



Avista helped us save over  
\$150,000 in energy costs.

**Pictured above:**  
Matt Iris (left),  
Mechanical Engineer, Avista  
Sean Hurley (center),  
Maintenance Supervisor, Cenex Zip Trip  
Ann Carey (right),  
Regional Account Executive, Avista

### FUEL STOP CONVENIENCE STORES HAVE BECOME A NECESSITY

for today's time-starved consumers, providing quick one-stop shopping for gasoline, grab & go foods, and sodas for the road trip. Among this region's leaders is Cenex Zip Trip, with 70 stores across Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Headquartered in Spokane, Washington, the chain is a subsidiary of CHS Inc., a leading global agribusiness owned by farmers, ranchers and cooperatives across the United States. CHS Inc. is the Minnesota-based company which owns and operates the Cenex energy brand.

Zip Trip provides exceptional customer service and products. Their associates take pride in what they do and consistently follow through on the company's brand promise. Zip Trip focuses on setting itself apart by providing great service and offering customers the convenience items they want most, such as fresh grab & go sandwiches and salads and high-quality coffees. Nonetheless, competition in their markets is growing.

To improve its brand positioning, the chain has been updating the interior of their stores. They have also continually strived to cut operating costs, energy use being one of the biggest. That's why Zip Trip partners with Avista for ways to make their stores more energy efficient.

"Avista comes to us regularly with ideas and recommendations of how we can save energy," said Zip Trip maintenance manager Sean Hurley. "And their rebates have enabled us to make these improvements in a cost-effective manner."

Since 2011, Avista has provided Zip Trip with more than \$280,000 in energy efficiency rebates through its Energy Smart Grocer Program and other incentive programs.

"Their upgrades have so far resulted in Zip Trip saving more than 1.9 million kilowatt hours of electricity and over \$150,000 in energy costs," said Avista regional account executive Ann Carey.

About five years ago, Avista began by helping Zip Trip complete a project to upgrade cooler fan motors in its refrigerated beverage and sandwich cases. Old evaporator motors were replaced with electronically commutated motors (ECMs) that feature blades made of lightweight plastic vs. metal. In addition to running on less energy, ECMs last longer and emit less heat, which helps maintain cool temperatures.

Zip Trip also received rebates to replace cooler-door gaskets for a tighter seal and add anti-sweat heat controls in the doors to prevent condensation of the glass and door frames. The changes not only save energy, they put less strain on the refrigeration compressors.

About a year after completing refrigeration upgrades, Zip Trip took advantage of Avista's energy efficiency rebates to change out the interior lighting at area stores and their main office. They swapped T-12 bulbs for T-8s, cutting energy consumption by more than 198,000 kilowatt hours.

The energy-cost savings were so remarkable that when Avista again approached Zip Trip four years later,

offering new rebates on the most recent advances in LED technology, Zip Trip was more than willing to do a second upgrade. It was estimated that the new LED lights would cut Zip Trip's energy use by nearly 600,000 kilowatt hours, qualifying for over \$50,000 in rebates.

"Avista's rebate program offset much of the cost for newer LED technology," said Hurley. "It was a simple decision to redo our lighting right away."

In this second phase, Zip Trip also updated the lights inside their refrigerator cases with brighter, low-heat LEDs. According to Hurley, the LEDs make the cases look new, even without updating the case shelves or doors.

"All of our stores now have a cleaner, brighter look inside as well as outside," said Hurley. "That not only gets customers to stop for gas, it's more inviting for them to come inside. That's a good thing, as industry statistics say only 35% of convenience store customers venture inside."

The brighter lighting over the gas pump islands is also good for security, according to Hurley. The lighting helps people feel safer while pumping gas at night. It also helps the clerks keep tabs on the pumps, as Zip Trip is one of very few fuel stops that do not require customers to prepay for gasoline.

The LEDs will save on maintenance, too, because they last longer. "We were always getting service orders for individual canopy lights being out," Hurley added, "we were changing bulbs on a weekly basis. Customers were also inconvenienced, because while swapping out the lights, we had to turn off the pumps for added safety. We have not had any of these issues at the sites that have been upgraded with the new LED canopy fixtures."

Zip Trip also installed new LED lighting inside their warehouse and its accompanying parking lot. Avista helped pay for these upgrades, as well as for motion sensors that automatically turn off lights whenever work areas become unoccupied.

Since completing the entire project, Zip Trip has seen their sales volume increase. The company is so pleased



with the overall changes that they plan to make the same updates at other Zip Trip locations, even those outside Avista's service territory.

For more information on Avista's energy efficiency programs for commercial and industrial customers, visit [myavista.com/bizrebates](http://myavista.com/bizrebates) or email [accountexecs@avistacorp.com](mailto:accountexecs@avistacorp.com).

**AVISTA**