.

They specialize in the aerospace industry, assembling robust products designed to hold up in the harshest conditions. Currently, American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are using Brazonics' radio boxes, which soldiers carry on their backs.

"Anywhere a U.S. soldier is deployed on the ground or in the air, they are probably using Brazonics equipment," says Sales Manager Michael Sweet.

As an approved supplier of virtually every major aerospace electronics company, Brazonics has been noticing the "greening" of their industry.

"We definitely have customers that want to see us reduce energy use and pollution, so using biofuels is a win-win for Brazonics," said Sweet. "There is a pro-green movement afoot in the business world — our customers are doing it and we want to go right along with them. If you check the Web sites of the large military manufacturers like Northrop Grumman or Raytheon, you will see that they want to see some movement on the issue."

Brazonics believes that using Bioheat is just a first step. The company hopes to enact further changes in energy conservation and efficiency.

When Brazonics signed up for Bioheat with Simply Green they were offered brochures and discounts for all of their 105 employees. Now Biofuels brochures hang in all the break rooms and each Brazonics employee received a \$50 gift certificate for the purchase of biodiesel or Bioheat from Simply Green.

Horton is modest about his impact, but he has educated a large energy user and more than 100 families about alternative fuels.

"Lots of people have signed up already," he said. "This is how you do something new, one person at a time, one company at a time and as people see their neighbors using it and as other companies see us using it, hopefully it will catch on."

Horton himself started with biodiesel and then moved to using Bioheat in his home after he realized it cost the same, can run in any regular oil furnace and actually burns cleaner.

"Even if you're not in it for the environment, you should do it to support the American economy and reduce our dependence on foreign oil," he adds.

And Brazonics' choice of renewable fuel will have industry-wide reverberations. Brazonics has an internal newsletter that affects scores of other large manufacturers in military and commercial aerospace, avionics, homeland security, telecommunications, transportation systems, medical solutions and semiconductors. There will be information in the next issue outlining the company's use of biofuels and its push to encourage employees to use it as well.

Simply Green owner Andrew Kellar said that he can offer the gift certificates to any Seacoast business that switches to Biofuels and wants to bring their employees along with them.

"Brazonics is taking the lead in terms of large Seacoast manufacturers, but making the switch makes financial and environmental sense for any business or home," Kellar said. "At this point, we are offering our renewable fuels at less than the standard oil or diesel products, so individuals or businesses don't have to make any financial sacrifices to do what is right for the environment."

For more information on Simply Green, visit www.seacoastbiofuels.com or call Andrew Kellar at 772-3155.

For more information on Brazonics, visit www.brazonics.com or call Roxanne Jewel at 758-6241.