



South Dakota

Rural Business & Cooperative Programs • REAP

Energy Efficiency Improvements Enhance Shopping Experience

The R&B Food Center located in Wessington, South Dakota is the only grocery store located in the community with a population of 177. Vernetta LeGrand has owned and operated this local grocery store since 1987.

Having a grocery store is critical to community vitality. Along those same lines, maintaining the equipment is important and appealing to the customer, as well as enhances the overall shopping experience.

LeGrand wanted to increase her profitability and concluded the obvious move was to make her store more energy efficient and cost effective.

LeGrand worked closely with USDA Rural Development to help fund her energy efficiency improvements using the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Grant funds of \$5,662 (25% percent of the total project cost) were used for the installation of a new refrigeration unit. The store is projected to save 39,795 kWh of electricity, which equates to a savings of \$3,334 per year.

When LeGrand was asked about what this grocery store means to the community, she replied, “Some people in the community get it. They understand what it means to have a grocery in town and support it.”

LeGrand shared that her favorite parts about running the store were seeing her customers and being able to provide healthy incentives for shopping locally.



Pictured above is a photo of the inefficient refrigeration system and below are left to right Vernetta Le Grand, Owner of R&B Grocery Store and Cayla Hilbrands, USDA Rural Development Specialist standing in front of the newly installed energy efficient refrigeration system.



Obligation Amount:	\$5,662 Rural Energy for America Program Grant
Date of Obligation:	03/28/2018
Congressional District:	At Large, Senator Thune, Senator Rounds, and Congresswoman Noem
Partners:	R&B Food Center, Vernetta LeGrand, and USDA Rural Development
Demographics:	Wessington, SD
Impact:	The store is projected to save 39,795 kWh of electricity, which equates to a savings of \$3,334 per year. Having a grocery store is critical to community vitality. The upgraded refrigeration system increases the owners bottom line while providing an appealing shopping experience to customers.
