

PROFILE: TWO HARBORS PUBLIC UTILITIES

NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY ON A ROLL
WITH COMMERCIAL ENERGY CONSERVATION



There is a bright, contemporary building, hidden in Two Harbors, Minn., that has become a hub of activity for bicycling enthusiasts and folks just looking for a hot cup of coffee or a light bite to eat. Tucked in a quiet cedar grove, it houses Spokengear Cycling & Outdoor and Cedar Coffee Co., a combination bike shop and café owned by Dan and Kirsten Cruikshank. The couple built the new facility with energy efficiency in mind, working with Energy Insight, Inc., to tap rebates and resources available through the City of Two Harbors' municipal electric utility.

"My wife and I wanted this to be a sustainable company; it was in our business plan all along," said Dan Cruikshank, a business-savvy entrepreneur who cofounded and later sold Granite Gear, explaining their interest in energy-efficient design and construction. "Maximizing efficiency makes sense for cost savings and environmental reasons."

Energy Insight, Inc., has delivered the commercial/industrial energy conservation improvement program for the City of Two Harbors since mid 2015, getting in on the ground floor of facility upgrades and new construction projects, like Spokengear/Cedar Coffee Co., whenever possible.



"We were hired by the City of Two Harbors to help commercial customers maximize efficiency and available rebates," said Scott Wishart, energy analyst, Energy Insight.

He met with the Cruikshanks during the design phase and noted their interest in high efficiency, integrated systems that would qualify for conservation rebates. "We aren't selling anything or pushing products. Our sole interest is in helping businesses save energy and lower costs."

This is critical for energy providers like the City of Two Harbors. Minnesota mandates that electric and gas utilities set an annual energy-saving goal of at least 1.5 percent of retail sales and spend a minimum of 1.5 percent of gross operating revenues on conservation improvement programs.

Two Harbors easily met these mandates in 2015 with the help of Energy Insight. Multiple businesses participated in the program, including a supermarket, hotel, convenience store, restaurants, the local wastewater treatment plant, and even the City itself. Energy Insight identified qualifying projects, calculated

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energy savings and rebates, and assisted customers with rebate applications. Combined projects in 2015 reduced electric demand by 45.1 kW per month and are saving local businesses 283,659 kWh per year. Customers qualified for nearly \$11,500 in conservation rebates.

The program is on track for even greater success in 2016, thanks to new construction projects like Spokengear/Cedar Coffee Co., Two Harbors Federal Credit Union, and North Shore Federal Credit Union—all of which have incorporated energy-efficient lighting, lighting controls, and other high performance technologies into their facilities.

“Our commercial conservation improvement program has really taken off since we started working with Energy Insight,” said Blake Prince, electrical superintendent for the City of Two Harbors. “It benefits customers because Energy Insight knows where to look for energy savings. They have the knowledge and the experience. My knowledge is in keeping the power going and the lights on for people, but I definitely want to be in the mix.”

“Blake is very interested in energy efficiency and in building customer relationships,” said Scott Wishart, energy analyst, Energy Insight. “He lives in the area and wants businesses to know the benefits of energy efficiency and that incentives are available to make conservation improvements. It is a great partnership.”

Back at Spokengear, cycling season shifted quickly into full gear after a Memorial Day opening. But that did not stop the Cruikshanks from welcoming Energy Insight representatives for a follow-up visit to verify the installation of LED lighting, variable frequency drive motors, ENERGY STAR® appliances, and other technologies that could qualify for rebates based on energy savings.

“(The City and Energy Insight) provide a great service by making business owners aware of this program and encouraging responsible choices,” Dan Cruikshank said. “We have always been interested in conservation, but the main driver for investing in energy efficiency was to minimize operating expenses. The rebate program was an incentive to go the extra mile.”



Demand control ventilation and LED lighting make the Vanilla Bean restaurant bright and comfortable for employees and customers, while saving over 17,000 kWh annually.



The Two Harbors Federal Credit Union “dug deep to save energy” said Two Harbors Electrical Superintendent Blake Prince, who toured the new facility with Energy Insight and was impressed by its energy-efficient features.



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