

## Customer Spotlight

### Wild Dunes Resort Dials in Savings with HVAC Control Upgrade

Located just steps from the beach near Charleston, SC, and nestled in the heart of Wild Dunes Resort is the Boardwalk Inn. The 93-room hotel offers a variety of accommodations for visitors to the island resort.

The job of keeping the inn’s rooms and suites comfortable for guests year-round falls to facility manager Jack Gorman. Thanks to energy efficiency retrofits made possible by incentives from SCE&G’s EnergyWise for Your Business program, Gorman’s job just got a lot easier. Newly installed digital thermostats and a Web-based energy management system now enable him to monitor temperatures in all guestrooms with the click of a mouse.

#### The Opportunity

Keeping costs down while maintaining a high level of quality and comfort throughout the hotel’s 84,630 square feet of space is an ongoing challenge. One persistent problem for the seaside property is humidity, specifically the disparity between the hot and humid air outside and the cool, conditioned air inside guestrooms. Before the upgrade, the condition of the inn’s old manual thermostats was variable, many leaning toward poor. Guests often reported trouble reading the thermostats, let alone setting them appropriately to achieve a comfortable temperature.

“Sometimes guests would set the thermostats too low, and we’d have a problem with condensation in the room,” Gorman says, “especially when someone left a balcony door open.”

Replacing the old thermostats with new digital models promised to enhance guest comfort and satisfaction, reduce maintenance calls, and improve energy efficiency and cost savings.

#### The SCE&G Solution

To complete its energy upgrade, Wild Dunes Resort took advantage of the Custom program offering available from SCE&G’s EnergyWise for Your Business program, which, for retrofit projects, provides incentives that can cover up to 50% of the total project costs. The inn installed in all the guestrooms new digital thermostats that are easy for customers to read and to adjust themselves. Occupancy sensors and door sensors installed on exterior lanai doors are coupled with a new energy management system that enables Gorman and his staff to control the thermostats and set points in each room remotely via computer. “Through a Web-based program, we can see if any room is having problems, and we can shut off or set the A/C to 78 degrees when rooms are unoccupied,” he says.



*Jack Gorman, Facility Manager, Wild Dunes Resort*

#### Savings at a Glance

Wild Dunes Resort used SCE&G incentives to install HVAC controls in hotel guestrooms and an energy management system at its Boardwalk Inn outside Charleston.

End uses:	<b>HVAC Controls</b>
Energy savings:	<b>107,461 kWh/year</b>
Total project cost:	<b>\$28,026</b>
Incentives paid:	<b>\$14,013</b>
Cost to Wild Dunes Resort:	<b>\$14,013</b>
Estimated lifetime energy savings:	<b>1,611,915 kWh</b>

The project approval process through SCE&G's EnergyWise for Your Business program was efficient and seamless. Gorman's equipment vendor worked directly with program staff to complete the proper calculations and submit supporting documentation to obtain approval for the project. Although the Custom program requires a little more upfront work than SCE&G's Prescriptive program, it enables a business to demonstrate how the unique measures being proposed for its site can meet SCE&G's requirements for improvement of energy efficiency, which helps to maximize the incentive dollars based on the specific circumstances of the facility. And, it worked for Wild Dunes, as the resort only had to pay \$14,013 out of pocket—just half the \$28,026 total project cost.

## The Benefits

Cost savings and guest comfort were the key motivators in doing the retrofit project. "We look at everything we can do to run efficiently and improve our guests' satisfaction and comfort," Gorman says. "This project was a perfect fit."

After just 6 months, Gorman already saw energy savings on the bottom line. The "results" page in the energy management program displays in real time how often each guestroom's A/C is running. In the past, he says, "the units would run 24/7. But now maybe just 5 hours a day."

When he gets into the office in the morning, Gorman can pull up the energy management program on his computer. It takes just a couple minutes to scroll through and see the actual temperatures in each room. "We can be proactive," he says. "If I see that a room's A/C is having problems, I can get a maintenance person out to address the issue before the customer even notices. As a result, we expect to see our customer service scores going up."

Participation in SCE&G's EnergyWise for Your Business program with Custom incentives was a definite win-win for the hotel. Gorman received the technology he needed to help the facility save energy, reduce maintenance and cut costs on its electric bill. And, the process of obtaining approval for the project and receiving the SCE&G incentives was straightforward and efficient.

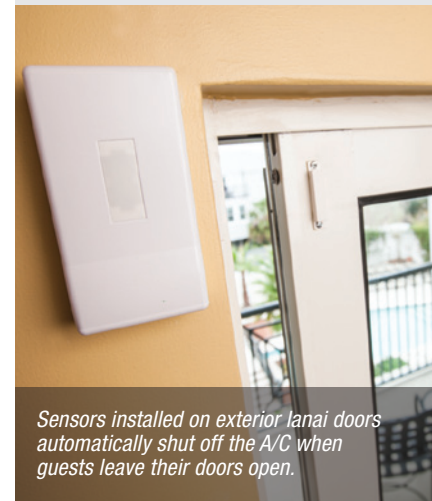
Up next, the resort is exploring doing an LED lighting retrofit project in another of its properties. "With the economy the way it is, we're putting people back to work by doing these projects," Gorman says. "Hopefully, projects like ours and others completed through SCE&G's program will help take some of the load off the grid down the road."



*New digital thermostats are easy for guests to operate and enable staff to adjust temperatures in unoccupied rooms.*

“ SCE&G's rebate program, which allowed us to split the cost, made the project a lot more attractive. ”

—Jack Gorman  
Wild Dunes Resort



*Sensors installed on exterior lanai doors automatically shut off the A/C when guests leave their doors open.*



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