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Genmar recognized for environment work

Yacht builder accepted into Green Tier program

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PULASKI — Officials at Genmar Yacht Group in Pulaski say throughout the course of almost two decades, they have been working to reduce the environmental footprint of the plant.

On Friday, the company was approved for the state's Green Tier program in recognition of those efforts.

Officials say those efforts have included changes to the manufacturing process resulting in reduced emissions of volatile organic compounds, reduced energy consumption and a 40 percent cut in wastewater discharges.

"It's a philosophy this company has maintained over the years," said Paul Prestin, vice president of operations for Genmar, who has been with the company since 1989. "We all live in this community, and we are interested in being as environmentally friendly as we can."

Genmar, formerly Carver Boat Corp., makes the Carver and Marquis line of yachts.

The Green Tier program is a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and businesses around the state aimed at boosting both economic and environmental business performance.

"When you get serious about this, it means you start looking at your manufacturing processes and you look at how you can do things better," said Matt Frank, secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

"You use innovation ... not just to increase your profitability ... but you're also going to improve your environmental bottom line."

Tier 1 acceptance in the program provides participants with a single point of contact with the DNR, use of the program logo and deferred enforcement of civil violations, according to the state.

In recent years, some businesses say they have seen an increasing number of customers ask about corporate environmental practices before buying.

"We see more of it coming out of some of the European nations ... and it's something that's becoming more recognized in the United States," Prestin said.

Among the changes the company has made since the early 1990s are changes in compounds, manufacturing processes and chemicals used to make fiberglass hulls that cut the emission of volatile organic compounds by "hundreds of thousands of pounds" in many cases, Prestin said.

Additionally, the air handling systems in one of its newer buildings is designed to recycle air when the

level of volatile organic compounds is less than 20 parts per million.

That system has reduced the amount of heat needed for the building — a key ingredient in the curing process of chemicals used in fiberglass — and subsequently cut energy costs and reduced emissions, he said.

Prestin said they will continue to streamline their environmental requirements and encourage new environmental technologies.

"Genmar Yacht Group is continuing to evaluate every facet of the yacht manufacturing process ... and have engineered our production processes to minimize and reduce potentially harmful chemicals," Prestin said.
