Hamdi Restaurant, offering traditional Somali food on East Lake Street, was eager to participate in the Small Business Energy Coaching Partnership program to improve the energy efficiency of the business and lower the electric bill. A representative, or “Energy Coach” from the Lake Street Council and Energy Efficiency Specialists from the Chamber of Commerce Energy Smart Program have teamed up to make energy efficiency accessible to area businesses.

Before an Energy Coach from the Lake Street Council stopped by Hamdi Restaurant to share information about the program, restaurant owner Abdishakur Elmi was already experiencing many problems with the lighting inside and outside of his building, and high utility costs were a major concern.

After learning about the variety of technical and financial assistance programs available, Elmi saw this program as a way to address many of his concerns. Elmi often asked, “What should we do to lower the operation costs and improve the business?” Through the Small Business Energy Coaching program, the Partnership would help Elmi navigate all the options available to his business.

First, the Energy Coach helped Elmi set up an energy assessment with an Energy Efficiency Specialist. The Specialist toured the inside and outside of the restaurant and kitchen looking for energy saving opportunities. From the assessment and input from Hamdi, upgrading the lighting to energy efficient LED bulbs was identified as the biggest energy savings opportunity.

Next, the Partnership helped Elmi through the process of selecting an LED lighting contractor. The chosen contractor, Lighten Up, LLC, estimated the entire upgrade to cost $2,460. However, the Partnership identified rebates and grants that significantly lowered the total cost of the upgrade. After applying rebates and grants, Elmi paid only $309, or roughly 13% of the estimated total.

After the new LED lighting was installed, Elmi quickly noticed a decrease in his electric bills. In fact, Elmi will end up saving 19,972 kWh and roughly $2,000 annually. In less than one year, the project will have paid for itself through savings and the savings will continue for many years to come. “Small businesses have lots of costs, and this program provides relief in our operation costs,” says Elmi.

The process was long, but Elmi believes the project went smoothly overall. And, he is very satisfied with the product he received.

Elmi is often approached by companies selling products that could benefit his business in some way. “It is hard to understand all the options out there,” says Elmi. Because he is familiar with the services provided by the Lake Street Council, he was open to learning about how the Small Efficiency Partnership can help businesses with their energy costs.

**Project Snapshot**

- **Annual Savings:** $1,978.15
- **Project Costs:** $2,481.64
- **Utility Rebate:** $1,109.07
- **MCC Grant:** $699.94
- **LSC Grant:** $336.32
- **Total Funding:** $2,145.33
- **Final Cost:** $336.32
- **Payback:** 0.17 years
- **Demand Reduction:** 4.1 kW
- **Annual Energy Savings:** 21,199 kWh
Business Energy Coaching Partnership could help him navigate all the options to improve the energy efficiency of his business.

“There is a need for a program like this,” says Elmi. He is eager to share his positive experience with others, and especially to connect Somali business owners to the program.

Interested in getting an assessment to find out how you can save energy in your business? Contact Energy Smart from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce at 651-292-4657.