

Customer Spotlight

Quality Foods Racks Up Savings With Energy Efficiency Upgrades

For more than 30 years, Quality Foods, Inc., has provided residents of north Georgia with fresh meats, produce and other groceries. The company operates seven supermarkets in Georgia and two more in South Carolina. With the goal of reducing its operating costs, the company recently completed a series of energy efficiency upgrades at five of its Georgia locations.

Financial incentives totaling nearly \$31,000 from Georgia Power's Commercial Energy Efficiency Program made those upgrades more affordable and helped the company save thousands on its annual energy costs.

The Opportunity

Each Quality Foods grocery store averages about 35,000 square feet, with 65 to 75 employees. According to President Verlin Reece, as an independent grocer, the company is always looking for opportunities to cut costs and maintain competitiveness. When those opportunities align with improving the shopping experience for customers, it's a win-win situation. That was the case a few years ago when Quality Foods upgraded the old, inefficient overhead lighting in its stores.

"I want my customers to be able to shop in a well-lit facility that is friendly for them and improves their shopping experience," Reece says.

Fast-forward to last year, when Reece once again was looking for ways to increase energy efficiency in his stores. "Our energy costs were escalating year after year," Reece says. "I needed help to evaluate additional steps I could take to cut my energy costs."

Reece contacted his Georgia Power account representative, who visited his office with information about the utility's Commercial Energy Efficiency Program. The discussion covered the variety of incentives available to commercial customers who replace inefficient equipment and systems with high-efficiency alternatives.

The retailer's numerous refrigerated cases in the dairy, produce, fresh meats and frozen foods departments offered an opportunity for efficiency upgrades, particularly to the inefficient lighting inside the cases.

The Georgia Power Solution

Through Georgia Power's Commercial Energy Efficiency Program, businesses can take advantage of direct incentives to reduce the cost of upgrading to energy-efficient technologies, resulting in lower energy use and costs. Incentives are available for retrofit projects, replacement of aging equipment and high-efficiency equipment installations in new construction.



Verlin Reece, President, Quality Foods, Inc.

Savings at a Glance

Quality Foods used incentives from Georgia Power to upgrade the refrigerated cases at five grocery stores with LED lighting and occupancy sensors, and installed reflective roofing at one of the stores.

Energy savings:

400,096 kWh/year

Total project cost:

\$261,315

Incentives paid:

\$30,840



Quality Foods retrofitted its refrigerated display cases with LEDs.

Quality Foods applied for and received incentives for a series of lighting upgrades at its stores in Commerce, Cornelia, Hartwell, Toccoa and Winder. Specifically, the company upgraded the T12 fluorescent lamps in its open and closed refrigerated cases to LED lighting. The old T12s in walk-in freezers were replaced with LEDs as well. The company also upgraded old canopy lighting and high-intensity discharge and incandescent wallpacks to LED technology. In addition, Quality Foods installed occupancy sensors on the refrigerated cases, which power down the lights when no one is around.

Store Location	LED Fixtures	Occupancy Sensors
Commerce	385	15
Cornelia	166	0
Hartwell	129	9
Toccoa	176	11
Winder	158	12
	1,014	47

At the Quality Foods shopping center in Cornelia, the company also installed nearly 60,000 square feet of reflective roofing, which reduces cooling loads, thus decreasing energy use during peak summer hours.

Together, these projects qualified for \$30,840 in incentives, which shaved about 12 percent off the total cost of the upgrades. As another cost-saving measure, Quality Foods used its in-house maintenance staff to do the installations, scheduling the work for early mornings to minimize the disturbance to shoppers and store operations. The whole process was completed in less than four months.

Plus, applying for the incentives was easy and straightforward. Georgia Power’s program staff “was thorough and made sure we supplied all the documentation needed as we made the changes in our facilities,” Reece says. “They were hands-on from the beginning until the task was completed.”

The Benefits

The upgrades have resulted in a number of benefits. The new lighting illuminates the merchandise better, Reece says. “We’re showing our customers that we’re taking steps to modernize, so they can better enjoy the shopping experience in our stores.”

Then there are the energy savings. Quality Foods expects to save about 400,000 kilowatt-hours of energy a year. “This is a long-term investment,” Reece says, “that will keep us operating more efficiently for years to come.”

“Georgia Power worked with us from start to finish to get everything done, review the upgrades and provide our incentive money. I felt like I had a partner, not somebody selling me on something and leaving me to do it myself.”

- Verlin Reece, Quality Foods



LEDs in these open cases showcase fresh produce in a whole new light.



Reflective roofing systems like the one installed at the Cornelia store help keep the building cooler during the hot summer months.



Quality Foods upgraded exterior canopy lighting and wallpacks to LEDs.

Georgia Power’s Commercial Energy Efficiency Program makes incorporating energy-efficient improvements into your business even more attractive.

Available incentives help reduce the cost to install high-efficiency equipment that results in lower energy use and costs. Incentives apply to:

- Lighting • Heating & Cooling
- Food Service & Grocery • Water Heating
- Reflective Roofing • Custom Projects

For more information, visit georgiapower.com/commercialsavings or call 1-877-310-5607.