



After two years, The Independent Processor has proven that creativity and openness to new ideas can provide a company of any size with an award-winning idea. While this industry is constantly on the go and searching for the next great innovation, it rarely stops to give credit where credit is due. The Indie Awards were

started to call out noteworthy processors that deserved special attention for their actions.

The Independent Processor is happy to recognize the following two companies in this year's Indie Awards. Both Main Street Wholesale Meats and Michigan Turkey Producers demonstrated that innovation is not the sole property of corporations with

As seen in **INDEPENDENT PROCESSOR**

sizable capital expenditure budgets and whole facilities set aside for product development and innovation. We hope to hear of even more success stories in 2010.

If you would like information about next year's Indie Awards, please contact Sam Gazdziak at (770) 594-0050 or gazdziaks@bnpmedia.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD AWARD

Michigan Turkey Producers

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Nine years ago, Michigan Turkey Producers built what was the first completely new turkey processing plant in 15 years. Starting from scratch gave the owners — a co-op of 16 Michigan farmers — the opportunity to start production with the latest available technology.

Even with a facility that's still relatively new by industry standards, Michigan Turkey Producers spent 2009 implementing two large-scale projects that were designed to make the company more environmentally friendly. The first project was a water reclamation project, explains Tina Conklin, quality assurance manager.

"As a slaughter facility within city limits, we are the city's largest consumer of water," she says, noting that the plant used approximately 1 million gallons of water per day.

The company modified its four chillers and was able to



reduce the amount of water going into the drains.

"This improvement in transfers equates to a reduction in use of 20 million gallons of refrigerated water per year — or almost 9 percent of the volume of water going through our production annually," she says.

The second phase of the company's improvements involves the lighting in the production rooms at its two facilities. Currently, the company uses standard metal halide lighting but is in the process of changing the fixtures to an induction lighting system that will use less energy. Conklin says that the changeover will bring about an expected energy savings of 1.36 million kWh per year.

"A reduction in power consumption of that size should translate into a reduced carbon dioxide emissions value of approximately 3.13 million pounds," she adds.

Michigan Turkey Producers offers a variety of cooked and ready-to-cook products. Its products include ground turkey, roasts, steaks, burgers, deli meat and sausage. It also offers products from organic and antibiotic-free turkeys. The company's current environmentally friendly initiatives represent the start of a journey rather than the culmination of one.

"We feel that these initiatives illustrate our commitment to becoming better stewards of our impact on the environment," says Conklin. "We will continue to investigate more avenues to further reduce that impact in the coming months." **IP**



MICHIGAN TURKEY PRODUCERS, CHILLERS, BEFORE (LEFT) AND AFTER (BELOW) THEIR WATER-SAVING MODIFICATIONS

