Energy Efficiency is Always in Store at Miller Hill Mall

Simon says, “Conserve energy.” That directive is not child's play for officials at Miller Hill Mall in Duluth. It is a winning business strategy advanced by Simon Property Group, Inc., the mall's parent company and a leader in the global retail real estate industry.

Simon Property Group, Inc., owns or has interest in more than 325 retail real estate properties in North America and Asia. In 2013, FORTUNE magazine named Simon Property Group, Inc., the World's Most Admired Real Estate Company for the third year in a row, partly because of its social responsibility to communities and the environment.

That should come as no surprise to anyone who has observed Miller Hill Mall's advances in energy efficiency over the past several years. Since 2005, mall officials and tenant businesses have worked with Minnesota Power's commercial energy conservation team on dozens of projects, including improvements in lighting, air conditioning, heating and energy controls. To date, those improvements have reduced electric energy consumption by nearly 2,875,000 kWh per year, lowered monthly demand by more than 475 kW, and are saving the company around $200,000 annually. This is the equivalent of reducing CO₂ by more than 3,000 tons, which is comparable to taking 613 cars off the road or eliminating over 8 million miles driven per year.

"Simon Property Group, Inc., is a very environmentally conscious company, and there is a new corporate initiative to cut energy usage by three percent year-over-year," said Ryan Waldriff, operations director, Miller Hill Mall. “Our goal is to improve energy efficiency without compromising comfort, service reliability or safety for our retail tenants and shoppers. We want to reduce the quantity of energy used without reducing quality.”

"We almost have an unfair advantage with an energy company so willing to help. Folks at other Simon malls around the country think we’re pretty lucky that Minnesota Power is so eager to work with us to move projects forward.”

Ryan Waldriff
Operations Director, Miller Hill Mall

"The rebates from Minnesota Power help advance projects and incentivize the corporation to invest additional money in energy conservation. Simon Property Group, Inc., sets ambitious goals for energy reduction, but the corporation also gives us the tools to do it.”

Ryan Waldriff
Operations Director, Miller Hill Mall

Miller Hill Mall has reduced energy consumption by more than 2.8 million kWh per year and qualified for nearly $140,000 in Power of One® Business rebates for conservation projects in its tenant stores, common spaces and back areas.
“Miller Hill Mall has engaged in energy efficiency for a long time and regularly turns to Minnesota Power for design assistance, product information, energy- and cost-savings calculations, and rebate incentives,” said Matt Haley, a Minnesota Power energy consultant and president of Energy Insight, Inc. “It is a very unique relationship.”

The relationship is unique because the mall has a master electric meter and submeters tenants for their individual usage. As tenant businesses remodel or new businesses move in, they must follow aggressive energy-efficiency standards that help Miller Hill Mall achieve its corporate conservation goals and reduce energy costs. Mall officials tap Minnesota Power’s expertise and resources to help tenants make informed choices about energy efficiency and ultimately identify right fit actions for the business. The energy and cost savings make Miller Hill Mall’s retail real estate more attractive to businesses, both economically and environmentally.

Over the years, Miller Hill Mall has qualified for nearly $140,000 in Power of One® Business rebates from Minnesota Power for electric energy conservation projects completed in stores, shared space and back areas.

Investments in 2013 include the installation of five new energy-efficient air conditioners and a project that will upgrade 12,000 to 16,000 lights throughout the center to energy-efficient light emitting diode (LED) bulbs and fixtures. Mall entrance and corridor lighting, wall packs and low-pole parking lot lights will be converted to LED, and occupancy sensors will be installed in rooms with intermittent occupancy.

“Lighting is critical because we want customers to feel comfortable and to see everything in the best possible light,” Waldriff said. “Minnesota Power is helping out in that process, providing resources for design assistance so we choose the right LED technology and laying out our options for potential energy savings and rebates.

“I ask a lot of questions, and Minnesota Power’s energy consultant Matt Haley and energy-efficiency analyst Craig Kedrowski answer every one of them,” Waldriff added. “We need that expertise on a local level. Having someone you trust vet the options and make recommendations is priceless.”

Miller Hill Mall is a shopping destination that draws customers from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Canada. It is similar in age to many regional malls owned and operated by Simon Property Group, and the corporation approved the LED lighting project in large part because of Minnesota Power’s insights, incentives and flexibility.

Moving projects forward is a key component of Minnesota Power’s overall Power of One® conservation program strategy, designed to help customers better understand how they use energy by providing tools and resources so they can make informed energy-saving choices that are the right fit for their home, business or community.