

CRAFT BEER COMPANY BREWS CONFIDENCE AND COST SAVINGS THROUGH ENERGY ASSESSMENT

ABOUT CREATURE COMFORTS BREWING COMPANY. Located in Athens, Georgia, Creature Comforts Brewing Co. is a craft beer company that produces and distributes high-quality beers, including a variety of seasonal and specialty releases. Since opening its doors in 2014, the company has experienced tremendous growth. In 2017 Creature Comforts built a new 40,000-square-foot facility located in Athens at the historic Southern Mill complex.

THE CHALLENGE. In January of 2021, Creature Comforts' Sustainability Manager Jacob Yarbrough reached out to the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech, part of the MEP National Network™, to inquire about an energy and sustainability assessment. The company had previously completed energy assessments through other providers at the original facility. However, after speaking with Kelly Grissom, a GaMEP project manager, Yarbrough learned that the GaMEP assessment would be much more comprehensive and provide him with precise data and specific action items that would allow him to confidently approach the company's leadership team.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. During the one-day assessment, Grissom and his team used different methods to analyze users of electricity throughout the facility - mainly those based on compressed air usage and carbon dioxide usage during the manufacturing process. After attaching a closed circuit data logger to the compressor Grissom observed that electricity was still running through the compressor during times of non-production, indicating air leaks. Grissom also encouraged the company to switch to a more efficient and cost-effective blower-driven system instead of using compressed air to dry and clean conveyed parts. Another quick fix for the compressed air system involved reducing the compressor's set point to the lowest possible pressure while still delivering the point-of-use requirements. As part of its preventive maintenance plan, the company is conducting a full audit of its compressed air systems and carbon dioxide usage two times per year. All of these recommendations help reduce electricity consumption and carbon emissions. Other recommendations following the assessment included using a natural gas combined heat and power (CHP) system. A CHP system produces cleaner energy while putting off heat that can be used during the production process (versus using industrial heaters). Generating electricity in this way would also help prevent power loss and further contribute to the reduction of the plant's energy consumption and carbon emissions.

"To any business that is looking to become more energy-efficient, I recommend working with the GaMEP to complete an energy assessment. Having a team of experts come to our facility and make meaningful suggestions based on our real-world experiences helped reveal efficiency issues we did not know existed. This opportunity pulled the curtain back for us and showed us how to apply these recommendations internally, and thus, has increased our team's confidence."

-Jacob Yarbrough, Sustainability Manager

RESULTS



\$20,000 in electrical cost savings project over a 12-month period



More efficient in lbs of CO₂ used per barrel of beer produced, decreasing **19** lbs to 16 lbs



Collaborated with the UGA College of Engineering on designing a CHP power system by April **2022**



Improved employee confidence and knowledge in executing best practices and implementing technology

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