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Half of GM Plants to Be Landfill-Free By Late 2010

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General Motors

plans to reduce, reuse, and recycle all waste from more than 80 manufacturing plants around the world by the end of 2010.

Whatever is left over will get transformed into energy as part of a massive drive to avoid sending any manufacturing remnants to landfills. Forty-three plants have reached landfill-free status, including 10 in the U.S. and 33 in Mexico, Korea, Germany, Poland, Canada, Austria, Hungary and France.

"As we develop new solutions in vehicle propulsion, GM is also making significant progress in reducing the impact our worldwide facilities have on the environment," Gary Cowger, GM group vice president of global manufacturing and labor, said in a statement Friday.

The move isn't just about saving the environment: Greener and leaner manufacturing operations lead to bigger bottom lines.

The company's scrap metal sales, for instance, opened a \$1 billion annual revenue stream. Selling recycled cardboard, wood, oil, plastic and other materials generates \$16 million in North America alone. These figures will surge once GM's remaining plants reach landfill-free status.

Overall, more than 96 percent of waste materials are reused or recycled at landfill-free plants. That adds up to more than 3 million tons worldwide -- discarded aluminum becomes engine and transmission components and steel, alloy metals and paper is sent to recyclers. Used oil is reconditioned and used again. Empty drums, totes and containers get refurbished and put to use.

More than 3 percent of a landfill-free plant's waste, such as wood from pallets, is sent to waste-to-energy facilities. Worldwide, more than 50,000 tons is turned into energy.



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