



Case Study: Juicy Lucy's Steakhouse

By Suzie Romig/CLEER Correspondent



Juicy Lucy's Energy Savings Bolster Business Expansion

In past years at Juicy Lucy's Steakhouse in downtown Glenwood Springs, customers at the front of the restaurant told the staff they were cold while diners near the back said they were too warm.

During the colder months in the circa 1903 building, ice formed inside the windows, front tables could not be used for customer seating, and a chilly draft blew in when the front door was opened. During warmer times of the year, the wait staff would sweat and unbutton their uniforms.

Those temperature and comfort issues are a thing of the past after

The Upgrades

- Motion detectors added
- Double door entryway added
- Insulation and air-sealing improved throughout building
- Lighting was retrofitted with more efficient ballasts and LED exit signs
- Installed insulated ductwork in unconditioned space
- Replaced original windows with efficient double-paned windows

restaurant owners David and Cece Zumwinkle completed two rounds of energy efficiency upgrades as well as a recent expansion during which they kept conservation in mind. Even though the restaurant includes a new bar and 825 additional square feet, the energy bills have shrunk.

In the months of February, March, and April 2011, the owners tracked a 52 percent decrease in electricity costs and a 17 percent decrease in natural gas bills compared to the same months the previous year, Cece said. Those decreases translated to \$1,921 in savings in just three months, and the lower energy bills are helping the restaurateurs plan big.

"It allows and encourages you to continue with other construction and energy-saving projects," said David, explaining a rooftop project. "It allows us to have seating on the roof and to grow herbs for our restaurant on the roof."

The Zumwinkles, who have owned the eatery for 12 years, have always implemented sustainability measures that made sense for the



Restaurateurs Cece and David Zumwinkle built a new front door with a double entranceway in order to improve temperature control. Photos by Suzie Romig

business, such as buying potatoes, vegetables, and elk from Garfield County farmers and ranchers. They buy Colorado lamb and beef and grow table flowers in their home garden. So several years ago they

Lessons Learned

- Energy upgrades save money, allowing businesses to expand
- The upgrades made the building more comfortable
- Decreases in energy use equated to \$1,921 in just three months



Left: The facade with its classic neon sign. Right: Juicy Lucy's kitchen manager and sous chef Clemente Santana passes through the doorway of the walk-in cooler where the compressor runs much less often due to newly added insulation.

decided to take physical steps to reduce the steakhouse's energy footprint.

In 2009, the Zumwinkles participated in a pilot energy program. Following an energy audit by Schmueser Gordon Meyer engineers, the Zumwinkles undertook the most cost-effective and electricity-saving recommendations.

Work included replacing some lighting ballasts with more efficient models, replacing exit sign lights with LEDs, insulating and sealing exterior walls and the ceiling of the upstairs office, balancing the kitchen exhaust hood, air-sealing the entire building, and installing efficient evaporator controls for an upgraded cooling system. The Zumwinkles did \$3,914 in work and received rebates of \$2,467.

After positive results with the pilot program, the owners joined for the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge for Business in 2010, and Juicy Lucy's is now one of 50 businesses between Parachute and Carbondale participating. The Challenge work

included installing insulated ducts in unconditioned spaces, beefing up insulation in the dining room ceiling to a high R-60 level, insulating the sides and top of an old walk-in cooler, changing to low-flow sink sprayers, and adding motion detectors and timers for outside signs. This second round of measures cost \$6,279; Garfield Clean Energy and Source Gas awarded the Zumwinkles rebates for \$5,023.

"Using the technical information in the audit, we worked with Source Gas and leveraged our rebates into an extra \$1,190 for the business owner," said Erica Sparhawk, an Energy Coach at CLEER.

"There is a total difference in the level in comfort in the dining room," Cece noted. The Zumwinkles have taken additional steps to cut power consumption. Motion detectors were added to the bathroom lighting, and the bar addition includes a double-door entryway to help keep the outside air out. Last November, with the help of a historic façade beautification grant from the Glenwood

Springs Downtown Partnership, the Zumwinkles also replaced the windows on the front of the building.

They also became more proactive in working with their staff so that employees no longer automatically turn on the power-hogging fryer, broiler, and exhaust hood when they arrive in the morning. The couple said they were "thrilled and happy" to be involved in the energy efficiency rebate programs through Garfield Clean Energy, and that they were surprised at the level of savings.

"It affects the bottom line positively," said Cece. "Plus it makes us feel good to be doing something that is environmentally friendly."

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