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NH Ice Rinks More Efficient Thanks To 'REALice'

Rinks in Exeter, Dover benefit from EE rebates, innovative resurfacing tech

February 8, 2019 Hampton, NH

Indoor ice arenas are energy-intensive facilities, so anytime they can reduce their energy spend, Unitil is there, supporting our customers with incentives. Two Unitil customers, the City of Dover and North Atlantic Hockey Group LLC, recently received incentives under the Smart Energy Solutions program to install the REALice cold water resurfacing system.

"What amazes me is the lower run time we're seeing on our compressors," says Chet Murch, arena manager at The Rinks at Exeter. "Before REALice, our three compressors were running an average of 19 hours a day each. They're now running almost half as often."

Ice rinks traditionally use extremely hot water to resurface the ice to remove the micro air bubbles in the water – tiny bubbles that create fragile, brittle ice. The REALice System acts like hot water, but without the same water heating expense. As a result, the rinks are no longer heating up the floodwater to extremely high temperatures like they were before REALice was installed, saving on energy.

Because the resulting water has fewer air bubbles in it than heated water, the ice freezes faster, which has an impact both on how the refrigeration plant runs as well as the arenas' brine temperature settings, which will need to be reset higher. This further reduces energy usage.

Unitil was able to cover more than a third of the project costs through energy efficiency rebates. In addition to incentives, North Atlantic Hockey Group LLC took advantage of Unitil's on-bill financing program, charging 0% interest over 36 months.

"These projects probably wouldn't happen without utility support," said Gary Bannon, Recreation Director for the City of Dover. "We're glad to work as a team together with the utilities to realize projects like this."

"We're thrilled with these kinds of projects," says Tim Noonis, Sr. Business Development Executive at Unitil. "By participating with incentives, we were able to encourage these rinks to be early adopters of this kind of technology, and greatly reducing their overall energy usage."



About Unitil Corporation

Unitil Corporation provides energy for life by safely and reliably delivering natural gas and electricity in New England. We are committed to the communities we serve and to developing people, business practices, and technologies that lead to the delivery of dependable, more efficient energy. Unitil Corporation is a public utility holding company with operations in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Together, Unitil's operating utilities serve approximately 105,600 electric customers and 82,700 natural gas customers. For more information about our people, technologies, and community involvement please visit <https://unitil.com>.

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