



Rural Development • Rural Business Service • Renewable Energy For America Program Grant

Energy Efficiency Improvements Increase Longevity of Small Business

Chad Mortensen is a third-generation owner and operator of Marion’s Variety shop and restaurant in Roosevelt, Utah. Chad’s great aunt Marion Mortensen opened the business in 1933 after emigrating from Denmark. Over a span of 36 years Marion changed locations along the main road twice and increased her store offerings to ice cream, gifts, and food; all of which you may find if you visit Marion’s today. The business has been in Roosevelt so long it is known as the place to enjoy good company. “We’ve always been a fixture in the community,” says Chad, “It’s a little visiting, social atmosphere for people so they’re not completely alone in life.”



Chad Mortensen, owner of Marion’s Variety, used funds from a Renewable Energy for America Program grant to make energy efficiency improvements to his business.

Recently Chad needed to do some seemingly minor repair work to the pipes in the restaurant. Once he exposed the pipes, however, he saw the required repairs were more extensive than he anticipated. He considered this potential setback as an opportunity to update in a number of ways and keep the business going, ideally for future generations. With a grant from USDA Rural Development’s Renewable Energy for America Program, Chad was able to make energy efficiency improvements that will not only increase the productivity of his operations but also cut down on his energy costs. Grant funds were used to add insulation to the store, upgrade the kitchen equipment, and for the replacement of the front windows. Even with the upgrades, he maintained the original look of the storefront, knowing his customers would prefer it. “I wanted to keep the front stationary,” he said, “Out here people have a hard time with change. If you change too much, too fast, they don’t come back.”

The recent improvements have made Chad sure that Marion’s Variety will last over time. “It’s sound, it’s secure,” he said of the restaurant’s modernization, “It’s just going to be more efficient for me to work in and energy-wise, it’s going to help out in the future with bills.” Now Marion’s Variety store and restaurant is prepared to continue providing the community the services they’ve come back for since 1933.

Obligation Amount: \$17,296 grant

Date of Obligation: June 2015

Congressional District: Representative Bishop, UT-1; Senators Hatch and Lee

Partners:

Demographics: Roosevelt, UT population: 6,310

Impact: Small business remains in operation with energy efficiency improvements