

# POWER Grant

Helping businesses lower electric usage and demand

## BendTec PROFILE

Business Energy Audits • Project Design Assistance • Conservation Rebates • Grants

### BendTec, Inc.— Energy Efficiency Is More Than a Pipe Dream

One unbending law in today's global economy is that every dollar saved helps a company stay competitive. That is why BendTec, Inc., a metal fabrication business that specializes in induction bending and fabrication of piping components for the pipeline, power, mining, and structural construction industries, takes its bottom line very seriously.

BendTec, based in Duluth, Minn., often competes against companies located overseas or in parts of the United States with lower labor costs and tax rates. It continually looks for ways to operate more efficiently by improving its facilities, equipment and production processes.

Minnesota Power is a valuable partner in this effort, helping company officials identify energy-saving measures that make economic sense and qualify for **POWERGrant** rebates. **POWERGrant** is Minnesota Power's commercial, industrial and agricultural conservation improvement program.

"It takes a lot of energy to make our products, and, since we often bid on projects a year in advance, rising energy costs are a concern," said Thomas J. Conrad, vice president and CFO, BendTec. "Any changes we can make to improve energy efficiency or use less electricity are worth considering."

*"Minnesota Power and its consultants have opened our eyes in terms of energy-efficiency."*

Thomas J. Conrad  
Vice President and CFO, BendTec



(Clockwise from top right) Tanuj Gulati of Matt Haley & Associates, Thomas Conrad of BendTec, and Steve Lent of Minnesota Power discuss energy improvements at BendTec. They include new welding equipment and plant floor lighting.

Conservation improvements can add up quickly for a company like BendTec, both in terms of energy and cost savings. For example, recent projects that upgraded welding equipment, replaced old cutting torches with a new band saw, and converted lighting fixtures to more energy-efficient models are reducing BendTec's electric demand by 195.5 kW

and saving 923,844 kWh per year. That translates to annual energy cost savings of \$51,174. In addition, these projects qualified for a combined \$55,539 in **POWERGrant** rebates, reducing the company's initial investment and speeding payback.

Learn more about **POWERGrant**.

Minnesota Power's Conservation Improvement Program  
218-722-5642 or toll-free at 800-228-4966, ext. 2909

[www.mnpower.com/powergrant/](http://www.mnpower.com/powergrant/)



# POWER *Grants*

## “Energizing Our Region” through Conservation Improvement

Minnesota Power’s Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) works with local leaders, businesses, community groups, other energy providers and government entities to help customers reap the economic and environmental benefits of sustainable energy savings. Minnesota Power and its partners accomplish this through research, education, evaluation and direct impact initiatives.

### Find out how *POWER Grant* can help you

Minnesota Power awards grants to commercial/industrial customers who use innovative technologies, improve manufacturing processes, undertake renewable electric energy projects, or who need project design assistance. *POWER Grant* is available for a wide variety of projects employing diverse technologies.

Here are some examples of activities or products that could qualify for Minnesota Power funding under the *POWER Grant* Program:

- New electro-technologies that lower energy costs per unit of production in a manufacturing process
- Innovative technologies that are new and underutilized in our regional marketplace
- Inclusion of energy-efficient options in the design phase of a project

Maximum annual grants are determined by a customer’s average billing demand:

Customer Demand	Maximum Grant
Less than 100 kW	\$10,000
100 to 300 kW	\$25,000
Over 300 kW	\$50,000

Minnesota Power may consider higher rebate levels.

### Other Minnesota Power Products and Services

In addition to *POWER Grants*, Minnesota Power CIP offers commercial, industrial and agricultural customers other energy efficiency products and services. These include energy audits, rebates, dual fuel, storage/off-peak services, outdoor and area lighting, and economic development assistance.



BendTec produces metal pipe bends and assemblies for pipelines, power companies, mines and structural building projects. Recent plant improvements save \$51,174 per year in energy costs and qualified for more than \$55,000 in *POWER Grant* rebates.

“Energy conservation and *POWER Grant* rebates provide incentives to do a project, but productivity is the real driver,” Conrad said. He noted that faster, more energy-efficient welding equipment helps lower labor costs and that employees appreciate the brighter work environment since the new lighting fixtures were installed.

Tanuj Gulati, CEM, of Matt Haley & Associates, has been instrumental in BendTec’s recent and ongoing energy improvements. As an energy consultant for Minnesota Power, he works closely with plant personnel to identify energy conservation projects, analyze potential savings, and calculate rebates. “Our job is to build relationships, understand customers’ operations, and look for ways to help.”

“Minnesota Power and its consultants have opened our eyes in terms of energy-efficiency,” Conrad said. “It is helpful to have a partner like Minnesota Power encouraging us to take advantage of utility conservation programs and resources.”

BendTec employs 150 people in Duluth. Its skilled workers earn good wages and benefits and owners hope to stay in the community.

“BendTec and similar manufacturers have a great impact on our region’s economy,” said Steve Lent, regional account manager for Minnesota Power. “It is very important to help these larger companies remain competitive. That is part of our commitment to our customers and communities.”