

Jackson Hole News & Guide

Program gives businesses energy-efficiency loans

Brewery, PR firm are 1st to borrow from Energy Conservation Works.

By Allie Gross 4 hrs ago

Two businesses are pioneering a program that allows them to take out loans from Energy Conservation Works to increase energy efficiency.

“We’re supporting local business by helping them do more with less energy consumption,” said Phil Cameron, executive director at Energy Conservation Works. “It helps to streamline their operations, reduce their operation expenses, and a lot of times it aligns with the business’s ethic or mission or principles.”

Last week the public energy board approved loan agreements with Roadhouse Brewing and Purple Orange, a media and public relations firm. Companies repay the loans at low interest rates on their utility bills.

The Roadhouse loan is financing solar panels for the roof of its new brewery on Gregory Lane. Amy Haverkamp, director of special projects at Roadhouse Brewing, spearheaded the effort.

“We want to be known for taking sustainability seriously and putting that in the forefront of our projects and how we move forward,” Haverkamp said.

She received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant — which covered 25 percent of the project’s \$75,000 price tag — and approached Energy Conservation Works about financing the rest of the project.

At Purple Orange the loan will go toward an “exhaustive retrofit” of the firm’s commercial space, including new insulation and windows.

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Similar loans have been available for residential homeowners for years, but the board is just now expanding it to commercial businesses.

Cameron said the new commercial loan program is one way Energy Conservation Works is looking to apply what it’s learned from various public projects to help private businesses, such as expertise with grant applications and energy audits.

“We can layer all these things on top of one another to get them where they want to be,” Cameron said.

For Haverkamp the project helps illustrate that sustainability is important to the Roadhouse brand.

“I think it’s exciting to see it coming to fruition,” Haverkamp said. “Hopefully the two businesses will use it well, and the projects are really successful, and it’s a great case study for others as they continue to grow the program.”

Cameron hopes to expand the program to new businesses.

“To us we’re achieving success if those monies are loaned out and they’re being used to save energy,” Cameron said. “We would encourage interested businesses to contact us.”