



# COLORADO INDUSTRIAL ENERGY CHALLENGE

*Improving Efficiency, Reducing Costs and Emissions*

## PROFILES IN INDUSTRIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY

### New Belgium Brewery Boosts Energy Savings and Sustainability through Employee Involvement

#### Quick Facts

**LOCATION:** Fort Collins, Colorado

**MARKET SECTOR:** Breweries

**BREWERY PRODUCTION:** 660,000 barrels of beer /yr

**BREWERY SIZE:** 51 acres

**PROJECT:** Company-wide energy education and a “Bright Ideas” project management system

**CIEC GOAL:** Reduce energy consumption 10% per unit of production from 2008 levels



#### SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USE: A CORE VALUE AT NEW BELGIUM

“Our brewery is definitely more profitable because of our employee engagement and educational efforts to reduce energy,” says New Belgium Sustainability Specialist Katie Wallace. “When everyone knows about our goals, it makes it possible to reach those goals. The behavioral side can have just as big an impact as any structural or physical improvements” in energy efficiency, she said.

Producing 660,000 barrels of beer per year, New Belgium Brewing Company is the third largest craft brewery and the seventh largest brewery in the U.S. Brands such as Fat Tire, 1554, Sunshine Wheat, Blue Paddle, and Trippel are made by New Belgium.

New Belgium built both employee engagement and environmental sustainability into its core values from the start, as part of its “People, Planet, and Profits” philosophy. The company connected these core values together by putting in a process to capture employees’ ideas about energy efficiency and waste reduction, and other cost-saving or profit-generating ideas. The brewery takes its low employee turnover rate of 5.5% as evidence that its employee engagement efforts are effective and worthwhile.

## Engagement = Innovation

*Employee awareness of energy reduction goals has yielded some resourceful energy-saving measures. Here are two:*



*Hot glycol lines need to be cooled. Snow on the northern loading docks needs to be melted. Solution: running the glycol lines under the loading docks fixes both problems with minimal energy use.*

*Daylighting solutions including windows, light shelves, and light tubes save on energy costs while not affecting production.*



## HOW IT'S DONE: THE PROCESS

New Belgium has a three-step project management system called “Bright Ideas,” used not just for energy efficiency but for any suggested improvement. Anyone can submit an idea by filling out a template where they explain the suggested change and how it could lead to energy savings, dollar savings, or other end goals. These proposals are reviewed by a committee with reps from the CFO’s office, sustainability, engineering, maintenance, and other company decision-makers.

Proposals that the committee thinks deserve further attention are assigned a project manager, who does a careful cost/benefit and feasibility analysis. If the project passes that step, it’s then sent to the budgetary department where it gets lined up in priority list.

## BUILDING A HIGH-INVOLVEMENT CULTURE

*“A lot of companies now are addressing sustainability. But very few are involving their co-workers in sustainability,” says Wallace.*

To do so, New Belgium suggests having executive support from the top down, and building a high-involvement culture from the bottom up where employees have an ownership mentality. Through continual education efforts, co-workers are encouraged to keep sustainability and wise energy use at the front of their minds.

Wallace added, “New Belgium also believes that ‘if it’s not fun, it’s not sustainable.’ It’s important to be excited about what we’re doing.”

### More Info

*Emphasizing the importance of wise energy use at every level of the business, creating a process to submit energy-saving and cost-saving suggestions, and ensuring top-down support for energy efficiency will help ensure success.*

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