

First Ford dealership to use new cooling system

The Action Ford dealership in Krugersdorp, Gauteng, recently became the first Ford facility in Africa to use a new indirect counter-flow evaporative cooling system for controlling the climate on the showroom floor. This is part of the company's initiative to introduce state-of-the-art green technologies in its dealerships.



The cooling system draws in fresh air and cools it by evaporating water, without adding to the moisture content in the air and thus avoiding the creation of a humid environment. It's also possible for the dealership to leave doors and windows open without affecting the efficiency of the cooling system.

With the indirect counter-flow evaporative cooling system in place as a standalone solution, energy cost savings of between 80% and 90% can be realised. It will take just ten years to recoup the costs of the system, and Ford is monitoring it closely to evaluate its performance to see if it will be viable for other dealerships.

Pleasant environment

"These technologies help make running a dealership far more efficient," says Hartogh Streicher, dealer principal at Action Ford Krugersdorp. "The indirect counter-flow evaporative cooling system is also better than a conventional air conditioning system when it comes to creating a pleasant environment for our customers."

The Action Ford dealership, commissioned a year ago, was built as one of Ford's first Greenfield dealerships. These are dealerships that are designed from the ground up to comply with Ford's global guidelines and be the dealership of the future incorporating more environmentally friendly technologies. This includes using energy-efficient LED lighting in conjunction with larger windows that let in more natural light.

It forms part of the regional directive to have Ford dealerships in Middle East and Africa be more efficient reflecting Ford's commitment to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Guidelines for Greenfield dealerships also require they use locally procured materials and suppliers, and keep costs as low as possible during construction.

Ford is also establishing new Greenfield dealerships in Ballito, KwaZulu-Natal, and Woodmead, Gauteng.

Manufacturing facilities

In conjunction with greener dealerships, Ford is also taking steps to conserve energy at its manufacturing facilities. At the Silverton assembly plant in Pretoria, where the Ford Ranger is built, a programme has been instituted to help reduce energy consumption by 5% in the next year. Additionally, a waste-water treatment plant with state-of-the-art technology was built to ensure minimal environmental impact and doubling the output of recycled water.

Jeff Nemeth, president and CEO at Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa says, "Today's car buyers expect high levels of technology. Ford is committed to exceeding these expectations by introducing exciting and innovative new technological features across its product range. The global scale of Ford's vehicle programmes makes additional technologies and features more economically viable for cars in South Africa."

Ford's products also reflect its commitment to the environment. Highly-efficient EcoBoost engines in its passenger cars let motorists enjoy improved fuel consumption of up to 20%, while reducing their carbon footprint at the same time. Ford also uses renewable and recycled materials in its cars. These range from recycled denim jeans for fabric, plant-based plastics for wiring harnesses, and soya bean-based foam for seat cushions.

"It's our vision to have all Ford dealerships in South Africa implement energy-saving, environmentally-friendly measures. It reflects the values of Ford at a global level, and makes us more responsible global citizens," said Nemeth.

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