



JARA NEWS

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Recyclers
across the
country

Imai Cars in Miyagi uses disaster as springboard for strengthening operations



Newly build HQ

Four years and two months have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck Japan in 2011, unleashing a devastating four-meter-high tsunami on Imai Cars Co., in Iwanuma City, Miyagi Prefecture. Was stricken by a 4-meter devastating tsunami. However, thanks to support by its employees and other recyclers, the company was able to make a fast rebound. Its recycling business is now on par with pre-disaster levels.

The 2011 disaster destroyed Imai Cars' headquarters, which housed its plant. To get back on its feet as soon as possible, Yuji Imai, the company's president, worked side by side with employees to clear away debris and carry out repairs. Immense support came from SPN group, of which Imai Cars was a member, as well as from other business partners. Thanks to these efforts, within only one month of the disaster, the company was already back to dismantling automobiles. Reconstruction of the headquarters was completed a year after the disaster, with computer servers being placed on the third floor in an effort to keep them out of the way of harm from future tsunamis. The new building features a temporary evacuation shelter for employees.

Second plant built to expand operations

In October 2013, the company started operations of its second plant, which was built on vacant land across from the company's headquarters. The new plant is used for reuse

parts production and as a warehouse. Optical cables efficiently relay information between the new plant and the headquarters plant on the whole process from parts production to shipment. The company introduced Bosch scanning tools for external fault diagnosis, which is needed for production of engine and other functional parts. When engine parts are shipped, diagnostic results are printed out and attached, thus, raising the quality of the parts.

Imai the president assumed the post of chairman of the JARA group in March 2014. "We were really taken care of by all of you after the disaster. Now we want to repay you by contributing to the group," Imai said in expressing his eternal gratefulness. From his experience of keeping up a fast pace from immediately after the disaster, as JARA chairman, Imai can be severe with others at times. "Doing things is more important than complaining about them without doing anything," he said.

With the generation of end-of-life-vehicles in declining and putting recyclers in a tough business environment, Imai foresees the coming challenge. "We have to find the next revenue sources, such as something that contributes to customers or steel or non-ferrous metals."

Further promotion of production efficiency

Staffing is another challenge facing the



Tsunami came up to the level, by which the wall discolored.

CO2 Reduction Effect (based on Super-Line System)

The use of Reuse Parts saved
3,312 tons of CO2 emissions
in April 2015

The reference figure represents the difference of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions at the vehicle repair using genuine (new) parts and recycled parts.*

*: Based on "Green Point System", which was jointly developed by the Japan Automotive Parts Recyclers Association and Waseda University Environmental Research Institute using a life cycle assessment (LCA) technique.

company. Work is progressing on building a breakwater in the vicinity of Imai Cars, drawing reconstruction workers from around the country, as well as from local areas. This makes it more difficult to recruit personnel than in other areas, due to lack of available people, meaning that even increasing its workforce for Imai Cars.

The company aims to improve operational efficiency further by better sharing its dismantling and parts production operations between its headquarters plant and second plant. By foreseeing the next challenge and through diligent study, Imai Cars is moving in a direction that will further contribute to resource recycling and promotion of the use of recycled parts. (Daily Automotive News, May 21 issue)



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Signs of globalization in auto recycling



Prst 1. New wave

Japan's automotive recycling industry is facing a wave of globalization.

This year marks the 10th year since the introduction of Japan's Automobile Recycling Law. The law, which governs a delicate system developed by both the government and industry, has played an important role in building a recycling society. On the other hand, major recyclers and groups consider believe the Japanese market will taper in the future, and are seeking to develop their business overseas, based on the advantages of their meticulous management of parts and highly skilled dismantling techniques.

Overseas business on the rise

Touting it as probably "the first attempt in the world," major recycler Kaiho Sangyo Co. started auctioning recycled auto parts in Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates last

December. Now, approximately 70 percent of the company's sales come from overseas. Although used vehicle auctions are well established in Japan, auctions for used car parts are rare anywhere in the world.

