

To print this page, select **File** then **Print** from your browser

URL: http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/energy/article/0,2777,DRMN_23914_5198234,00.html

Mercury Cafe has something in the wind

Rooftop turbines generate electricity

By Gargi Chakrabarty, Rocky Mountain News
December 8, 2006

Mercury Cafe toasted new windmills placed on its roof Thursday, the first in downtown Denver.

The pair of turbines, about 40 feet tall and 4 feet in diameter, will generate enough electricity to account for half the restaurant's consumption during the day and a small portion at night.

The inspiration behind the windmills can be traced back to cafe owner Marilyn Megenity's visit to the Denver Art Museum, where she came upon a painting of the Moulin Rouge club in Paris.

"I realized Moulin Rouge had a windmill," said Megenity, 56, who has run the cafe for 32 years. "I thought if a nightclub had a windmill a hundred years ago, how come I don't?"

Convinced of the benefits of a windmill, Megenity paid a visit to the Denver City Council to get the necessary approvals.

"This is the very first windmill that Denver has permitted," said David Steele, an independent contractor who installed the turbines for Advanced Energy Systems. "The zoning department had to come up with guidelines about the windmill capacity that you can put in the city."

Steele said each of the turbines at the Mercury Cafe has a capacity of 400 watts, the maximum allowed under city guidelines.

In addition to the turbines, Mercury Cafe has installed six solar panels - each with a capacity of 1.75 kilowatts.

In total, Megenity said she invested about \$20,000 in wind and solar installations, of which she hopes to recover \$7,000 to \$8,000 from Xcel Energy in rebates.

Though windmills, unlike solar panels, don't qualify for Xcel rebates, owners can benefit from putting electricity back into the grid. And wind technology is finding more acceptance from customers.

Copyright 2006, Rocky Mountain News. All Rights Reserved.



Matt McClain ©
News

Engineer Tim Olsen, from left, David Steele and Steve "Stosh" Cohen on Thursday install one of two AirX model windmills on the roof of the Mercury Cafe in downtown Denver. The 40-foot-tall turbines will provide about half of the restaurant's daytime use of electricity.