



Case Study: Savage Land Co.

Rifle, Colorado

By Suzie Romig
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Businesses fight downturn in economy with energy savings, rebates

Rifle contractor Sally Brands already knows a thing or two about building for energy efficiency. Her company has built tight, well-insulated homes with 6-inch framed walls for many years, and she completed an Energy Star home in fall 2008.

But it wasn't until she heard a presentation explaining the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge for Business that she thought about how improved insulation and other efficiency measures might decrease her own business' energy bills. "I've always been very aware [of energy-efficient

buildings], but it just hadn't dawned on me that there was much we could do with that building until we started thinking about putting insulation in the roof," Brands noted.

Brands' Savage Land Co., whose offices are in a circa 1896 building in downtown Rifle, is one of 50 businesses between Parachute and Carbondale participating in the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge for Business organized by Garfield Clean Energy and administered by Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER). Xcel Energy contractors Long Energy Solutions did a commercial energy audit on the building last year. The audit led to prioritized suggestions with cost estimates. "This was a very well done, very specific audit," Brands said. "They looked all over, looked at energy bills and usage, and were able to quantify things."

Brands knew her 115-year-old building on Railroad Avenue, the former Rifle House hotel, would be an energy challenge. The brick



Business owner Sally Brands knew her circa 1896 building on Railroad Avenue in downtown Rifle, the former Rifle House hotel, would be an energy challenge. Photos by Cam Burns

walls are a foot thick, and the upstairs includes six affordable dorm-style housing units. Brands had already installed double-paned windows in the building and replaced some old-style steam radiators, but she wasn't sure how much else could be done. "The audit really came up with some specific recommendations that I could look at," Brands said. "It gave me a place to start."

The Upgrades

- Insulation blown into attic
- Dense foam pipe insulation added to the many feet of exposed hot water pipe
- Lighting was retrofitted with more efficient ballasts
- **The upgrades cost \$6,282, with \$4,594 in rebates coming from Garfield Clean Energy**

Lessons Learned

- Energy audits are key to identifying specific upgrades
- Very old buildings are easy targets for energy upgrades
- **33–65 percent savings on energy bills**
- **\$270+ monthly savings**



Left: Savage Land Co. office manager Joanie Hibdon shows the foam pipe insulation added to exposed hot water pipes in the basement.
Right: Sally Brands with an insulated hot water pipe on the building's main level.

Insulation was blown into the attic. Dense foam pipe insulation was added to the many feet of exposed hot water pipe. Lighting was retrofitted with more efficient

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ballasts. The cost of the work totaled \$6,282, with \$4,594 in rebates coming from Garfield Clean Energy. Energy experts say replacing T-12 lamps and magnetic ballasts with T-8 lamps and electronic ballasts can save 30 percent on electricity, improve light quality, and extend the lives of the bulbs.

"All of our lights were already fluorescent, but they were 20 years old," Brands said. "I had not paid

much attention to the fact that you could have more high efficiency ballasts. I didn't know it would offer that much savings."

After the energy efficiency upgrades were completed in October 2010, the red brick building is realizing savings on energy bills of up to \$273 a month. Brands advises business owners to take advantage of other types of rebates as well, which is especially important during the economic downturn. Xcel Energy, for example, offers rebates for business customers who install high efficiency lighting ballasts, but the ballasts must meet Xcel efficiency specifications. More information is available under the "Find a Rebate" section at www.xcelenergy.com.

Brands said tenants on the top floor have complained about the heat in the summer, but the ceiling insulation is making a big difference this year. In fact, the insula-

tion is keeping occupants much cooler while saving roughly \$100 per month in air conditioning costs. "That [the insulation] has helped quite a bit," she said.

Businesses across the county can still sign up for the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge. By participating you'll get access to CLEER Energy Coaches who will help make sure you maximize utility rebates and you'll get access to Garfield Clean Energy rebates. Go to www.garfieldcleanenergy.org for more information.

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