



Mike Fiebiger, and John Teller of Alpine Garage, stand alongside Rick Phelps, executive director of the High Sierra Energy Foundation. Phelps facilitated an electrical makeover for the garage.



John Teller works on an engine re-build under decent lighting, for a change. Times Photos/George Shirk

Alpine Garage gets a free electrical makeover

All it took was a little help from their friends

By George Shirk
Times Senior Writer

The Alpine Garage has a bright future.

Literally.

Mammoth's venerable business on Center Street got an electrical makeover recently, thanks to the High Sierra Energy Foundation and Southern California Edison's "Direct Install" program.

'All the lights in the garage here were about 30 or 40

years old," said mechanic John Teller.

"Most of them wouldn't even work anymore. Now it's working better and conserving energy well.

"We can actually see now."

Mike Fiebiger, meanwhile, said sometimes the lights had been so dim that customers could hardly tell if the garage was open or closed.

The best part of the makeover, said Dieter Fiebiger, is that it didn't cost a thing.

"Thanks to Rick Phelps," Fiebiger said. "He was the main drive that got this."

Phelps is the director of

the non-profit High Sierra Foundation. He said by using the Alpine Garage as a pilot project, other small business owners can see for themselves how to become more energy efficient.

"It's all about saving money," Fiebiger said.

The Alpine Garage pilot project began about two years ago, when Phelps walked into the garage and could hardly see a thing.

He saw that the ballasts were decades old, some lights had quit working altogether, and he figured the garage was bleeding energy.

Phelps helped the garage take advantage of SCE's

program by facilitating the process.

Under the program, licensed contractors assess the work requirements, then install new equipment at no charge.

The process for Alpine Garage took more than a year from the time Phelps first walked in.

The results have been dramatic so far.

Thirty-four fluorescent lamps were replaced with electronic ballasts.

Working with O'Kelly Electric, the garage achieved more than 100 percent in measured light lumens and "a significant reduction" in electric bills.

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