

The Grocery Store is Vital to Rural Residents



Outline of Need: Odell Market in Odell, Nebraska, owned by Perry and Sharon Gydesen, is the only grocery store and morning coffee gathering place for this community of 357 citizens. The Gydesens retired from their teaching careers about four years ago and wanted to keep the local store open.

This grocery store had a 50 year old refrigerated produce case and a 70 year old meat display case. Lighting, heating and cooling systems were inefficient, and the back door to the building was deteriorated and offered little security. Electrical costs were becoming a huge drain on the Gydesens' overhead expenses.

How Rural Development Helped: USDA Rural

Development assisted the Gydesens with technical advice needed to complete their application for grant assistance through the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The REAP grant awarded to them provided 25 percent of the total costs to install a new refrigerated meat and produce display case, make upgrades to the heating/cooling system and replace ductwork, plus install new lighting and insulated steel door.

The Results: Based on a professional energy audit, the Gydesens' annual energy savings will be approximately \$4,554 per year. This energy savings would be expected to pay back the total costs for all new improvements and equipment within 4.5 years. But with the REAP grant, their payback is reduced to less than 3.4 years.



Sharon Gydesen, Co-owner of Odell Market said, "The new ductwork has made such an improvement in the comfort level of the store, for customers and employees. The new cooler is wonderful – lots of room and easier to see what's available. All the people I worked with were more than helpful. They all wanted me to be able to make these improvements and went above and beyond to give advice and connect me to the people I needed to work with."