AO Smith News Release
A. O. Smith Corporation PO Box 245008 Milwaukee, WI 53224-9508 414-359-4000 NYSE: AOS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Mark A. Petrarca
414-359-4100

Analyst/Investor Contact:
Patricia K. Ackerman
414-359-4130

A. O. Smith's Johnson City plant first to earn ENERGY STAR® certification

Milwaukee, Wis. (March 22, 2011) - A. O. Smith's water heater plant in Johnson City, Tenn., has become the first company facility—and one of the few facilities in Tennessee—to earn ENERGY STAR® certification.

To qualify, a building's energy efficiency must rank in the top 25 percent nationwide compared with similar facilities. The rankings are based on the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Energy Performance Rating System. Johnson City received a rating of 82 on the 100-point ENERGY STAR performance scale; a building that scores 75 or higher is eligible for the certification.

The 470,000-square-foot Johnson City facility did not set out originally to obtain the ENERGY STAR certification according to Director of Operations Andy Demski. Instead, it was looking at long-term initiatives to reduce the building's energy and water consumption.

"We saw this as a strategic blueprint to help steer projects toward a specific objective of improved efficiency and reducing the cost of energy and water in the building," he observed. "We already had an aggressive recycling program in place; this fits in under that umbrella."

The primary areas of focus in the plant were lighting, heating, ventilation, and water usage.

The water heater facility's ventilation system consists of a series of air make-up units that heat and cool the facility. In cooling mode, the make-up units and fans deliver fresh air from outdoors into the operation. The make-up units also have burners that allow the system to circulate heated air in cooler weather.

The Johnson City team customized a purchased software package to automate the building's ventilation system. A series of 17 temperature sensors throughout the building enable staff to monitor and control the system to deliver improved efficiency.

The lighting system in the facility, including the office area has received a major upgrade over the last several years. In the factory, the team installed fixtures that last three times as long as conventional lighting, require less maintenance, and use less energy. The 400 overhead lights are connected to a lighting control system that monitors the entire overhead lighting system and reduces the number of lights illuminated based on the operation's work schedule.

In the office area, Johnson City reduced the number of bulbs by 25 percent, installed more energy-efficient lighting, and installed motion sensors with timers. The sensors help reduce the amount of time lights are left on during off hours.

Johnson City also has reduced water consumption by installing “flushless” bathroom fixtures in the office area restrooms, and next year the team plans to investigate using recycled gray water in most restrooms.

Demski is aware that reducing energy consumption has indirect, positive effects on the environment as well. “Reducing energy consumption also reduces greenhouse gas emissions (from power plants),” he noted.

The EPA introduced the ENERGY STAR certification in 1992 and awarded the first building with the ENERGY STAR designation in 1999. According to the EPA’s website, there are 12,600 commercial buildings in the U.S. that have earned the designation. Commercial buildings are responsible for 20 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in this country, according to the EPA.

The Johnson City plant manufactures residential and light commercial water heaters. It is part of A. O. Smith Water Products Company, North America’s leading manufacturer of residential and commercial water heating equipment.

About A. O. Smith Corporation:
A. O. Smith Corporation, with headquarters in Milwaukee, Wis., is a global leader applying innovative technology and energy-efficient solutions to products marketed worldwide.

# # #