



# PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER GETS ENERGY-EFFICIENT REHAB

## NEW HEIGHTS RENOVATES CLINIC INTO MODEL OF EFFICIENCY

After 17 years in Southeast Portland, New Heights Physical Therapy recently outgrew its old facility and set its sights on a new (so to speak) location on Northeast Glisan Street. For many in the neighborhood, the decaying building was considered an eyesore at best. It had previously served as a feed store and sheet metal supply store. But New Heights saw the potential, and being in the business of physical therapy, jumped at the chance to rehabilitate the building into a sparkling facility loaded with energy-saving innovations.

“We got a lot of different responses about this building, whether we should tear it down or try to rehab it,” said Kevin Poe, CEO, New Heights. “But we do physical therapy, so we decided to rehab the place.”

Aiming for peak efficiency, New Heights turned to Energy Trust of Oregon and a host of innovative partners for assistance in pulling together the project’s energy-saving features. Through Energy Trust’s market solutions package for small offices, New Heights received cash incentives and guidance to help achieve its ambitious goals.





## NEW HEIGHTS PHYSICAL THERAPY AT A GLANCE

### Overview

- 7,000 square feet
- Space for 20 staff members
- Gym area, private treatment rooms, conference room

### Energy-efficient features

- LED light fixtures
- Peak plug load reduction
- Variable refrigerant flow heat pump with dedicated outdoor air system
- High-performance windows
- Solar ready construction

### Energy Trust incentives

- \$20,630

### Estimated energy savings

- 39,100 annual kWh

### Project contributors

- Constructive Form
- Interworks
- Far Pacific
- All Pro Electric
- Rose City Heating and Air

## BUILDING EFFICIENCY FROM THE GROUND UP

The site of the Glisan Street clinic has come a long way since its humble metal shop beginnings. When New Heights took over the space, the building became a blank canvas for the company's future home, and energy efficiency was always a part of the plan.

"We took it down to an absolute shell, everything but cutting the power. When we started building it back up, we all had the same inclination of trying to do something that was going to be as green as possible within our budget," said Poe.

### Solar ready construction

New Heights didn't just build out its space for immediate energy savings; the company also had an eye on the future, which is why it chose to pursue Energy Trust's solar ready offering for new building and major renovation projects. By building solar ready, the facility is now set up to accommodate the installation of solar panels and equipment when time and budget allow. The benefits of building solar ready include:

- Roof structure already equipped for solar
- No need to relocate HVAC rooftop units
- No need to open walls for piping or conduit
- Ample space for required electrical components
- Plug-and-play process for adding solar panels and equipment
- Energy Trust solar ready incentives



“Solar ready construction was a big one for us because we didn’t have the budget to actually put a solar package on,” said Poe. “It made perfect sense. If we can do that, if we can make the building ready for it, then we can move on to the solar installation later, and we’re talking about that already.”

New Heights’ future plans include solar water heating, tapping into solar for the facility’s already efficient lighting system and installing a solar electric system on the roof that will preheat air for dryers.

### **LED lighting**

New Heights chose to install high-efficiency LED light fixtures throughout its facility. At the time, Poe admits there were some naysayers, but today no one is arguing about the price or benefits of a lighting system that’s an incredible 59 percent better than code. New Heights received Energy Trust cash incentives to help cover the upfront costs of the setup, which now saves an estimated 3,000 kilowatt hours, kWh, each year.

“When we first started all of this, everybody was saying LED fixtures are too expensive, that we can’t afford it,” said Poe. “As we got into it, we started seeing the prices had come down a tremendous amount.”

### **High-efficiency heating and cooling**

Energy Trust market solutions packages are typically broken up into three tiers: good, better and best. What separates the best from the rest is the HVAC system. In this area, New Heights allowed mechanical system designer Far Pacific the flexibility to use the most energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment available for small commercial applications.

The resulting setup, a variable refrigerant flow heat pump with a dedicated outdoor air system (heat recovery ventilation), offers outstanding performance, healthy indoor air quality and saves an estimated 5,900 kWh per year. Fully programmable controls, including zonal thermostats and variable fan drives, allow the system to function interactively, reacting to both indoor and outdoor conditions in real time.

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Kevin Poe, CEO,  
New Heights  
Physical Therapy





## NATURAL RESOURCES

Some of the more impressive aspects of the New Heights space involve its use of natural resources and repurposed components. The natural light that floods the facility through large windows and skylights is a prime example. A light harvesting system in the main gym space reads the incoming natural light and uses those measurements to dim the light fixtures accordingly. During the day, there are areas throughout the space that receive so much outside light, it's not uncommon for the light fixtures to turn off completely.

In terms of repurposing materials, New Heights saved as much as it could while taking a sledgehammer to the building's interior. Salvaged wood was transformed into new items like desktops, tables, trim work and cabinets.

"There was a tremendous amount of wood salvaged, and I thought there was no way we'd use all of it, but we ended up using exactly what we had," said Poe.

## A GOOD THING GOING

The Glisan Street clinic is more than twice the square footage of New Heights' previous space, but according to Poe, the energy bill is actually less. That's the result of a company philosophy that strives for efficiency, a willingness to pursue innovation and the teamwork of all involved in bringing fresh energy-saving ideas to the table.

"It's been phenomenal," said Poe. "We're on to a really good thing here, and with the next phase of the project, we see that we can pretty easily get down to being a net-zero building. We're not done yet."



### Get more from your energy

To learn more about energy solutions and cash incentives for new construction and major renovation projects, contact Energy Trust at **1.866.368.7878** or visit [www.energytrust.org/newbuildings](http://www.energytrust.org/newbuildings).