

A Model for Resiliency

The Dubuque Rescue Mission



SUCCESS STORY

In January of 2014, Iowa Interfaith Power & Light highlighted the Dubuque Rescue Mission as an [Iowa Success Story](#). Under the leadership of Executive Director Rick Mihm, the Mission began recycling old appliances and replacing them with energy efficient models, underwent an energy audit, and weatherized the building by updating installation and weather stripping leaky doors. The Mission utilized grants and rebates offered by the community and their utility provider, making these updates affordable.



Since that 2014 Success Story, the Dubuque Rescue Mission has continued this important work—living into their call to stewardship. Seven months after we interviewed the Mission in 2014, they added 89 solar panels to their roof. **These panels have allowed the Mission to save 25% on their annual electric bill.** In order to

finance the panels, the Mission began setting aside money several years before the installation; they also took advantage of another rebate.

When asked if there were any obstacles or barriers to getting the solar panels installed, Rick couldn't think of any. Over the course of his time at the Mission he has advocated for energy efficiency and educated supporters and the Board of Directors on the importance of renewable energy. "By the time I came to the Board with the idea of solar, we had done all of our energy efficiency work—it was the logical next step," says Rick.

The Dubuque Rescue Mission provides a model for churches and non-profit organizations committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing air pollution harmful to public health, creating local jobs, and saving money they can reinvest into their churches and organizations. At the Dubuque Rescue Mission, money saved goes toward their mission: offering hospitality, spiritual hope, food, shelter, clothing, and job development to those in need.

Rick is dedicated to creating independence and resiliency at the Mission—resiliency in food production, energy production, and job production. The Mission's garden and greenhouse produce over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce for meals at the Mission and

create opportunities for education and job skill development. The decision to install solar and produce renewable energy onsite fits into this resiliency model. **“As systems change, as government changes, as weather changes, we want to create a bigger buffer—a safer, more reliable future here at the Mission,” says Rick.** Isn't it incredible that in Dubuque, Iowa men experiencing homelessness “are the growers of food and producers of energy?” he asks.

The work of the Mission and the effort they have put into renewable energy and energy efficiency has lifted them up as leaders in their community. They have set strong examples of what it means to be good stewards of creation and how to promote resiliency— examples churches and faith communities across Iowa can learn from.

For more information visit their website at www.dbqrescue.org or contact Rick Mihm at mihmr@mchsi.com.