



South Washington Schools: Energy-Efficient Ovens Reap Rebates and Savings



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Dorie Pavel

Nutrition Service Business Specialist

Cooking for kids

School cafeteria ovens run twice a day, five days a week to cook breakfast and lunch for thousands of kids. At South Washington School district's 22 schools in Cottage Grove, Minnesota, the ovens are slowly wearing out and need to be replaced.

Nutrition Service Business Specialist, Dorie Pavel, had received Xcel Energy rebates when replacing equipment before, so it was her first call when it came time to get new ovens.

Cool rebates for hot ovens

There are two primary pieces of equipment used to cook and store hot food at the district cafeterias: a combination or "combi" oven, and hot food holding cabinets to keep cooked food warm.

A "combi oven" is a convection oven that includes steam injection capability, which makes for a highly versatile oven. It offers three cooking modes within the same oven space: convection, steam or combi mode, for simultaneous steaming and convection.

"Our Xcel Energy representative pointed out that new, more efficient combi ovens and hot food holding cabinets would be eligible for rebates through their Foodservice Equipment program, so we opted for those," says Pavel.

"Just by filling out the paperwork, we saved \$7,000, which paid for two of the cabinets," adds Pavel. "It's great to be able to reinvest money we save, back into the district."

"A \$7,000 difference is a big deal for a cost-conscious school district," says Al Joe, Xcel Energy account representative. "Rebates make upgrading equipment possible and provide a great incentive."

A new standard

Pavel says the district standard is to choose ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances when it comes to replacing older models.

Project Snapshot

Project	Replace 3 combi ovens and 10 hot food holding cabinets
Xcel Energy rebates	\$7,000 \$3,000 for 3 combi ovens and \$4,000 for 10 holding cabinets
Total Annual Savings	9.7 kW and 3,870 therms saved
Payback term	Less than 4 years

"When you're running ovens nine months per year and only serve breakfast and lunch, you don't buy new equipment as often as restaurants," explains Pavel. "So when we do purchase them, they have to pay back in a relatively short period of time — ideally five years or less."

Director of Facilities, Mick Greiner, keeps busy managing the mechanicals at all of the district's schools.

"Every time we need new equipment we look at more efficient options," says Greiner. "We upgraded variable frequency drives on our mechanicals and the high bay lights in our gyms. I'm always looking for more efficient ways to operate."

Collaborative effort

Pavel, Greiner and Joe collaborate frequently to determine the next priority and get the paperwork done to apply for rebates.

"It's nice to have a rep to tell you about the rebates and help you get everything completed," says Pavel.

And they plan to continue working together, one efficiency project at a time.

For more about Xcel Energy's Foodservice Efficiency program, call an energy efficiency specialist at **855.839.8862** or contact your local Xcel Energy representative.



Top: Hot fold holding cabinet
Bottom: Combi ovens