



Rug Gallery Improves Lighting and Cost-Savings Thanks to Energy Watch Program

Stephen Miller's gallery in Menlo Park is not your typical rug store. Owner Stephen Miller's keen eye for design and workmanship, combined with his deep expertise in hand-woven rugs, has made the Stephen Miller Gallery one of Northern California's most respected collections of contemporary rugs. As a small business owner, Miller is intent on finding ways to manage costs without sacrificing quality or his unique aesthetic. The need to find this balance is no more evident than in store lighting – which can be expensive, but is also key to creating the right gallery ambiance.

The Challenge

Stephen Miller opened his rug gallery in Menlo Park in 1991, inspired by the multicultural, intellectual vitality and entrepreneurial spirit of the San Francisco Peninsula area. Being a vital part of the local culture and community is important to Mr. Miller, but the rising operational costs in the region motivated him to seek out ways to lower his overhead expenses so that he could remain in the area. While considering ways to reduce his utility costs, Mr. Miller discovered the San Mateo County Energy Watch program for small businesses and nonprofits and reached out to a program representative to learn more.

The Solution

The San Mateo County Energy Watch program is a partnership between PG&E and the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) of San Mateo County, a public agency that represents San Mateo County's 20 cities and the County itself. The energy efficiency turn-key program works exactly as it implies: energy efficiency specialists manage the entire project for customers, starting with the initial survey of existing lighting and ending with the final quality check after the installation. In addition, the program offers rebates that typically cover 30-100% of the project's cost.

An Energy Watch Efficiency Consultant conducted a free, comprehensive assessment of the gallery's existing lighting system and developed a proposal to replace the existing in-ceiling can lights and track lighting with energy-efficient bulbs. While Energy Watch clients may choose to have the program's contractors carry out the lighting retrofit, Mr. Miller opted to take advantage of the flexible "self-install" option

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*– Stephen Miller, Owner,
Stephen Miller Gallery*



for businesses that prefer to manage the equipment installation themselves. Mr. Miller had members of his own staff who were accustomed to changing out the store's lighting do the retrofit and replace the existing bulbs with the recommended efficient models provided by the Energy Watch program. This made it incredibly convenient and allowed Mr. Miller to schedule the installation when the store was closed, while still leveraging the technical expertise and oversight provided by the program. "The installation team really adapted based on our needs. They were always easy to get ahold of and returned calls right away. Our Consultant was on site regularly to make sure the installation was going as planned," said Mr. Miller.

The Results

Mr. Miller has been very pleased with the results of the lighting retrofit and has found that the new lights have cut the gallery's utility bills by more than half. In addition, the new lighting better illuminates the true color of the rugs and makes it easier for customers to appreciate the finer details of the design. Mr. Miller's aim is to encourage customers to trust their eye, be attentive to what evokes a positive response, and find a rug that they'll fall in love with. The new gallery lighting is a subtle but powerful aid in creating that customer experience.



Project impact

Installation Cost	Rebate	Total Out-of-pocket Costs
\$13,363	\$13,363	\$0



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About San Mateo County Energy Watch

Energy Watch is a public-private partnership between the County of San Mateo and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). We provide cities, schools, and small businesses with the resources they need to pursue energy efficiency at a low cost. We partner with Ecology Action, a California-based 501c3 nonprofit and industry leader for energy efficiency and sustainability, to implement customer projects and provide technical assistance. To learn more about how Energy Watch can save you money, please visit www.smcenergywatch.com.