

One Business

Energy Conservation Program



Miner's Inc.

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Mark Heehn, Store Planning/Facilities Manager
Miner's Inc.

Savings in Store for Grocery Powerhouse

One of the first areas customers pass through in the newly remodeled Super One Foods store in Duluth's Kenwood neighborhood is the produce department. The brilliant red tomatoes, lush green lettuce and eye-popping oranges reflect more than just high quality fruits and vegetables—they also reveal a corporate commitment to high performance light emitting diode (LED) lighting.

Virtually every light at the newly remodeled store, from the exterior logo and awning lights to those that illuminate the entryway, shopping aisles, restrooms, offices, display counters, coolers and freezers have been converted to energy-efficient LEDs. Bright, long-lasting LEDs have come a long way in recent years. Prices have lowered, quality has improved and there are more choices than ever for a variety of commercial applications.

"We are probably the leader in LED lighting around the region," said Matt Miner, facilities manager for Miner's, Inc., a family-owned corporation that includes 31 grocery stores, 4 liquor stores and 2 malls in the Upper Midwest, plus a 167,000-square-foot warehouse, truck garage and corporate office. "With our large number of facilities, we are always looking for ways to save energy and lower costs."

Miner's, Inc., often depends upon Minnesota Power's Power of One® Business team to identify energy-saving opportunities that make business sense. Those opportunities include energy-efficient lighting; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrades; and industry-specific technologies, such as cutting-edge refrigeration. Minnesota Power lead energy efficiency analyst Craig Kedrowski and Power of One® Business consultant Tanuj Gulati, of Energy Insight, Inc., are on the front lines.

"Tanuj and Craig come up with ideas, and they understand return on investment," said Miner, noting that they explain potential energy savings, costs with rebates and payback. "Plus they do all of the legwork—I can hand them a file with facts and figures and a few days later they come back with ways to maximize energy savings and rebates from Minnesota Power."

Minnesota Power's recommendations led Miner's, Inc., to replace overhead fluorescent lights with high bay LEDs throughout the Kenwood store. The lighting redesign greatly reduced the number of light fixtures needed, while maintaining the proper output and precise color rendering needed in a retail grocery setting. The project also included



lighting controls, new high efficiency freezers, and coolers with anti-condensate controls.

“Eighty percent of the energy load in our stores is refrigeration,” said Don Olson, store planning/facility management, Miner’s, Inc. “Improving efficiency there has a large impact.”

Projected energy savings at the Kenwood store due to these choices are over 800,000 kWh per year and nearly 62 kW in lowered demand. The company also can expect annual energy and maintenance cost reductions of around \$33,000. With rebates from Minnesota Power, the total investment will pay for itself in almost eight years, with lighting payback expected in less than three years.

“Our company recognizes value,” said Mark Heehn, store planning/facility management, Miner’s Inc. “If we can get

payback on a lighting investment in two to three years, it helps stores be profitable down the road.”

Miner’s, Inc., has a long and comfortable relationship with Minnesota Power and its Power of One® Business team. Company officials contact utility representatives whenever they are considering projects within Minnesota Power’s service territory.

Minnesota Power program experts have ENERGY STAR® benchmarked all of the company’s northern Minnesota facilities to assess their energy performance and identify ways to improve. Small-scale research studies funded by Minnesota Power have helped persuade Miner’s, Inc., to make large-scale lighting, refrigeration and HVAC improvements in multiple facilities.

“We are very busy and don’t always have time to research new technologies,” Miner said. “They demonstrate how their ideas would work and find ways to drive down costs and improve payback.”

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Matt Miner, Facilities Manager
Miner’s Inc.

“Miner’s Inc., has many stores, and decision makers want proof something is going to be effective before they invest,” Gulati said. “Minnesota Power takes a research approach. They pay to install and test new technology at one site and then the company expands it to other stores. It really is about customer service and providing whatever is needed to help customers make wise energy decisions that will help them for a long period of time.”

In 2014, Minnesota Power assisted Miner’s, Inc., with dozens of projects at Kenwood Super One Foods and multiple other locations. They included LED indoor and outdoor lighting and signs at Miller Hill Super One Foods; refrigerator cases and LED lighting at Miner’s Cloquet and West Duluth liquor stores; LED freezer case lighting at



Plaza Super One Foods; lighting controls at International Falls County Market; overhead and walk-in freezer lighting at Pike Lake Super One Foods; LED signage at Cloquet Super One Foods; and LED lighting in Miner’s truck garage.

These combined projects will conserve more than 2 million kWh in electricity, reduce electric demand by more than 200 kW, and save the company around \$100,000 per year in energy and maintenance costs. They qualified for more than \$90,000 in rebates from Minnesota Power and have an average payback of less than 4.5 years.

“These guys are aggressive in energy conservation,” Kedrowski said. “Working with Minnesota Power helps ensure good projects that meet their expectations, fit their goals and can be replicated at multiple stores.”



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Learn more about Power of One® Business, Minnesota Power’s commercial, agricultural and industrial energy conservation program by calling **218-355-2909** or visiting www.mnpower.com/OneBusiness