Japanese-made auto parts are highly reliable. Japanese recycled parts are also very popular in the Middle East, Caribbean, and Central Asia. Many buyers still visit Japan to get such parts. Currently, the trade of such parts between overseas buyers and Japanese dismantlers, however, is mostly done through direct negotiation. "It is a buyers' market," sighed Norihiko Kondo, president of Kaiho Sangyo. In order to build a fair and open priced market, Kondo decided to hold parts auctions. Sharjah is a center of trade in auto parts, where 7,000 to 8,000 traders do business. From its foothold in Sharjah, Kaiho Sangyo aims to further develop its business in other areas.

Eco R Co. of Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture, is engaged in auto parts trade with 50 buyers from countries. Its sales from overseas trade have increased by a factor of 20 in a decade. The company currently sources used engines from Japan and ships them to Malaysia for disassembly and sale. Showa Metal Co. of Koshigaya City, Saitama Prefecture, jointly with Toyota Tsusho Corporation, is engaged in the operation of an automobile recycling plant in Beijing, China, which was built as a model plant.

Acceleration in recycling overseas seen as opportunity

There is another reason recyclers are looking overseas. Declining birth rates in Japan mean new vehicle sales are falling, thus "the generation of ELVs will eventually decline," according to a recycled parts sales group. On the other hand, used vehicle exports in 2014

increased 10.3 percent from a year earlier to 1,283,390 units, marking a record-high volume after the 2008 global financial crisis and underlines the flow away from Japan of vehicles to overseas. Keeping an eye on such a change in their business environment, recyclers began to make moves to secure customers for their parts.

Industry observers view the accelerating trend of recycling overseas to be good opportunity. In line with this, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Ministry of Environment have taken up for the first time the subject of "international development of auto recycling" as part of discussions from this summer for review of the Automobile Recycling Law. METI's Automobile Bureau notes that, among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "development of auto recycling-related laws is on the verge of moving forward in some countries." The need for law-making toward a recycling society is highly expected even in emerging economies.

Responding to calls from the industry, such as Japan Automotive Recyclers Association' Chairman Shigeru Tenmyo's statement that "We want to export Japan's recycling system", the two ministries began to look overseas. "e need to consider how we can contribute to other countries based on our experience in Japan."

JARA Corporation's President Soshio Kitajima said, "From now on, it is important to communicate our know-how to trainees from overseas and to distribute training materials to them."

The time has come to draw on experiences and efforts taken uniformly by Japanese industry, government, and academia. Globalization of auto recycling has begun to roll forward with big potential. (*Daily Automotive News, May 18 issue*)

Eco-friendly vehicles take stage at Shanghai motor show

At the 16th Auto Shanghai (April 22-29, 2015), major carmakers from Japan, the United States and Europe, as well as local Chinese carmakers showcased their concept vehicles, new models and latest technologies.

Nissan announces "Lannia" targeting young consumers

Nissan has the largest market share among other Japanese carmakers in China. It



unveiled the "Lannia", which was developed exclusively for the Chinese market and the first Nissan vehicle for which Chinese designers led development in an effort to attract younger consumers. From its Infiniti luxury brand, the "Q70 Bespoke Edition" was displayed. Dongfeng Nissan Motor also unveiled its "Vow" concept, as the first crossover model of its Venucia brand.

Toyota expands hybrid lineup

Toyota exhibited its "Corolla Hybrid" and "Levin Hybrid," both which will be developed and produced for the first time outside of Japan



and are scheduled to be released this autumn. The company is planning to launch a nationwide campaign to promote hybrid vehicles and, thereby, strengthen

its hybrid vehicle sales in China. Honda unveiled its "Concept D," its top-end SUV model, as China's SUV market continues to grow. The company also showcased its "NSX Concept" super-sports car from its Acura brand for the first time in China.

Meanwhile, to respond to a scheduled tightening of environmental regulations in 2020 announced by the Chinese government, an array of eco-friendly vehicles were displayed at the motor show. Volkswagen, the market leader in China, exhibited its plug-in hybrid vehicle "Coupe GTE". Mitsubishi Motors displayed its plug-in concepts "Mitsubishi Concept XR-PREVII" and "Outlander PHV Concept-S". The company will introduce its plug-in hybrid vehicles in the Chinese in limited numbers to explore the possibility of the diffusion of such cars. Electric vehicle maker Tesla Motors also exhibited its products for the first time at Chinese motor show. Local Chinese carmakers, as well, displayed electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles. (*Daily Automotive News, Apr. 28 issue*)

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