

ENVIRONMENT: Saving 13,652 gallons of fuel annually

RK Dixon puts new fleet on the road

Company expands its Operation Green initiative

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Four years after RK Dixon first set out to do its part to help the environment, Operation Green is hitting the road — literally — with a new green fleet.

The Davenport-based provider of copiers, printers, IT solutions and pure drinking water systems has purchased 41 fuel-efficient vehicles to create a corporate fleet. The cars will be used by RK Dixon's technicians in Davenport and its Illinois branches in Peoria, Champaign, Rockford and Springfield.

"We're extremely excited to finally be able to offer this fleet of vehicles to our employees," said Bryan Dixon, the company's president. "We are confident this will deliver substantial benefits, both in terms of environmental sustainability and the logistics of servicing our client base across Illinois and Iowa."

Sue Hill, the company's vice president of marketing, said having a corporate fleet is something the company has investigated previously but the timing never before was right. "We had to put the idea to our technicians because it impacts them and we wanted to make sure they were on board."

Before now, all of the company's 60-plus technicians drove their own cars, she said, adding that they had to own vehicles capable of carrying their inventory. So the company was con-



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RK Dixon purchased 41 fuel-efficient vehicles to create a corporate fleet.

cerned there could have been employees who had just purchased vehicles and might not be in favor of company cars.

"But we were able to get 41 of them to buy into the idea," she said. "We didn't force the idea. Over time, we expect more will come on board."

With its new corporate fleet of 38 flex-fuel Chevrolet HHRs and three Nissan Versas, RK Dixon expects to save an estimated 13,652 gallons of fuel annually. The new vehicles are rated to get between 32 and 34 miles to the gallon. The savings is

based on the company's annual mileage, its previous 25 MPG fuel usage and its fuel reimbursement rate. Hill said the smaller Nissans are for network technicians who do not have to haul large equipment.

The family-owned RK Dixon acquired the cars for each market from a local Chevrolet dealership in that area. Hale Printing, Davenport, was hired to do all the car wraps with RK Dixon's branding and logo. In addition, all the cars were equipped with US Fleet Tracker, a system that combines multiple satel-

lites to allow the company to know exactly where its cars are at any given time.

The \$925,000 investment puts RK Dixon among a growing number of U.S. companies turning to the use of corporate fleets to help reduce carbon footprints and improve mileage. According to a 2010 survey by NAFA Fleet Management Association, the number of corporate fleets with sustainability initiatives soared from 64.5 percent to 76.6 in the past year. The survey questioned 200 fleet managers in North America.

The fleet also is the latest initiative in RK Dixon's ongoing Operation Green

program, which the company began in 2007. The program aimed to examine and improve how the behaviors of the company and its employees were impacting the environment.

To kick off the program and its carbon footprint, RK Dixon rolled out a coffee mug program in 2007 — giving each employee their own personalized coffee cup to replace all the Styrofoam cups being purchased each year. At the time, the company was going through 31,000 disposable cups annually.

Hill, who also is the company's CEO — chief environmental officer, said that since then the company has

launched recycling programs in all its branches and recycles its old electronics at the Scott County Electronic Demanufacturing Center. Any equipment that still works is donated.

In addition, the company now has established recycled parts centers in-house. "We take equipment that is ours that comes back in and remove the parts that are still very good to use them on other equipment. It's a neat program because it one less thing to put into landfill."

"We're still looking at different avenues to make things better and still trying to be as green as possible."