

El Andariego Serves Up a Brighter Dining Experience

Managing one restaurant is a full-time job, so imagine running your own restaurant in Baltimore at night and operating a busy Washington, DC, restaurant by day. Jaime Vasquez, owner of El Andariego Restaurant in Ashton, MD, and manager of the prestigious Lafayette Room restaurant in the Hay Adams Hotel in Washington, DC, not only succeeds at juggling both roles, but also found time to enhance the customer experience, improve energy efficiency, and save money by upgrading the lighting in his restaurant.

Opened in 1999, El Andariego specializes in both Mexican and Salvadoran cuisine. The restaurant's goal is to provide an atmosphere where people can enjoy an exceptional meal in a comfortable and relaxing environment. With the help of the BGE Smart Energy Savers ProgramSM, El Andariego recently completed comprehensive lighting upgrades throughout the restaurant, including the dining room, office, kitchen, and storage space. These upgrades enhance the restaurant's energy efficiency and improve the dining experience for customers.

The Opportunity

El Andariego occupies a 3,000-square-foot space, with seating for approximately 125 customers. Vasquez is always looking for ways to decrease the restaurant's operating costs without compromising customer satisfaction. That goal was a challenge, in part, due to the existing lighting fixtures throughout the facility, which were insufficient and creating a dim and uninspiring environment for both customers and staff.

Vasquez wasn't initially planning any lighting upgrades for El Andariego. However, following a visit from one of his regular customers, who also happens to be a local Maryland lighting contractor versed in the BGE Small Business Lighting Solutions Program, Vasquez quickly realized the value of the opportunity in front of him. "Once I heard BGE was going to pay 80% of the costs, I didn't think it was real," he says. "I kept looking for the catch."



Jaime Vasquez, Owner, El Andariego Restaurant.

Savings at a Glance

Program: **Small Business Lighting Solutions**

El Andariego, a restaurant in Ashton, used BGE incentives to install energy-efficient lighting.

Energy savings: **70% annual kWh savings on lighting**

Incentives paid: **\$1,091**

Payback: **Less than 3 months**

“BGE’s incentives make the Small Business Lighting Solutions Program such a great deal. We were able to make our dining room brighter and more lively, while seeing a tangible difference in our monthly bills.”

—Jaime Vasquez
Owner
El Andariego Restaurant

The BGE Solution

Working with one of BGE’s approved Small Business Lighting Solutions contractors, El Andariego improved the efficiency and quality of the lighting in the restaurant by using high-efficiency and lower-wattage fixtures that will last longer and use less energy. With BGE’s simple, turnkey process, El Andariego received an on-site lighting assessment, which led to recommendations about lighting replacements to best serve the restaurant’s needs. Replacement lighting for the dining room included fifteen 15-watt compact fluorescent screw-in dimmable lights with reflectors, and eleven 13-watt compact fluorescent screw-in “mini-twist” bulbs. These replacements reduced energy demand from 1,560 to 368 watts, which was estimated to produce annual savings of 4,338 kilowatt-hours (kWh), based on 70 hours per week of operation.

The remaining lighting in the offices, kitchen, and storage area was replaced with high-efficiency T8 28-watt low-ballast-factor fixtures. The result? The restaurant reduced its energy demand from 1,880 to 672 watts, which will yield an estimated annual savings of 4,397 kWh.

Installation of the new lighting was quick and straightforward. “The process couldn’t have gone any smoother,” Vasquez says. “All of the upgrades were done over the course of three mornings, before the restaurant was open, so our staff and customers were not inconvenienced, and we were able to open and run just like normal.”

The BGE **Small Business Lighting Solutions Program** is designed to help small business owners use energy more efficiently. The program includes an energy analysis and easy-to-follow recommendations for improving energy efficiency and full turnkey service to help you make energy efficiency part of your long-term business plan. Participating businesses can receive rebates that cover up to 80% of the total cost for most energy efficiency lighting retrofit projects, including materials, labor, and recycling. For more information, visit BGESmartEnergy.com.

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El Andariego Restaurant used incentives from BGE to complete its lighting retrofit.

The Benefits

Vasquez cites a variety of benefits associated with El Andariego’s lighting retrofit. First, the project was instrumental in helping the small business stay focused on the bottom line while improving the customer and employee experience. “Making changes like these is really important to controlling your operating costs and protecting your competitive edge,” he says.

Another key benefit is the ongoing energy savings made possible by the project’s 70% estimated reduction in annual kilowatt-hour consumption for lighting. The financial incentives available from the BGE Small Business Lighting Solutions Program—\$1,091 worth—and the less-than-3-month payback on the investment made a compelling business case for the upgrades. The increased lamp life and decreased maintenance costs further reinforce the financial benefits.

Finally, Vasquez says, “With the new energy-efficient lighting, our customers have a happier dining experience. Plus, telling them you’re also helping the environment never hurts either.” With top to bottom advantages like those, El Andariego is looking forward to a brighter future.



New lighting in the kitchen provides a brighter and, therefore, safer working environment for restaurant staff.