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smart energy choices

SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY ADVANTAGE ENERGY EFFICIENCY CASE STUDY: Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

This program provides cost-effective, turnkey, energy-saving products and services for small business customers. Benefits include financial incentives to offset the premium costs associated with energy-efficient technology.

This program is one of several innovative solutions offered by Energize Connecticut and administered by Connecticut's utility companies.

To find energy solutions for your business, call 877-WISE-USE (877-947-3873) or visit: EnergizeCT.com

Energize Connecticut and Eversource helped the Silver Star Diner:

- Save approximately \$20,000 and 88,343 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually.
- Defray its investment with a \$50,000 incentive.
- Achieve a lifetime savings of approximately 1,151,673 kilowatt-hours.

The electricity saved on this project over the lifetime of the measures is equivalent of approximately:

- 43 tons of carbon dioxide emissions avoided, or
- Eight cars taken off the road, or
- 11 homes provided with electricity for one year

Background

The Silver Star Diner is an iconic, family-owned Norwalk restaurant that has been serving hungry locals for the past 30 years. In many ways, this restaurant embodies everything the "American Dream" stands for – owner Alex Savvidis and his family moved to the United States from Greece when he was just a teenager. He didn't speak a word of English and worked for years as a dishwasher in local restaurants, dreaming of one day opening a place of his own. Alex eventually became a restaurant owner in the early 1980's when he and his brother purchased the now-Silver Star Diner on Connecticut Avenue in Norwalk. The combination of delicious food, friendly service and loyal customers has kept the diner thriving over the past three decades, and has become a dining destination for people living, working and visiting Norwalk.

The Challenge

Silver Star Diner is open 24 hours on the weekend, and 20 hours a day during the week. One of the biggest challenges with a business that virtually never closes is making sure equipment and lighting is working as efficiently as possible to keep expenses down. Reducing energy consumption and lowering utility bills were huge priorities for Alex, but coming up with the capital needed to make the necessary upgrades presented another challenge for the restaurant owner.

The Solution

When Alex heard about the Small Business Energy Advantage (SBEA) program and the no-interest small business loan that can be repaid through his monthly electric bill, it seemed like a perfect fit for his business needs. This customized solution made it possible for Alex to invest in energy-saving improvements to the diner's lighting, temperature controls and exhaust hood control system for the kitchen.

Lighting

In addition to upgrading the lighting in Silver Star Diner's main dining room and kitchen/food prep area, traditional

light bulbs in the outdoor sign were also replaced with new, energy-efficient LED lights. This not only saves the diner money and energy each month, but it also saves employees the time and effort to scale the sign and replace those traditional bulbs. LED lights use approximately 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

"At the end of the day, it was absolutely the right choice to invest in energy efficient improvements that make the restaurant more comfortable for our employees and guests," said Savvidis. "With the steps we've taken to improve operations, we can now ensure that the Silver Star Diner remains a fixture in Norwalk for many generations to come."
– Alex Savvidis

Total annual savings from energy-efficient lighting throughout the facility: 42,317 kilowatt-hours (approximately \$8,000 in annual savings).

Temperature Controls & Hood Exhaust

Upgrades to the kitchen's refrigeration system included the addition of energy-efficient fan motors for refrigeration units and control devices that cut down on run time – this makes a big difference as the doors are constantly being opened and closed throughout the day. Addition-

ally, a new exhaust hood control system was installed in the main kitchen cooking line, allowing Silver Star Diner to have better control over the fan motors, which were previously running on high all the time.

Total annual savings from energy-efficient refrigeration controls: 30,679 kilowatt-hours (approximately \$6,000 in annual savings).

Total annual savings from energy-efficient hood exhaust systems: 15,348 kilowatt-hours (approximately \$3,000 in annual savings).

Benefits of Small Business Energy Advantage Program

- The SBEA program offers a variety of incentive structures to offset the cost of energy-efficient equipment.
- To cover the customer's share of the costs, the SBEA program offers a zero-percent financing option to qualifying customers with a maximum loan term of 48 months.
- Energy upgrades translate into customer savings on monthly energy bills for the life of the measures.
- Eversource provides oversight and inspection.

(Small business customers with an average 12-month peak demand between 10 kilowatts (kW) and up to 200 kW are eligible. Program measures subject to change without notice.)

The Bottom Line

Total cost for all project measures:	\$ 128,369
Energize Connecticut incentive paid to Silver Star Diner:	\$ 50,581
Annual estimated electric savings based on rates at time of project:	\$ 20,000
Net cost:	\$ 77,788
Estimated payback time for Silver Star Diner's investment:	Four years

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