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Ken Groh  
Director and Facilities Manager  
Rosauers Supermarkets

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## Energy savings? Grocery Aisle 6.



Rosauers uses an automated energy management system to fine tune everything from lighting to refrigeration temps.

Selling bread and bananas may not seem complicated. But in the grocery industry, the profit margin is just pennies on the dollar and often there are competitors on every corner. Success requires insight into consumer trends as well as tight controls over store costs—one of the biggest being energy use. It's why Rosauers Supermarkets partners with Avista on energy efficiency.

Considered one of the most innovative grocery chains in the Northwest, Rosauers first opened in 1934 during the Great Depression, when Mert Rosauer purchased a small grocery store in Spokane. Despite the economy at the time, his store quickly became a success.

Eventually, the company added superstores with full-service

pharmacies. It also established Huckleberry's Natural Market, Spokane's first grocer to offer a full array of natural and organic foods. Today, Rosauers operates 22 stores in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Successful growth, however, has only increased its need to save energy.

"Energy for heating, cooling and store lighting is one of a store's highest operating costs," says Rosauers Supermarkets Director and Facilities Manager Ken Groh. "But it's also one we can more easily control, especially with energy-saving rebates and incentives from Avista."

Rosauers has been committed to energy efficiency for over 20 years and, through Avista, takes advantage of the Energy Smart Grocer Program. Avista helps all

## Energy savings? Grocery Aisle 6. continued

types of large energy users but adopted a specific grocer program because most stores have similar efficiency opportunities. In the program, Avista provides a facility assessment as well as rebates and incentives to offset the costs of making energy-efficient upgrades.

Rosauers recently received \$106,000 in Avista rebates and incentives to complete energy upgrades for one project alone (a recent remodel of one of the company's stores). Because the changes were extensive and completed all at once, they also saw the immediate, total effect on their energy bill.

"The store reduced its electrical use by 14 percent," says Groh. "Over the last two years alone, it's saved us over \$50,000 in energy costs."

Rosauers' store strategy began with switching its lighting from 4-lamp fluorescents, high-bay HIDs and neon to higher efficiency, high-output 3-lamp fluorescents and low-watt LED track lighting. Now only a third of the floor lights stay on after hours, and all case lighting is turned off, leaving just enough light for night workers. The directional LED track lighting also requires less light to make products look appealing and generates less heat which preserves shelf life.

Rosauers upgraded refrigerated cases throughout the store, too, by installing fans with electronically commutated motors (ECMs). Unlike shaded-pole-motor fans which have heavy metal blades, ECM fans are lightweight plastic so use less energy and create less unwanted heat.

"They're more expensive, but Avista rebates help offset that," says Groh, "and the money you save in energy consumption offsets the cost."



New LED track lighting lets Rosauers more precisely aim lamps, so less lighting is needed to make products look great.

ECM fans were also installed in the freezer cases, as were more energy-efficient doors. Unlike the older doors which were fully heated to keep from freezing shut, the new doors save electricity by using only a bit of heat along the frame.

To maximize energy efficiency store-wide, Rosauers also uses an automated energy management system to control everything from lighting schedules and comfort levels to refrigerated-case temperatures. The computerized system even sounds an alarm if a refrigeration case isn't running properly to help prevent product loss.

Along with the greater energy savings, Groh is very happy with the store upgrades, especially the lighting: "Everything looks a million times better," he says. "It was well worth the money."



Higher efficiency ECM fans are now used on cases that need a steady air curtain to keep cold air from escaping.