

York County Jail 2012 to Present

Project

The York County Sheriff's office in Alfred, Maine is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the York County Jail. The jail is a modern correctional facility, responsible for the safe pre-trial and post-conviction custody of up to 300 inmates.

In the winter of 2012, the per-gallon price of commercial heating oil soared to more than \$3.50 per gallon amid instability in the Middle East. At that time, the York County Jail's source of heat and hot water was heating oil—and the cost was blowing a hole in the county budget.

Challenge

York County Manager Greg Zinser knew a change had to be made to a less expensive fuel. As county jails across the state struggled with deficits and flat funding, Zinser knew there would be no new money coming to fund a conversion.

His challenge: how to fund a fuel conversion that ultimately would save the county tens of thousands of dollars annually when he had no money to pay for up front conversion costs?

A secondary challenge was fuel supply. Zinser's research told him that propane would be the most convenient, economical, and efficient replacement for heating oil. The county already used propane for smaller projects, but the only propane tanks on site were relatively small. If a conversion of the jail and Sheriff's office to propane were to take place, on-site storage would have to be increased ten-fold.

Because Dead River Company was the county's propane provider; Zinser says he "naturally turned to Dead River for help with our problem."

How Dead River Company Met the Challenge

Dead River Company's Commercial Account Manager, Dave Luce, assessed the county's critical needs and created a plan to install an 18,000-gallon propane tank as well as dual fuel burners that allow the jail to heat primarily with propane, using oil as a backup. In addition, Luce created a five-year 400,000-gallon supply agreement with the county that included what amounts to installment payments on the tank installation and conversion costs. As an added benefit to the County, Luce devised multiple fixed-price agreements for the cost of the propane within that supply agreement. The conversion resulted in considerable annual savings.

Dead River Company worked with the county to eliminate any up front expenses, lower the county's fuel costs, all while increasing efficiency.

Result

"The results have been fantastic!" said Zinser. "Without the supply agreement, we could never have afforded the conversion and the installation of the propane tank. We've lowered our fuel costs and because of our ongoing relationship with Dead River Company, we've made further supply agreements—and that means the fuel budget will go down even more. We continue to increase our savings and our efficiency."

Zinser understands the responsibility and restrictions of working with a taxpayer-funded budget and advises other government managers to look at the York County success story with Dead River Company.

"I would absolutely recommend this to any entity that has budget constraints and sees the value in looking ahead to lower operating costs," added Zinser. "After the conversions we saw immediate savings and efficiency. We've since paid for the entire system and we're still saving money. Absolutely, I'd recommend this approach."