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Air conditioner device saves power

Restaurant conversation draws attention of JPL

By Michele Willer-Allred
Posted May 1, 2010 at midnight

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Shawn Murphy of Eergee Corp., installs the AircoSaver air conditioning energy saver, shown in the top photo, in an air conditioning unit at Café Firenze in Moorpark. The device cuts air conditioner power use, the manufacturer says.

If NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena ends up buying new German devices that can reduce an air-conditioner's energy use by more than 25 percent, Moorpark restaurateur Mike Takeda can take some of the credit.

A regular customer at Takeda's Café Firenze in Moorpark overheard another talking about the device and got the lab to successfully test it. So the restaurant was an appropriate place to hold a demonstration of the device Friday.

The device is called an AircoSaver. According to the distributor, Moorpark-based Mountain Clear LLC, the newly developed electronic control unit compensates for the

shortcomings of a typical air conditioner by using sensor-driven software algorithms to detect overcooling and switch off the compressor.



Photo by Joseph A. Garcia / Star staff Testing of an air conditioning unit with the AircoSaver device, which will show its voltage and current, begins. Several air conditioning units were tested before and after they were retrofitted with the AircoSaver device.

Russell Murry of Moorpark is an efficiency expert for Emcor Group Inc., a contractor that handles maintenance and operations for the Pasadena lab. One day, he overheard Tim Gayvert, president of Mountain Clear, talking about the product at the restaurant.

Murry said he was interested because NASA has mandated reducing power consumption by 3 percent every year at its facilities, but further testing of the device would be required to convince him.

“At first I thought it was snake oil but was willing to give it a chance,” said Murry.

Murry had engineering technicians set up the units at the lab, and the results were significant — a 31.8 percent energy savings. “I was really surprised with the results,” said Murry. “I can say other NASA sites are interested.”

He said the device can be used to upgrade existing AC units, be installed in new units, and qualifies for rebates from utility companies. Each device costs \$1,195.

Murry was on hand Friday as the restaurant had an AircoSaver installed on its rooftop air conditioner during a demonstration for potential clients, including United Way, Baxter International Inc., and the city of Moorpark.

Takeda said the electric bill at his 6,500-square-foot restaurant goes up by more than 40 percent during the summer and can reach several thousand dollars a month.

Data from the demonstration Friday showed the unit decreased Café Firenze’s energy consumption by an average of 17.7 percent.

“The electricity costs kill us. Anything to get it down would be wonderful,” said Takeda.

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