



# Efficiency Vermont

## Vermont Country Store Lights the Way

**December 2007, Rutland, Vt.** — For more than 60 years, The Vermont Country Store has supplied customers with a variety of hard-to-find, nostalgic items. Recently, however, the iconic Vermont company has shifted its focus to the future by investing significantly in energy efficiency.

By replacing lighting in all five of its retail, business, and customer service locations with energy-efficient alternatives, The Vermont Country Store is projected to save more than \$88,000 a year on its energy bills. In 2008, the company plans more lighting projects for its Weston, Rockingham, and Manchester facilities that could save an additional \$15,000 per year.

“Going energy-efficient resulted in a stronger bottom line for our company, but equally important, it instantly created better working conditions for our employees,” said president and CEO William C. Shouldice, IV. “What really surprised us was how easy it was to get to this win-win situation.”

In 2004, The Vermont Country Store partnered with Efficiency Vermont, the statewide energy efficiency utility, to begin assessing the lighting in the company’s Weston and Rockingham retail stores. After seeing the ease and cost effectiveness of the upgrades, the company expanded the project to its North Clarendon distribution center, its Customer service centers in North Clarendon and Bennington, and its Manchester headquarters by installing more durable, high-efficiency lighting throughout these facilities. Efficiency Vermont provided technical assistance and financial incentives throughout the planning and installation processes. The lighting equipment was supplied by the Rutland branch of Graybar and installation was completed by Energy Source of Providence, Rhode Island.

“There was truly minimal impact on our day-to-day operations, but a great impact on our collective environmental consciousness,” said facilities manager Ken Martin, who spearheaded the project with facilities supervisor Kevin Cross.

In addition to the energy savings and lower maintenance costs, the lighting upgrades have also resulted in improved working conditions for employees. The energy-efficient lighting provides a brighter, healthier environment, and many of the new overhead fixtures are less intrusive than the old lighting, resulting in more room for workers to navigate their heavy equipment in the distribution center. To maximize savings and utilize natural light, occupancy sensors and daylight controls were also installed.

“Our employees definitely prefer the new lighting,” said Martin. “This was just the right thing to do – it improves safety, employee morale, our bottom line, and awareness of how we, individually and as a company, can have a positive impact on the environment.”

As part of the company’s commitment to being more efficient, The Vermont Country Store is planning to offer employees a series of free workshops where they can learn how to incorporate energy efficiency into their own lives. The “Employee Energy Awareness Program” will be conducted by Efficiency Vermont. For each of its over 500 employees, the company has also distributed one free compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb as an incentive to be more energy efficient in their own homes.

“We’re thrilled that The Vermont Country Store is taking the extra step and educating their employees about energy efficiency,” said Efficiency Vermont project manager Cathy Reynolds. “This is a great example of a business taking on a larger role in the community and becoming even more socially responsible.”

The Vermont Country Store is investigating additional ways to improve the company’s efficiency.

“We look at this project as the beginning of a long relationship with Efficiency Vermont,” said Martin. “We’re now constantly thinking about other ways we can save money and protect the environment by being more energy efficient.”

*The Vermont Country Store, the Orton family business since 1946, specializes in the practical and hard-to-find. Its catalogues, website ([www.vermontcountrystore.com](http://www.vermontcountrystore.com)), and stores in Weston and Rockingham offer more than 6,000 brands from the past and customer favorites that just plain work.*

*Efficiency Vermont was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters reduce energy costs, strengthen the economy, and protect Vermont’s environment. Efficiency Vermont is currently operated by Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), an independent organization under contract to the Vermont Public Service Board. VEIC is a Vermont-based, nonprofit organization founded in 1986. For more information, contact Efficiency Vermont at 888-921-5990 or visit [www.encyvermont.com](http://www.encyvermont.com).*