

# Rural business owners save money and energy with Avista.

**MIKE STORMO** (left)  
**GARRY ROSMAN** (right)  
CO-OWNERS, LUXURY LIVING LLC



## Rural businesses often lack easy access to expert guidance on energy-saving measures. Avista's Small Business Partner Program eliminates the costs and hassle of obtaining help by bringing energy-efficiency knowledge and project funding incentives straight to businesses in small communities, including Davenport, Washington, population 1,740.

Garry Rosman and Mike Stormo are two Davenport business partners who've benefited from this program. Born and raised locally, the men have been friends for nearly 50 years. And they've invested in commercial businesses and property together many times, including in their latest project: Luxury Living LLC, Davenport's newest senior independent living apartments.

"Our Small Business Partner Program showed Garry and Mike how to make their apartment building energy efficient," says program manager, Lorri Kirstein. "It also significantly reduced their renovation expenses with Avista rebates and incentives as well as outside grants."

Through the program, Avista covers expenses for a specialized, licensed contractor to visit the facility and submit a competitive bid for an energy-efficiency project. The bid includes applicable Avista rebates as well as state grants that may be available. With a complete price in hand and the contractor ready to go, the customer can easily decide whether to move forward.

In Garry and Mike's case, they had come across a building for sale near Davenport's hospital. Built in the 70s, it was a medical clinic that housed four doctors, a dentist and a chiropractor. The doctors, however, planned to move.

"If something didn't happen, the building was just going to deteriorate," says Garry. "We scratched our heads on how to make something useful for the community that would last."

Given the building's proximity to the hospital, they decided to convert it into apartments for independent senior living. Until then, the few alternatives for seniors in Davenport either required purchase, included nursing care, or had income restrictions.

They bought the building and after receiving their first energy bill, they were shocked by how much electricity was being used.

"We immediately called Avista," says Mike. "They sent out a tech, who found that the existing sidewalk snow-melt system was running 24/7, costing almost \$600 extra a month."

Garry adds, "The tech mentioned that Avista may help pay for an automatic thermostat for seasonal heating systems—one that senses temperature and moisture. He put us in touch with Lorri. We not only received a rebate and grant for the new heat-control system, but after she caught wind of our apartment project, she volunteered to have Avista assist with everything."

With Mike as construction manager and Garry handling logistics, their plan was to convert 11 office units into one, one-plus-, and two-bedroom apartments, including ADA certified units. Unfortunately, they quickly learned the outer walls and original support structure were an issue.

"The 2 x 4 walls had to be furred into 2 x 6's to meet code," Mike explains. "In some places there was only two inches of insulation. We had to fix the ceiling, too, to fit maximum insulation."

Avista provided rebates to replace the deteriorated insulation. Rebates were also given to refurbish areas where single-pane windows were removed and were replaced with insulated walls.

Garry and Mike wanted the units to have private entries, so visiting guests didn't have to go through the main building. So, they installed French doors on all the back decks.

Says Mike, "The wide doors are also a safety measure for elderly tenants. If ever there's an emergency, first responders can bring in mobile medical equipment a lot easier."

"Safety is also why we installed a gas fireplace in each unit," adds Garry. "Should a winter storm knock out power to our new heat pumps, the fireplace can heat the entire apartment."

For added energy savings, Garry and Mike took advantage of rebates on high efficiency LED lighting for the entire complex, including the dentist and chiropractor offices which had obsolete fluorescents. They also saved on sensors for the common area to automatically shut off lights when unoccupied.



"Altogether, they received \$25,946 in rebates and \$12,846 in grants," says Lorri.

"Their upgrades also saved 65,600 kWh of electricity and 850 therms of natural gas, which lowered their bill."

According to Garry and Mike, the benefits of working with Avista went beyond rebates and lower energy costs. By emphasizing energy efficiency and equipment, they were able to improve tenant comfort and keep rents affordable.

Both men agreed that Avista and its Small Business Partner Program were pivotal in helping them to complete their new independent senior living apartments. They are currently undertaking several other projects with Avista's help.

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