

Smart, Efficient Building Helps MRCI Serve Clients and Staff

At MRCI, a vocational rehabilitation organization in southern Minnesota, the primary mission is to help people with disabilities find employment. With 3,000 clients and more than 400 staff, it is the sixth largest, civic non-profit in the state of Minnesota. A top priority for CEO Brian Benshoof is that everyone work in a safe, comfortable environment.

When it came time to replace two buildings they occupied with one new facility, Benshoof knew he wanted to incorporate energy efficiency into it.

"The old facilities didn't afford us the flexibility that we needed to reconfigure space depending on the jobs we were servicing, and they were really inefficient," explains Benshoof.

The new 30,000-square foot facility would include large workspaces for assembly and packaging work, a warehouse for a candy-making operation, training rooms, office space and several large bathrooms to accommodate those in wheelchairs, or who need assistance.

Efficiency was built right in with the help of Xcel Energy's Energy Design Assistance program. The program provides computerized energy modeling to identify various efficiency measures available, potential costs, payback terms and rebates.

Armed with a priority list and return-on-investment knowledge, Benshoof opted for roof and wall insulation, high-efficiency lighting, daylighting controls, motion sensors and a high-efficiency heating and cooling system.

"As a nonprofit, we have to evaluate the cost to build versus renting and factor in everything, including energy efficiency," says Benshoof. "It took us two years to decide that building was the most cost effective, and we were very selective about what measures we included. I think we found that happy middle ground where we're being good stewards to the environment, but also protecting our investment."

One project alone helped significantly reduce their energy consumption. A heat recovery system on the building exhaust saves them one third of their annual heating costs. They estimate that all efficiency measures will save them more than \$20,000 every year.

Benshoof, his staff and clients are all thrilled with the new space.

"We now have an efficient building that will meet our needs and is economical to operate," says Benshoof. "The most gratifying part is that we're taking really good care of our staff and clients."

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BRIAN BENSHOOF
CEO, MRCI



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Estimated annual energy savings	99,571 kWh
Estimated peak energy reduction	38%
Estimated annual energy cost savings	\$20,746

For more information on Xcel Energy's Energy Design Assistance programs, please visit [XcelEnergy.com/EDAMN](https://www.xcelenergy.com/EDAMN). or call the Business Solutions Center at **1-855-839-8862**.