



UNIFIED GROCERS OPENS THE DOOR TO ENERGY SAVINGS

NEW HIGH-SPEED DOOR IMPROVES TEMPERATURE CONTROL AND INCREASES ENERGY SAVINGS

Unified Grocers is the largest, retailer-owned, wholesale grocery cooperative in the western United States. The company's 882,000-square-foot distribution center in Milwaukie, Ore., dispenses dry, chilled and frozen foods 24 hours a day to hundreds of independent grocers throughout the Pacific Northwest. Working with Energy Trust of Oregon, Unified Grocers identified the installation of a new high-speed roll door between the refrigerated food dock and the forklift service bay as an energy-efficiency project that could really lower cooling costs.

When the decades-old, heavy door separating the two areas could no longer be repaired, it was disconnected and never replaced due to cost. In its place, Unified Grocers installed a curtain of heavy plastic strips as a temporary barrier. "It was not effective," explained Joe Gomez, manager of plant services. "We needed to keep the dock at a more consistent 34 degrees, plus we were keeping the battery room unnecessarily cool."

“ Unified Grocers looks for ways to be energy conscious. The information and training we get from Energy Trust provides us with ideas and options, like a high-speed door, that help us improve efficiency and save money. ”

Joe Gomez, manager of plant services
Unified Grocers

PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

- 882,000-square-foot dry and chilled storage facility
- High-speed door installation

Project benefits

- Better temperature control
- Measured energy efficiency and cost savings
- Reduced infiltration of unwanted debris
- Improved safety and traffic flow

Financial analysis

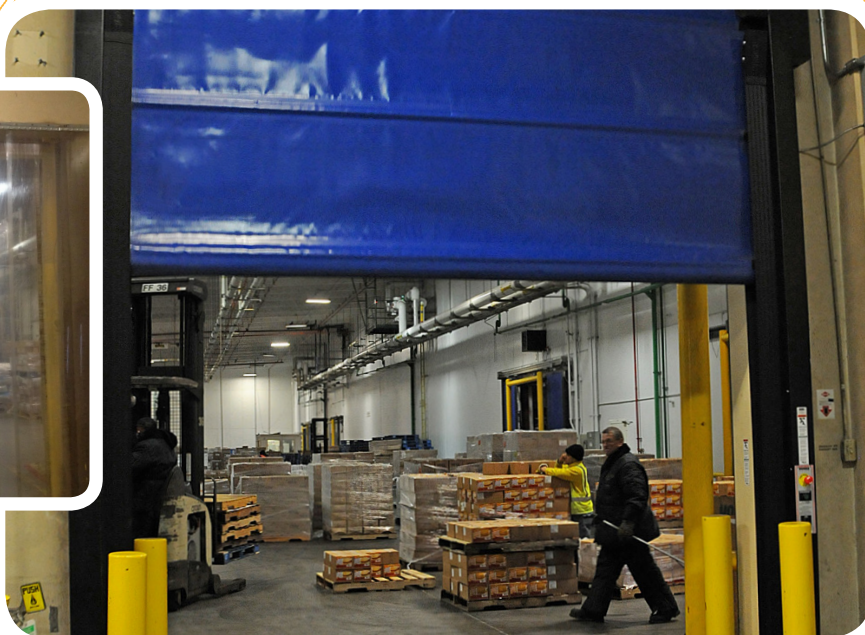
- \$13,132 total project cost
- \$6,566 in cash incentives from Energy Trust
- \$4,800 estimated annual energy cost savings

Estimated annual savings

- 74,000 annual kilowatt hours



Before



After

Gomez decided to investigate options for a better solution. After talking about high-speed doors with the company's vendor and Cascade Energy, Energy Trust's Program Delivery Contractor for streamlined program offerings, Gomez was pleased to discover that a high-speed door qualified for cash incentives equal to one-half the cost of the project. In addition, Energy Trust estimated the upgrade would result in annual cost savings of \$4,800, based on an estimated approximately 74,000 annual kilowatt hours of energy savings. "That's huge," said Gomez. "We didn't really start out looking at this for energy savings, but when I presented this to corporate management, they said it was a 'no brainer; get it done.'"

Unified Grocers installed the new high-speed door in August 2013. Made of a heavyweight industrial curtain fabric, the door is lighter weight and "looks a lot nicer, too," said Gomez. He reports that the new door works smoothly and maintains the correct temperatures in both the cooling dock and battery room. The evaporators don't have to cycle on and off as much since they're maintaining the cooler temperatures in the smaller area of the cooling dock, and the battery charging room is no longer colder than it needs to be.



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The new door provides additional safety features including a see-through panel that improves sight lines and a signal alerting operators of nearby traffic. While the door can operate using wireless technology, Unified Grocers has found that manual opening and closing works best for its employees given the rate of traffic through the doorway. The door will close automatically if it has been open for a preset interval.

Unified Grocers received a \$6,566 incentive from Energy Trust, one-half of the \$13,132 project cost. Since installing the new door and making additional energy-efficiency changes to the refrigeration process, Unified Grocers' first energy bill showed more than \$5,000 in energy savings. While those results are not solely related to the door, Gomez predicts that the payback period for the high-speed door will be less than the initial estimate of 1.5 years. Unified Grocers plans to install two more high-speed doors at their facility. "We're pleased with the level of attention and service from the Energy Trust team, not to mention the performance and return on investment," said Gomez.