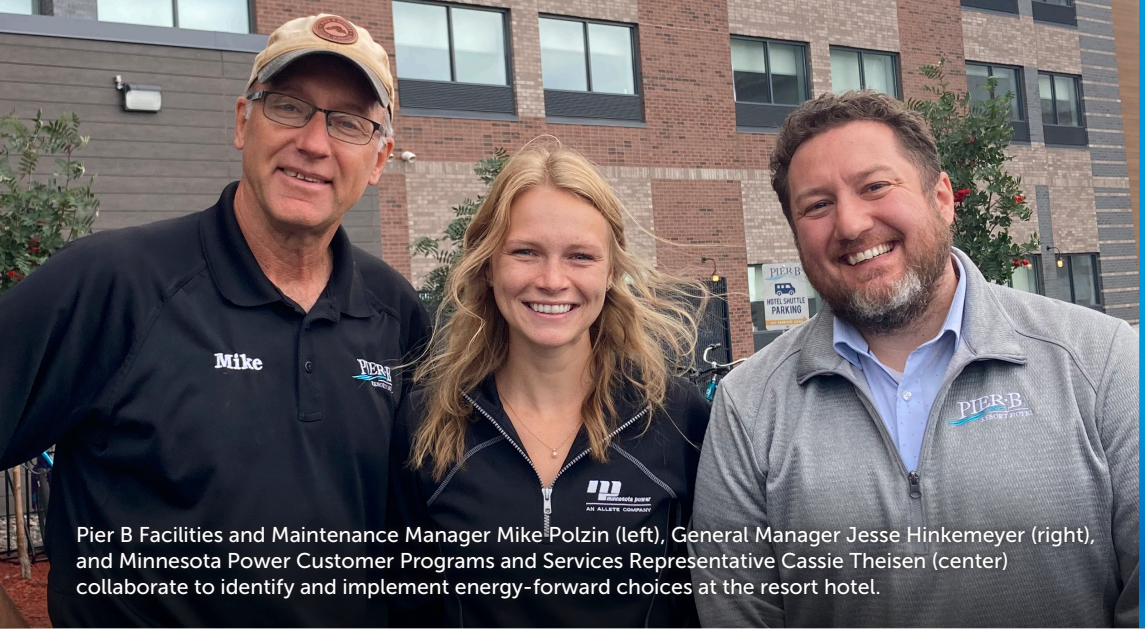


Pier B Facilities and Maintenance Manager Mike Polzin (left), General Manager Jesse Hinkemeyer (right), and Minnesota Power Customer Programs and Services Representative Cassie Theisen (center) collaborate to identify and implement energy-forward choices at the resort hotel.

minnesota power

AN ALLETE COMPANY

SUCCESS STORY

SAVE ENERGY. SAVE MONEY. SAVE TIME.

PIER B RESORT HOTEL HAS NO RESERVATIONS ABOUT SAVING ENERGY

Pier B Resort Hotel in Duluth, Minn., is one of the region's most unique places to stay. Surrounded by water on three sides with a front-row view of Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge and busy working harbor, the contemporary, 138-room hotel has all of the amenities that modern travelers desire in a setting that honors the property's waterfront history.

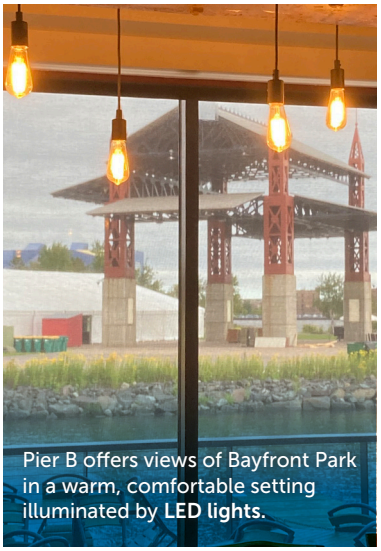
Pier B was built on the former site of a cement plant and storage facility. One of its most striking features is a cluster of four towering concrete silos, remnants of its industrial past. But nearby you'll find four newly erected pedestals, electric vehicle charging stations that point directly toward the future.

The new EV chargers reflect Pier B's corporate commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible energy management. An ongoing partnership with Minnesota Power helped provide this amenity for guests while sparking other facility improvements that save energy, lower operating costs, and reduce Pier B's carbon footprint.

INVOLVEMENT IN DESIGN PHASE IMPROVES ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Minnesota Power's energy conservation program has a longstanding relationship with Pier B that dates back to before the hotel was even built. The Duluth-based utility and its commercial energy consultants, Frontier Energy, were involved in the design phase of the building, identifying energy-saving technologies and equipment that would improve efficiency and qualify for rebates.

