



LIGHTING UP ENERGY SAVINGS

ENERGY INVESTMENTS HELPING LOCAL BUSINESSES, ECONOMY

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ENERGY TRUST UPDATE

The results published in this article are current from January through October 2010. Updated Energy Trust results for the Coos County area through the end of 2010:

- Energy-efficiency upgrades, including electrical and lighting improvements: 34
- Trade ally contractors based in Coos Bay: 6
- Trade ally contractors serving Coos County: 267

Incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon and tax breaks from the state are spurring more businesses and public agencies around the Coos Bay area to swap outdated, energy-draining lights for high-performance fluorescent tubes, among other measures to cut utility costs.

The number of local energy improvement projects that qualified for incentives has grown significantly since last year. So far this year, Coos County saw 31 electrical upgrades at commercial and public facilities—up from eight last year, according to Energy Trust.

Susan Jowaiszas, marketing manager, Energy Trust, points to several factors driving the trend:

Grant support

Energy Trust has been helping public agencies apply for grants available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help pay for upgrades.

Increased public awareness

“Energy Trust has been doing a lot of community outreach in Coos County, both on the residential and commercial sides,” Jowaiszas said. That included a workshop hosted by Pacific Power that instructed business owners on cost-saving measures available through electrical improvements. “We talk about lighting as the best first step a business can take,” she said.

Trade allies

Plus, Energy Trust’s Coos County-based trade-ally contractors are drumming up business by spreading the word about incentives. Energy Trust has more than a dozen certified contractors in the Bay Area.

So far this year, Reese Electric in North Bend has completed 20 lighting retrofit projects at North Bend School District and City of North Bend facilities, several county buildings and private businesses. Projects totaled \$628,000 in contracts, said owner Randy Rema.

“Practically 100 percent of our involvement with Energy Trust of Oregon has been in the area of lighting efficiency upgrades in local businesses and government buildings.”

Annual energy savings for all projects total 1,247,832 kilowatt hours—enough to power 98 average homes for a year. That equates to roughly \$80,000 in annual savings, he said. “With everyone’s budgets being very tight, these savings are a very welcome thing to achieve,” Rema said.

More man hours

Rema said the jobs typically require a crew of six to eight workers. Energy Trust projects have generated more than 3,800 hours of labor for the company. “We hired two additional people during the period who were heavily involved in these,” he said. Reese Electric also purchased \$214,000 worth of materials through local suppliers.

RIFE WITH SAVINGS

For some businesses, savings after efficiency improvements can yield a return on investment within two years. Rife’s Home Furniture in downtown Coos Bay recently upgraded its antiquated lighting system. Andy Laird, of Eugene-based Laird Lighting, said the job would have cost Rife’s about \$36,800. But an Energy Trust rebate and a tax break will slash the cost to \$11,500.

Laird also did lighting improvements at Waterfall Community Health Center and Industrial Steel in North Bend in recent years. He noted he hired a local subcontractor for the Rife’s project.

The furniture store project included a major overhaul on its ‘60s-era fluorescent lighting system. Inside, wasteful overhead T12 lamps—only about half of which actually worked—were swapped with T8s, which use half the watts and produce more than twice the lumens. Outside, nine rows of tubular fluorescents spanning the 100-foot storefront awning were replaced with one row of slim T8s.

“Back in the old days, that’s the way they wanted it, lit up so you wouldn’t miss a thing,” he said of the storefront’s former fluorescents.

The new automated exterior lights are set to turn off at 11:30 p.m. More automated sensors were installed upstairs, turning on lights only when rooms are occupied, and switching off shortly after someone leaves.

All old ballasts were incinerated and old fixtures were recycled in Portland. Marshfield Bargain House in Coos Bay also assisted in recycling efforts. He estimated Rife’s will save \$600 to \$700 a month on utility costs.

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To see how your business can benefit from lighting and other energy-efficiency upgrades, visit www.energytrust.org or call **1.866.368.7878**.