



NY Energy Savings Programs

Customer Spotlight:

The Keator Block Cortland, NY

Helping a historic property go all-electric while preserving its character

Main Street businesses are the heart of our communities, and many are located in older buildings. This circa-1830 building includes apartments and a restaurant, it's a perfect example of a historic mixed-use building full of well-loved local businesses.

With drafty conditions, limited air conditioning, and a significant need for repairs, The Keator Block turned to National Grid for support in making their building more efficient, comfortable, and sustainable.

The Opportunity

What began as a temporary fix quickly evolved into a complete modernization. Rather than upgrading the building system by system, The Keator Block decided to take a holistic approach. They pursued a comprehensive renovation that included structural re-support and roof replacement, a new façade and storefront, and a whole-building envelope upgrade.

The biggest challenge was ensuring year-round comfort while preserving the building's historic look. Retrofitting a heating-only boiler system with a ducted heating and cooling system would require significant changes; this presented an opportunity to pursue an all-electric ductless option and align with the building owner's decarbonization goals.

The Solution

It all started with the heating and cooling system. To match diverse space needs and simplify installation, the owner began by upgrading the upstairs apartments first—the initial phase of a multi-stage project. The team used National Grid's Clean Heat incentives to help reduce the cost of installing high-efficiency mini-split heat pumps. These systems provide room-by-room and zone-by-zone control throughout each unit, maximizing both comfort and efficiency. The electric service was also upgraded to support the property's all-electric design.



High-Efficiency Heat Pumps



Optimizing Comfort For Every Room

“Installing heat pumps allowed us to retain the historic nature of our building while providing everyone inside with greater comfort.”

*Steve Wineburg
Owner, The Keator Block, Cortland, NY*



To further reduce energy use, deteriorated single-pane windows in the upstairs units were replaced with historically matched, aluminum-clad double-pane windows. New doors, insulation, and air sealing rounded out the building-envelope improvements, ensuring the heat pumps would operate as efficiently as possible. With the upstairs phase complete, the owner is now moving on to phase two, which includes upgrading the commercial space occupied by Nanu's Nanu's Hot Chicken.

The Results

For The Keator Block efficiency and comfort are now front and center. For the apartments, central air conditioning is a major market differentiator in an area where many units lack this feature. The envelope improvements ensure the new heat pump systems can heat and cool efficiently without drafts or losses, preserving historic character while delivering modern comfort all year round. With the exception of the restaurant's natural gas cooking equipment, the building is now fully electric—making it a showcase for lower carbon emissions.

Program Impact

Annual energy savings:

434
MMBtu

**Annual reduction of
CO₂ emissions:**

22.3
Metric tons

**Projected costs
incentivized by
National Grid:**

\$34,700

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