

Dubuque Rescue Mission

Like many of us, Rick Mihm, the Executive Director of the Dubuque Rescue Mission, believes that God is the creator of all and that we are called to be good stewards of God's gift of the natural order. But he also sees the social justice angle of environmental stewardship as paramount. Since assuming the position as director he has made many changes to improve the energy efficiency of the Mission house.



Thrift shop entrance to Mission

The Dubuque Rescue Mission offers a public meals program, temporary housing for transients, work opportunities, times of worship, a thrift shop, and other programs that minister to the less fortunate.

On his very first day on the job Rick had a tour of the five-story building where the Mission has been located since 1950. There, he saw a huge chest freezer in the basement that must have dated from 1950, full of frost and past-dated food, plugged in and

running. He emptied, unplugged, and recycled that freezer and has instituted a number of measures since then that are saving the Mission big time.

He started with an energy audit. Alliant sent a private third party consultant to do the free audit that was very thorough, and they gave the Mission 200 compact fluorescent light bulbs to replace their old inefficient incandescents.

The first recommendation they followed through with was to improve the old attic insulation, rated as R10 due to age and compaction, to R39 insulation. This was paid for out of the Mission budget with a small rebate from Alliant.

Alliant Energy's rebate program for businesses includes churches. Start first with their free energy audit, which could include free upgrades to lighting, water heater insulation blankets, pre-rinse sprayers, and vending machine controllers.

<http://www.alliantenergy.com/SaveEnergyAndMoney/Rebates/BusIA/>

They also weather-stripped the leaky back alley doors and tuck-pointed the sub-basement walls that were enormous air infiltrators.

Then their rooftop air-conditioning and heating unit was struck by lightning. Rick said. "Our insurance covered this and we now have an entirely new system that

Black Hills offers prescriptive rebates and custom rebates to businesses. Churches are considered businesses.

<http://www.blackhillsenergy.com/save-money-energy>

is much more energy efficient.” And their natural gas provider, Black Hills Energy, gave them a rebate for choosing energy efficient equipment.

The Mission feeds dozens of people a day from their commercial kitchen, and uses several freezers to hold the donated food. So Rick applied for a grant from Alliant to replace four of

the upright freezers with Energy Star freezers. They also upgraded their leaking commercial fridges and freezers with new magnetic strips, and recycled another 35-year old chest freezer. Plus, they took advantage of the Alliant rebate to purchase an energy efficient pre-rinse sprayer that is saving them lots of money on hot water.

The energy auditor suggested that they look at upgrading their ancient office equipment, so Rick decided to rent a new small energy efficient copier/printer/fax machine from Ricoh for a \$55/mo fee that includes all ink and maintenance and 2000 copies a month. The office manager is thrilled because it works better, it's only half the size of the previous 3 machines that it replaced, and the office used to get uncomfortably hot from the copier being on, even when it wasn't making copies.

Rick recommends congregations who get their electricity from Alliant look into applying for their 'Community Grants' to fund their energy efficiency improvements. They take applications 3 times a year and the paperwork is pretty simple to fill out.

<http://www.alliantenergy.com/CommunityInvolvement/CharitableFoundation/Programs/GrantsScholarships/030180>

The Mission board has been very supportive of Rick's leadership in making these changes. They see it as being good stewards of the resources their donors have given, and the less money spent on energy costs, means more money spent on helping others.

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