

Microfinish Realizes the Benefits of Ameren Missouri's DR Program

Why Microfinish Says Demand Response Has Been "Good for Our Community and Beneficial to Our Company"



Industry

Metal Finishing



Location

St. Louis, Missouri



Program

Ameren Missouri's Business DR program



Benefits

DR Revenue, grid relief, environmental impact

Microfinish is a metal finishing company in St. Louis, Missouri. The company works with metal stamping and fabricators to coat component parts with a variety of different coatings, including nickel chrome plating and powder coating. As Bill Stock, Owner and President of Microfinish, noted, many consumers may not realize the sheer variety of different items they use that are coated, or even the volume of items that have to be produced.

"A common use of nickel chrome is seat buckle tongues," Stock said. "You use these to latch yourself into your car every day. We coat close to 20 million of those a year. Anything metal that you think is painted is powder coated."

Why Demand Response Sounded Too Good to Be True

As a large energy user, Microfinish was a good candidate for demand response programs. Ameren Missouri's Business Demand Response (BDR) program provides

payments to large energy users that agree to reduce their energy demand during times of grid stress. Ameren partners with Enel X, a leading energy solutions and demand response provider, to manage the demand response program and make it simple for Ameren Missouri customers to earn payments.

When a representative from Enel X first spoke to Stock about the program, he thought such a simple, risk-free way of making new revenue sounded too good to be true. But he quickly found out it was for real.



“I didn’t believe it could be that good, so I wanted to check some references,” Stock said. “I called two names the salesperson gave me, and I left a message for both of them. They both called me back to tell me what a great experience they’d had. They sold me on the product right away—they were so enthusiastic.”

The Benefits of Demand Response

Stock signed three of the Microfinish facilities up for the demand response program in Ameren. The experience has more than lived up to his expectations. Stock said he’s seen a variety of benefits from demand response:

Significant New Revenue

“There was tremendous payback in the rebate we got at the end of the year. It was as promised, and it was very helpful, especially with how many things have changed during COVID. The extra check at this time was very helpful.”

Helping the Community With Grid Reliability

“As a metal finishing company, we often have a reputation of not really caring about the environment. So our employees really thought this was a positive thing. They wondered why they were stopping work, and we told them about demand response and how it helps conserve energy on the grid—so that on a day with high energy demand, their home will still have air conditioning at night when their kids come home. They thought it was a neat thing for the company to be participating in.”

Great Service from Enel X Team

“It seemed like it was going to be difficult to try to schedule around downtime. But there was so much communication, it was just phenomenal. We were given almost a week warning that it was a possibility we may need to reduce energy at a certain time, and they reminded us again the Monday before an event was expected. There were also emails and follow-up phone calls, so everyone knew what was going on. The communication could not have been better.”

Minimal Disruption to Operations

“In some ways, shutting down has been a benefit to us—when there’s a high demand for energy, it’s usually a very hot day, and that means our facility is hot. So people get to go home and get away from that heat, so it hasn’t been detrimental to our operations at all.”

A Recommendation for Enel X

“I’d absolutely recommend it. I’ve told several other people, even customers, about the program and the benefit it has been to us. I’m as enthusiastic as the gentlemen I originally talked to about their facilities. I think it’s good for our community and beneficial to our company.”



“ I didn’t believe demand response could be this good, honestly.”

—Bill Stock, Owner and President of Microfinish