

Case Study – Retail LED Light Upgrade

Benjamin Fig *Gift Shop*

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“Everything went quite smoothly. We saved a ton of money and a ton of energy. [The Sierra Nevada Energy Watch staff] did a really good job, I was really impressed with how smoothly and quickly it all happened. I have recommended [the program] to colleagues.”

- Mark Endicott, Manager

Benjamin Fig, located in downtown Sonora, features Eastern Indian-themed jewelry, clothing, gifts, incense, figurines, pet collars and leashes, as well as many other unique artifacts from around the world. A long-time local favorite, Benjamin Fig won the 2017 Lodestar Award for Best Gift Store in Tuolumne County.

In 2014, Manager Mark Endicott contacted the Sierra Nevada Energy Watch (SNEW) team after hearing about the program’s no-cost audit and incentivized lighting retrofit services. The team completed the upgrade of roughly 100 halogen and track light bulbs to LEDs in March of 2015.

The total cost of the project before PG&E incentives was \$2,506.20. With an incentive of \$1,880.85 covering 75% of the cost, the final cost for the project was \$625.35. Based off of kWh savings, this project paid for itself in roughly 4.5 months, with an estimated savings of 9,303 kWh (roughly \$1,682.86) annually.

Endicott notes that the appearance of the merchandise and the store changed very little, as the LEDs were very similar to the color rendition and brightness of the previous lights. Though Endicott has also bought commercial Costco LEDs for his home, he says they are not nearly as well functioning and have a high failure rate – compared to the store’s new LED bulbs, none of which have ever burnt out, despite the fact that some of the lights operate 24 hours, 7 days a week. Endicott estimates additional savings at \$100/month just from the completely eliminated cost of replacing lights.

Ironically, some of the energy previously used to run the old lights is now used for running the heater in the winter months, as the old halogen and incandescent bulbs used to heat the store. Despite this, Mark still saves money on overall energy costs since the replacement, and he no longer has to run the AC as much in the summer months to cool off radiant heat from the light bulbs. He says the next step is upgrading the store’s heat pump system.