When site remediation costs came in unexpectedly high, Minnesota Power adjusted recommendations and helped Pier B achieve maximum energy efficiency within the revised budget. Rebates for energy-efficient LED lighting, lighting controls, higher than standard efficiency HVAC units, and air handling units with variable frequency drives (VFD) lowered upfront costs.


Pier B offers views of Bayfront Park in a warm, comfortable setting illuminated by LED lights.

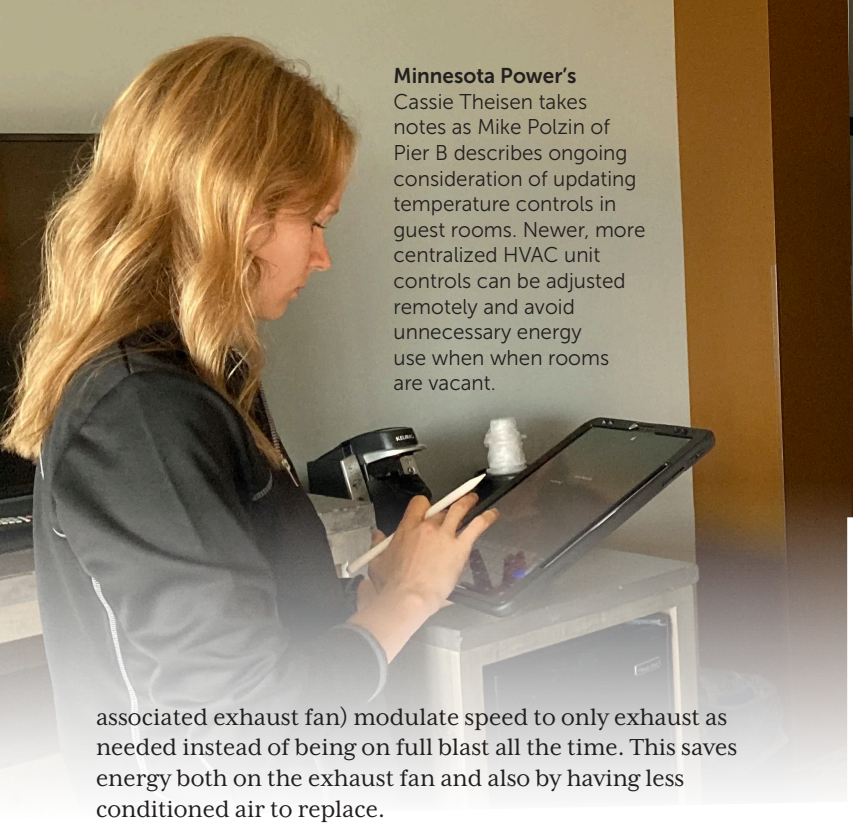
"Minnesota Power was very present throughout those conversations, trying to advise Pier B toward efficient but financially feasible decisions," said Cassie Theisen, CEM, customer programs and services representative for Minnesota Power. "That is why it is important for Minnesota Power to be involved in the early phases of design and construction—so we can work together to really make an impact."

ONGOING RELATIONSHIP FACILITATES ENERGY-WISE UPGRADES

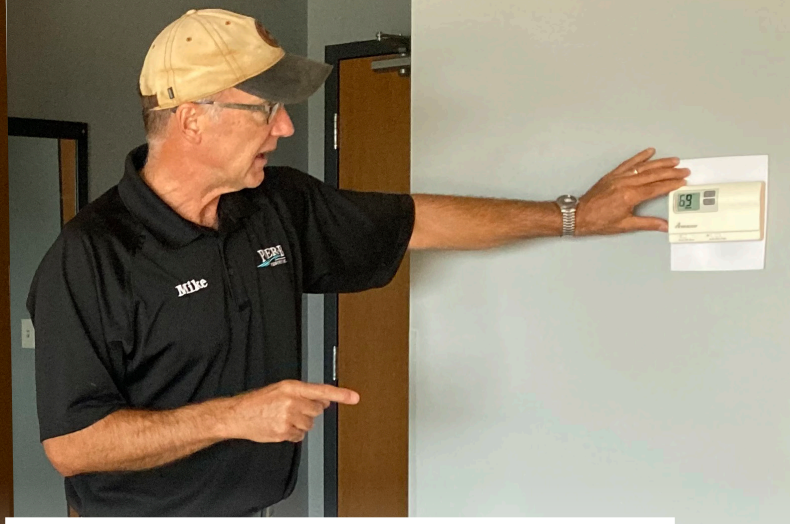
The relationship continued and strengthened after the hotel opened, with Minnesota Power and its commercial energy team providing a variety of services, such as ENERGY STAR® benchmarking and a 2019 energy analysis. Things slowed down significantly when the COVID-19 pandemic hit but are now back on track at full speed.

