



City of Sonoma
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Mayor Joe Costello congratulates Sonoma business owner, Brian Smucker, for saving energy and money.

City of Sonoma Energizes Local Economy

THE CITY: Sonoma, a historic community in the heart of the California wine country, is a favorite destination for both local and international tourists. They're drawn to the area's scenic vineyards, local wineries and distinctive eight-block Plaza, the centerpiece of the town.

THE CHALLENGE: After September 11, 2001, tourism slowed dramatically, and the town's retail stores and restaurants felt the downturn. At the same time, gasoline prices soared while investment portfolios plummeted. Businesses, especially tourist-dependent restaurants and retail shops, scrambled for ways to remain profitable during these turbulent times.

THE SOLUTION: The City of Sonoma and the Small Business Energy Alliance (SBEA) created the Sonoma Energy Savers Program to help businesses in the city's redevelopment project area save money on their monthly energy bills. A combination of state-sponsored funding from the SBEA and grant money from the city's community development agency helped businesses implement energy saving improvements with little or no out-of-pocket expense.

THE PROCESS: SBEA provided free energy audits and made recommendations on four simple energy-efficiency

measures: lighting upgrades, programmable thermostat installations and refrigeration or air conditioning tune-ups. "SBEA promoted the program, supervised the installations, followed through with the customers and wrote checks to the contractors," said Cathy Lanning, a management analyst for the City of Sonoma. "All the city had to do was approve the expenditure and write a matching check."

THE SAVINGS: More than 60 Sonoma businesses took advantage of the program, which provided \$29,148 from the city and more than \$32,000 from the SBEA. Participating business are saving a combined \$77,000 per year and have reduced energy usage by 500,000 kilo-Watt hours – enough to meet the annual energy needs of 100 households.

THE BOTTOM LINE: In addition to the \$77,000 in reduced electricity costs, every dollar saved in a community through energy conservation is known to have a multiplier effect, resulting in an additional \$125,000 that has been retained in the community of Sonoma.

As an added benefit, businesses report that sales and productivity are up as a result of the brighter, more natural looking light.

WINNER: National 2003 ENERGY STAR® for Small Business Special Award



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