Over the past few months we have read with interest how Maintenance Technology has adopted and re-energized the concept of “capacity assurance” as it applies to industry. This underscores the time-proven influences exerted by proactive maintenance approaches, strategic reliability initiatives and improved energy efficiencies in contributing to an operation’s full potential, productivity and profitability.

The enabling toolbox to attain the highest levels of capacity assurance has been filling up with a variety of solutions. From our perspective “sustainability” tops the list.

The International Trade Association (ITA) defines sustainability as “the creation of manufactured products using processes that are nonpolluting, conserve energy and safe for employees, communities and consumers.” Specialized technologies and expertise offers various avenues to turn the process into progress.

Sustainability programs among manufacturers have accrued significant gains with successes large and small. For those most engaged, organizations have been able to engineer annual reductions in CO2 emissions and water consumption; made recycling of scrap metal routine and profitable; equipped pumps with frequency controls to promote energy efficiency; and have moved from harmful chemicals and lubricants to environmentally friendly and lubrication-free solutions.

Countless other examples abound to affirm the viability, achievability and rationale of sustainability programs, regardless of a manufacturer’s size or industry. For those seeking to make their own inroads with sustainability, these keys for success can help unlock programs and keep them moving forward:

- **Evaluate your operations top-to-bottom.** Energy and environmental analyses can be conducted to pinpoint areas where high energy consumption is the norm and check chemical treatments, lubrication use and other operating processes to determine environmental risk. Improvements linked to opportunities then can be introduced, based on remedial action recommendations.
- **Establish goals and targets.** Analyses additionally provide benchmarking data for arriving at realistic objectives and measuring subsequent results that contribute to the business goals.
- **Apply new technologies.** Targets of opportunity for sustainability improvements can be

found in virtually every piece of equipment and among all applications and processes within industry. Great strides have been made in the evolution of relevant technologies and these can be enlisted as appropriate to meet particular sustainability goals.

- **Promote equipment reliability.** Practices aimed at improving and enhancing the reliability and efficiency of assets can pay big dividends. Regularly monitored and well-maintained equipment can save energy, increase uptime, drive profitability and advance sustainability objectives.
- **Manage information effectively.** Data is “king” for documenting and quantifying sustainability efforts and satisfying mandated obligations for environmental, health and safety compliance reporting. Customized Web-based EHS (environmental, health and safety) information management systems offer solutions to electronically automate key EHS functions, including audits, chemicals management, regulatory reporting and sustainability metrics. This can drastically reduce the time and money usually spent in collecting, analyzing, re-formatting and preparing data. Capabilities expand with live CO2 footprint tracking and performance tracking and measurement.

Immediately and over time, sustainability programs can allow operations to reap the inherent rewards in reduced operating costs, increased productivity, generated energy savings and enhanced asset reliability. In today’s competitive business arena, making room for sustainability programs simply makes perfect sense.