

2023 KAIZEN AWARD COMPETITION: COOPER STANDARD RECOGNIZES FOUR REGIONAL FINALISTS

For the past 11 years, Cooper Standard has hosted a global Kaizen Competition to identify and recognize the Company's best global Kaizen projects. This internal program acknowledges teams who are "changing for the better" by making significant lean advancements in manufacturing.

On a quarterly basis, Cooper Standard plants are evaluated, and leaders score teams who find ways to optimize equipment, streamline operating processes and reduce waste and cost. At the end of the year, Regional Finalists are identified and compete in Cooper Standard's Global Kaizen Competition.

This year's Regional Finalists are:

Shenyang, China - Manufacturing Optimization

The Shenyang Plant was faced with several challenges with an existing program to improve overall manufacturing performance, including cycle time, labor efficiency, scrap, and floor space. The Kaizen team performed Value Stream Mapping (VSM) to optimize cycle time, line balancing and floor space; implemented an automated product tolerance vision system to eliminate 100% inspection to improve labor efficiency; and redesigned the seal joint process which significantly reduced scrap.

Dzierżoniów, Poland - Natural Gas Energy Saving

A reconfiguration of extrusion line by the Dzierżoniów Kaizen Team drastically reduced natural gas consumption by two-thirds and resultant CO₂ emissions. The project also realized scrap reduction due to elimination of oven downtime disruption and improved heat management. Importantly, this project is being leveraged to other extrusion plants to realize similar benefits as a best practice.

Aguascalientes, Mexico - Energy Savings

As the 2021 Global Kaizen Award winner, Aguascalientes has once again been nominated to represent the Latin America Region with their 4-phase approach to energy savings. The team optimized energy consumption which yielded considerable savings and associated reduction of environmental impact due to lower water, natural gas, and electricity utilization. Additionally, the project identified opportunities for scrap and labor reduction and increased line speed performance.

Surgoinsville, USA - Volume Uplift Optimization

A volume increase to a major OEM program in mid-2023 required the Surgoinsville team to optimize existing operating conditions and avoid additional capital expenditure. The project identified opportunities to improve quality, reduce labor hours, reduce floor space and reuse in-house equipment. The team built a new robotic endform machine in-house which avoided a seven-fold capital expenditure of outsourcing the equipment build. The project also reduced inventory and improved process flow.

On December 13, the Regional Finalist Teams will present to a panel of global leaders who will select a Global Winner based on the project's lean improvement, use of lean principles, ability to leverage potential at other plants, and alignment with the Company's Purpose, Mission and Values.

Additional assets available online: [PHOTOS \(1\)](#)

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