



Case Study – Diamond Pointe: One Call, Two Utilities, Many Savings

As a property manager at Diamond Pointe Apartments in Minneapolis, Grant Hartley says his job is to simply run an efficient building.

He heard about Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy’s joint effort called the Multi-Family Building Efficiency program, designed specifically for multi-family apartment buildings like his, and wanted to know more.

As it turned out, Hartley’s apartment building was the very first to complete the program.

Financial snapshot

Estimated combined energy savings (gas and electric)	26.6%
Incentive received	\$25,328
Percentage of project cost covered by incentive	40%

I want to make sure that I’m keeping up with the most modern controls, lighting technology and latest heating and cooling equipment, so I’m always looking for ways to run more efficiently.”

– Grant Hartley, property manager, Diamond Point Apartments

Better together

Diamond Point apartments were built in 1966 and had been through a variety of improvements. Its 63 apartments had been painted, re-carpeted and seen appliances come and go. But it had never seen a whole-building approach to energy efficiency.

“Multi-family buildings have a high potential for energy savings,” explains Yvonne Pfeifer, Xcel Energy channel manager. “We can find efficiencies in both the common areas and individual apartments, so there is a lot to be done. This program provides a one-stop solution.”

Participants get a free, whole-building energy audit to determine the best approach to energy savings and incentive potential. A single point of contact helps the customer create a streamlined path to efficiencies through the entire process—all the way to the incentive payment.

A three-tiered approach offers three levels of incentive based on the savings achieved by the energy efficiency work. A building needs to achieve a minimum of 15 percent energy savings



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to earn a 25 percent incentive. The middle level is a 20 percent savings for a 35 percent incentive, and the top level of savings is 25 percent savings for a 40 percent incentive.

Hartley went for the maximum savings and incentive because he was able to reduce his whole-building energy use more than 25 percent, making him eligible to receive an incentive of 40 percent of the related energy efficiency project cost.

“No matter which level you achieve, the benefits for the customer are lower bills, energy saved over the life of the equipment and increased residential comfort,” says Emma Ingebretsen, Energy Efficiency Programs Administrator, CenterPoint Energy.

“We’d be foolish not to take advantage of a program like this,” says Hartley. “It’s our job to save money and be efficient.”

Energy saving measures

The process began in the residential units. The program replaced incandescent bulbs with energy efficient LEDs. They also added high efficiency showerheads and aerators in the faucets to conserve energy and water. Those measures alone reduced Diamond Point’s total energy use by 7.7 percent.

“The LED bulbs last longer and shouldn’t have to be replaced anytime soon,” says Hartley.

The work continued in the common areas. Again, the inefficient bulbs were swapped to energy efficient screw-in LEDs, which Hartley says cuts their energy consumption considerably. They bought all new air conditioning unit covers to improve the seal and reduce the infiltration rate of air through the gaps during the winter. They bought a new energy efficient boiler and water heater, and installed insulation for the new hot water piping, which further saves otherwise wasted energy.

One final measure didn’t cost them a thing: they simply turned down the temperature on the water heater.

“We touched just about everything,” says Hartley. “We’re now running about as efficiently as we can.”

And the savings will be worth it.

After implementing all of the recommended measures, Diamond Point will reduce its energy use by over 25 percent. And the incentive of over \$25,000 helped off-set 40 percent of the cost of the energy efficient equipment installed.

Hartley says the program worked well every step of the way.

“I like how the two utilities worked together,” says Hartley. “They were very professional and easy to work with. It was also educational for me to get to know my building better.”

Next steps

Now that Hartley is familiar with the program, he plans to enroll some of his other buildings.

“I’m doing three more buildings this year,” says Hartley. “The program lays out all of the information, costs and potential rebates so it makes it easy to follow the recommendations.”

And with each new project, he’ll take away additional knowledge that he can use the next time around.



Project highlights

Diamond Point implemented the following energy efficiency measures:

- Installed a new energy efficient boiler and water heater
- Reduced the hot water temperature from 142°F down to 120°F
- Installed pipe insulation
- Weatherized two louvered window openings in front hall landings
- Installed covers on all 45 through-the-wall air conditioners to reduce infiltration through the gaps and to provide some additional insulation value
- Installed LED bulbs in the apartment hall and stair areas
- Received free, energy-saving installations, including:
 - Screw-in LED lights in common areas
 - LED lights in resident units
 - Energy efficient showerheads
 - Energy efficient kitchen and bath faucet aerators

