

Mary Queen of Heaven saves \$32,000 in energy and maintenance costs



Energy-saving upgrades secure the future for this local parish and school



Project description:

Energy assessment, free energy-saving products and a new boiler



energySMART incentives:

\$36,837



Energy savings:

23,080 therms saved per year

Mary Queen of Heaven Roman Catholic Parish, established over 100 years ago, is a historical fixture of faith in the community of Cicero, Ill. Mary Queen of Heaven is also home to four school buildings – the most recent of which was built back in 1960.

As a community staple, Parish Manager Monica Geiser decided to address the much needed upgrades of the two school buildings. To ensure the parish would be a part of the community for years to come, Monica wanted to repair the inefficient, uneven heating throughout the buildings. The outdated and malfunctioning steam and hot water boiler systems made some rooms so hot that windows had to be opened during cold days, while nearby rooms were frigid. As a result, heating costs had skyrocketed to \$49,000 per year, an unsustainable amount on a modest parish budget. Knowing that waiting until the 84-year old boiler broke down was not an option, Monica turned to energySMART, a Nicor Gas program. With energy-saving solutions designed to meet the energy needs and budgetary requirements of the parish, Mary Queen of Heaven was headed towards savings and efficient operations.



The project

Knowing that their educational programming could be suspended if the problems weren't fixed, it was important for Monica to find solutions that would not require a huge initial investment and would eventually pay for themselves. Solutions included replacing the old boiler and insulating pipes throughout the buildings. The free assessment evaluated energy use throughout the parish and school buildings and revealed inefficient water fixtures. The Energy Advisor installed free energy-saving products to reduce daily energy costs even more.



How Mary Queen of Heaven made it happen

When the boiler was identified as the issue for much of the wasted energy and high costs, the Archdiocese put the project out for a bid. energySMART Contractor Circle member Gerry Grilec at Southwest Town Mechanical came in with the right solutions at the right price. Gerry was able to work with Mary Queen of Heaven on a complex boiler replacement project, which led to dramatic cuts in energy costs, including saving \$20,000 in heating costs and cutting yearly maintenance and repair costs by \$12,000. The boiler project qualified for close to \$27,000 in rebates, enabling the parish to make the necessary improvements while minimizing their initial investment.

In addition to the boiler project, Mary Queen of Heaven received free energy-saving products and recommendations for more ways to save as part of their free energy assessment. Our energySMART Energy Advisors installed faucet aerators, water-saving showerheads and hot water pipe insulation in all four of Mary Queen of Heaven's buildings.

“We feel like we’re getting ahead and able to pay things off.”

— Monica Geiser
Parish Manager

The experience

energySMART was an invaluable partner to Monica throughout the process, helping the parish to make the necessary improvements that would allow the parish to continue functioning as a vital part of the community for the next 100 years. “energySMART is a wonderful program from Nicor Gas, encouraging poor parishes to make energy-efficient improvements,” said Monica. Gerry at Southwest Town Mechanical took care of all the incentive applications and the new boiler that cut energy costs will pay for itself in 11 years. Their positive experience has inspired future energy-saving improvements, such as upgrading old wiring, replacing old windows and investing in a new boiler for the directory.

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