Hockey is a way of life in Northern Minnesota. It was a dark day when Mesabi East cut its high school hockey program, leaving the East Range without a team of hockey Giants to cheer. Yet, hope burns bright that they will return—as bright as the new high-bay lights at the Hoyt Lakes Arena.

The 2005 lighting project at Hoyt Lakes Arena replaced 72 metal halide lights with 36 energy-efficient T5 fluorescent fixtures that provide more lumens at rink level using far less electricity. They also are wired with dual switching to allow full lighting during games and half lighting for practices, scrimmages, and other activities without the lighting requirements of hockey.

“This arena was built in 1969 to 1970, and the former lights were noisy, inefficient, and difficult to maintain,” said Tom Ferris, Arena/Recreation Supervisor for the City of Hoyt Lakes. He researched lighting options and contacted other communities that had made the switch to fluorescents in their arenas.

“I was skeptical that fluorescent lighting would work in our cold-weather environment, so I initially installed four fixtures over the center red line during the coldest part of the year,” Ferris said. “They came on with hardly any warm-up needed at all.”

The new arena lighting will conserve approximately 65,282 kWh and reduce monthly demand by 16.6 kW, saving the City $3,900 per year. A PowerGrant rebate of $5,819 from Minnesota Power brought the total cost down to $7,681, meaning the project will pay for itself in two years.

Recent conservation improvements to the Hoyt Lakes Arena earned a $5,819 PowerGrant Rebate from Minnesota Power.
“Our City is always looking for ways to save money, and energy conservation is one area with savings potential,” Ferris said. He noted that energy-efficient lighting also has been installed at the Hoyt Lakes Ballpark, a project that earned the City an $8,948 PowerGrant rebate by substantially reducing monthly electric demand.

Well-lit sporting facilities result in safer games, faster plays, and better calls—important considerations for athletic programs. The Hoyt Lakes Arena hosted the Junior Gold A Minnesota State Hockey Tournament shortly after the new lights were installed. The improvements scored points with players, fans, and officials. Other arena users, including youth hockey programs, men’s no-check hockey teams, figure skating clubs, and the general public, also appreciate the whiter, brighter difference.

“The Hoyt Lakes Arena is a showplace for high-bay fluorescent lighting,” said Dale Sundin, a Regional Account Manager for Minnesota Power. “Other Northland communities could benefit from making similar changes in their own arenas, and Minnesota Power is eager to help them.”

Meanwhile in Hoyt Lakes, the arena is lit for a “Giant” comeback.