



## Case Study: The Pink Palace

Glenwood Springs,  
Colorado

By Cameron M. Burns, CLEER



# Historic Glenwood building gets extensive energy makeover, lowering costs, improving comfort

The Pink Palace is a Glenwood Springs landmark and treasure. Built in 1887, it was touted as the most beautiful building in the city for many years. In the 1920s it was converted to include five apartments, and was often the first place newcomers to the city lived when they arrived. In the 1960s, it was painted a “Pepto-Bismol pink,” earning it the nickname of the Pink Palace.

Now that it’s undergone an extensive series of energy upgrades and other renovations, owners of the building—and the residents—say they’re saving a considerable amount of money on energy costs.

“We have done a remodel of most kitchens and bathroom, insulated walls and ceilings where ever possible,” said co-owner John Ackerman. “I expect bills to be less than half, maybe a third, of the past.”

Ackerman and his wife, Mari-



John Ackerman in front of the west facade of the Pink Palace. Photos by Cam Burns

anne, bought the building with Pete Waller, who’s Colorado Mountain College’s facilities director, and his wife Gina in the early 2000s. They all knew the historic building needed upgrades, but as with most buildings, the various efforts had to be weighed against available resources.

After they bought the Palace, the owners replaced the old windows and added insulation. Later, they remodeled all the kitchens and bathrooms, but, Ackerman noted, “even after that [the insulation and

window replacement] the heating bills were still about \$750 a month. The heating system was malfunctioning, and we couldn’t figure out how to fix it.”

In spring 2013 SGM’s Tony

### Lessons Learned

- Equipment needs to function the way it was intended
- During remodels of homes and apartments is a great time to do energy upgrades

### The Upgrades

- Replaced old steam boiler with new energy efficient model
- Added insulation
- Replaced old windows with better models
- Added zone thermostats for residents’ comfort



*Above: John Ackerman shows off the new boiler and hot water tank (with heat exchanger) in the Pink Palace's basement.*

Haschke did an energy assessment on the building. Pink Palace owners received a rebate of \$500 from the Glenwood Springs Electric Sustainability program to help fund the assessment.

“He was pretty impressed because we’d put all new windows—thermal pane windows—and kitchens and bathrooms in, and insulated everything,” Ackerman said.

But there was still the issue of the 1920s steam heating system and the 1950s boiler in the basement. The heat was impossible to regulate and windows were always open in the winter.

“We bought the Pink Palace because everyone was kind of afraid of it,” Ackerman said. “I thought, man, we’re taking on a big deal here with this steam heat.”

Serendipitously, a friend of Ackerman’s, Shelley Kaup, is an energy coach at CLEER, Clean Energy Economy for the Region, a local organization implementing both Garfield Clean Energy and Glenwood Springs Electric energy efficiency programs. She told

Ackerman about rebates available through Garfield Clean Energy for upgrades like new heating equipment. So, Ackerman and the co-owners committed to the replacement. After spending \$6,000 on basement asbestos removal, a new energy efficient boiler and integrated hot water tank were installed along with zone thermostats in each of the units, so residents can better control their own comfort.

The new boiler and heat system cost \$26,917, but Pink Palace owners were able to get rebates for \$2,500 from Garfield Clean Energy and \$2,500 from CORE damping the expense somewhat.

Now the Pink Palace is on track to save considerable energy and maintenance expenses in the decades ahead, in addition to greatly improved comfort.

It was always Ackerman and Waller’s goal to make the building more energy efficient, and they’re glad they undertook all the upgrades.

The upgrades are also something of a theme in the history of the building and its relationship with

energy. It was built by Jared DeRemer. DeRemer worked on survey crews for the South Pacific Railroad Company and moved to Glenwood to oversee the construction of the railroad through Glenwood Canyon. DeRemer also invented the DeRemer Water Wheel—for generating electricity—and was the mastermind behind the Shoshone hydro plant in Glenwood Canyon.

“This house is 126 years old and now we have this great modern heating system,” Ackerman said, smiling. “We’re glad we undertook all of the upgrades. So are the tenants who comment that they are much more comfortable now.”

**Garfield Clean Energy/CLEER**  
520 S. Third St., Ste. 17  
Carbondale CO 81623  
970-704-9200

[info@cleanenergyeconomy.net](mailto:info@cleanenergyeconomy.net)  
[www.cleanenergyeconomy.net](http://www.cleanenergyeconomy.net)  
[www.garfieldcleanenergy.org](http://www.garfieldcleanenergy.org)