"This past year, we have really picked up where things left off and started moving forward on a number of levels," said Theisen, pointing to a recent commercial food service kitchen audit and recent rebates for upgrades to LED lighting, ENERGY STAR® appliances, and HVAC equipment with VFD fans. "Electric vehicle charging also has been a big topic of conversation recently, and we are so excited to see that process come together."

The commercial kitchen audit was part of a Minnesota Power initiative that brought a Frontier Energy specialist from California to Duluth to work with several customers involved in commercial and institutional food service. At Pier B, it included an analysis of kitchen operations and data logging on a demand-controlled ventilation unit that was not operating properly. Demand-controlled ventilation is when the kitchen hood (and

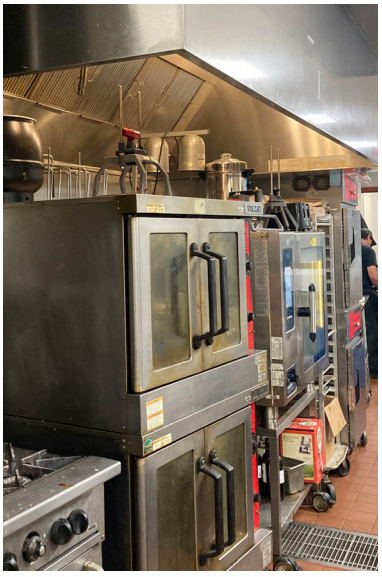


Minnesota Power's Cassie Theisen takes notes as Mike Polzin of Pier B describes ongoing consideration of updating temperature controls in guest rooms. Newer, more centralized HVAC unit controls can be adjusted remotely and avoid unnecessary energy use when when rooms are vacant.



associated exhaust fan) modulate speed to only exhaust as needed instead of being on full blast all the time. This saves energy both on the exhaust fan and also by having less conditioned air to replace.

"Often in operations, we're reactionary to something that is broken or needs to be fixed or replaced, and the easiest thing is to replace it in kind," said Mike Polzin, facilities and maintenance manager, Pier B. "The benefit of having Minnesota Power here is that they are showing us better, more energy-wise ways to upgrade, whether that means switching to programmable thermostats so rooms don't get too hot or too cold, LED bulbs versus incandescent bulbs, new energy-efficient refrigerators, or implementing new operating techniques in the kitchen. Minnesota Power has provided a lot of cues, tips, and tricks on how we can operate better and incorporate energy efficiency."



A recent commercial kitchen energy audit looked at ventilation equipment and ways to improve energy efficiency through both equipment updates and operational adjustments.

"As an operator, I'm always looking at utilities for ways to be more efficient, save money and be more environmentally friendly," said Jesse Hinkemeyer, general manager, Pier B.

"Finding time is difficult, but working with Minnesota Power, we can conduct energy audits, get recommendations, and receive rebates. When we have questions, they can help guide us to where we need to go. It is great to have someone wanting to do that for you," he said.

A newly installed Level 2 EV charging station at Pier B.

MINNESOTA POWER ADVANCES REGION'S EV INFRASTRUCTURE

Minnesota Power's energy conservation program is a trusted energy adviser that helps commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers move toward energy efficiency and electrification. It played an important role in the latter by donating two Level 2 EV chargers to Pier B. As part of Minnesota Power's EnergyForward strategy to increase the number of publicly available charging stations in northern Minnesota, the company donated 19 Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations to business customers in communities it serves.

"Pier B was interested in EV chargers and has a great location next to Bayfront Park with a bar, restaurant, and lots of people across the slip at events," Theisen said. "It seemed like a perfect place for us to donate a couple of Level 2 chargers and pedestals."

Pier B reached out to ZEF Energy to get two more for a total of four EV chargers now available to the public.

"Minnesota Power was not just instrumental in donating but in helping us through the process and getting this project to the finish line," Hinkemeyer said. "They connected us with people who could answer questions and generate ideas outside of the realm of a normal Minnesota Power project ... even things like signage."

Design Service Representatives/Engineering at Minnesota Power made sure the project was done with expansion in mind, so additional chargers can be added as the need arises. Pier B officials also have expressed interest in exploring renewable solar energy. If so, Minnesota Power is there to assist.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Take the first steps toward managing energy use and costs at your business. Get started by filling out our online application at **www.mnpower.com/ProgramsRebates/BusinessIncentives**