



## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Xcel Energy Center and Saint Paul RiverCentre Use Less, Save More



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General Manager, Saint Paul RiverCentre

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You don't need to look very hard at Xcel Energy Center and adjacent Saint Paul RiverCentre in downtown St. Paul to see that sustainability is the new standard. Three certifications to three international sustainability standards on the wall prove that sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental responsibility are top priorities.

The complex is home to the NHL's Minnesota Wild, Minnesota Swarm Lacrosse, Minnesota RollerGirls, as well as conventions, concerts and events that run year round. And all the while, staff is working on using less energy, being more efficient where they can, and getting guests involved in the effort.

But before they were models of energy efficiency, staff at Xcel Energy Center/Saint Paul RiverCentre started their process by turning to namesake utility, Xcel Energy, to put together a plan.

### Energy saving partners

They hired a third-party sustainability consulting firm who worked in conjunction with Xcel Energy to determine a priority list and potential rebates for efficiency work.

"We first needed to benchmark what we were doing, so we could figure out where to start," says Jim Ibister, General Manager of Saint Paul RiverCentre and Vice President of Administration for the Minnesota Wild. "Once we understood how and where energy and other resources were being used, we could determine a priority list and set goals. We started with waste reduction, which was a highly-visual effort that engaged our guests, so it broadened the adoption of sustainability causes across the campus."

The first major energy efficiency project they took on was replacing old High Intensity Discharge (HID) lighting in the multi-story RiverCentre parking ramp with high-efficiency T8 fixtures. "We took advantage of savings in the form of rebates to help mitigate our up-front costs, and that's when we started rolling through our plan," says Ibister.

"The lighting projects are a huge labor savings for us," adds Mark Stoffel, Senior Director of Operations. "Now that we are integrating LEDs throughout the facilities, we aren't wasting nearly as much time running to change bulbs one at a time."

Xcel Energy account manager, Sara Terrell, adds that advancements in technology made the early lighting work possible. "From there, the flood gates opened on other efficiency work," she says.

Terrell says a partially funded Recommissioning study helped identify numerous no-cost and low-cost measures to improve efficiency. From there, the facilities determined which projects would be eligible for rebates, helping them narrow down the task list.

### On a roll

With a long-term plan in place, they tackled projects one by one, with rebate dollars and savings achieved in one project put into the next. In all, Ibister and his team have implemented numerous energy efficiency improvements in just the last five years including:

- Lighting Technology Upgrades
  - HID to T8 fixtures in the parking ramp and loading docks (almost 1,400 fixtures)
  - LED lamps in the Hockey Lodge, Audi quattro Club, Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 Club and Bud Light Top Shelf Lounge
  - LED fixtures in the arena hallways and the Roy Wilkins Exhibit Halls
  - Low-watt T8 lamps in offices and back-of-house areas
  - LED screw-in bulbs in dimmable locations throughout the complex
- Installed high-speed doors on the convention center and arena loading docks
- Installed air curtains on the main entrances in arena
- Purchased ENERGY STAR® rated foodservice equipment
- Reduced kitchen exhaust fan operating hours
- Implemented measures identified in their Recommissioning study
  - Adjusted outside air dampers
  - Added CO<sub>2</sub> sensors
  - Reduced run-time hours
  - Changed economizing set point

"One of the things we've done is to really listen to the people who are doing the work in our buildings," says Ibister. "Custodians, electricians and engineers are the ones who see the real impact on a daily basis and they come forward with ideas about other things we could be doing."

Energy savings is just one part of their overall effort. They have implemented comprehensive initiatives in waste reduction and recycling, water conservation, renewable energy by way of wind and solar power, and environmentally-friendly purchasing.



### Xcel Energy Center/Saint Paul RiverCentre sustainability highlights

- Since 2010, the facilities have received more than \$275,000 in energy rebates from Xcel Energy for efficiency work completed.
- The complex is currently operating 25 percent more energy-efficient than average comparable buildings nationwide and 33 percent more efficient than average NHL facilities.
- Nearly 4,500 lights and fixtures at the complex have been upgraded to more efficient technology over the past five years. On average, these new fixtures use less than half the energy of the ones that were replaced.
- Through a combination of on-site solar, off-site wind and carbon offsets, the facilities are offsetting 57 percent of their total energy usage with renewable energy. The complex is also a top-five purchaser of Windsource® from Xcel Energy in the State of Minnesota.
- Saint Paul RiverCentre and Xcel Energy Center are now strategically poised as leaders in sustainability, which has begun to attract events and regional visitors who prioritize environmental responsibility. These events drive additional hotel stays, retail sales and restaurant visits, contributing to a healthier economy for the greater community.

The three certifications they've received as a direct result of their energy efficiency work and sustainability practices are:

- LEED Certified as an Existing Building for Operations and Maintenance (U.S. Green Building Council)
- Green Globes Certified for Continuous Improvement of Existing Buildings (three out of four globes)
- APEX/ASTM Certified as a Venue for Sustainable Events (Green Meeting Industry Council)

And they say they're not done yet.

"They've gotten more aggressive over the years," says Terrell. "They're always working on something."

### Next steps

Two major lighting projects are up next for Xcel Energy Center and Saint Paul RiverCentre. The exhibit halls will get over 400 new LED fixtures this year and the NHL is in the process of approving new LEDs for the hockey arena. In addition to Xcel Energy rebates, the team is hoping the projects qualify for money from the St. Paul Port Authority's Trillion BTU Project, a business loan program funded by federal stimulus money.

"Moving forward with a project comes down to the investment, and if you can cut that by a third or a half, it makes it much easier to execute," says Stoffel.

To learn more about their sustainability program, visit [xcelenergycenter.com/Sustainability](http://xcelenergycenter.com/Sustainability).

For more information about Xcel Energy's energy efficiency rebate programs, please visit [xcelenergy.com/Business](http://xcelenergy.com/Business).

