

Tulsa Developer Avoids Costly Electrical Vault Upgrade By Choosing Natural Gas



BACKGROUND

The historic Adams Building in downtown Tulsa has lived several different lives.

The Adams Building was built in 1928 as a luxury hotel for oil businessmen and was an iconic part of downtown Tulsa. As times changed and the roaring 20s faded, the Adams Building evolved and became a commercial office tower for Tulsa businesses in the late 1980s. Today, the Adams Building, 403 S. Cheyenne Avenue, has been given a new life and transformed into a beautifully restored luxury apartment high-rise.

The mixed-use redevelopment project by Rose Rock Development Partners has 65 units and a ground-floor restaurant. Revitalizing the Adams Building, which claimed a listing on the renowned National Register of Historic Places in 1978, was no easy task, though. Rose Rock Development Partners CEO, Steven Watts and his team worked hard to abide by the National Park Service standards and were able to preserve the original, nearly century-old tile throughout the building's lobby and stairwell. However, they encountered several challenges they needed to overcome for the project to come to fruition.



DEVELOPER

Rose Rock Development Partners



LOCATION

Tulsa, Oklahoma



NATURAL GAS APPLIANCES

Cooking range, water heater, furnace



PROJECT SIZE

65 units



CHALLENGES

- Outdated and insufficient electrical infrastructure
- Logistics of venting and piping
- Limited meter placement
- Preservation of the historic architecture while adding modern amenities that young professionals desire



RESULTS

- More than \$200,000 reimbursed to help cover the cost of piping and venting
- More than \$50,000 issued in energy efficiency rebates
- Narrow alleyway meter location
- 65 individual meters

CHALLENGES

While some features could be preserved, others had to be upgraded.

Watts and his team were initially planning to make the Adams Building an all-electric development. During the restoration process, they discovered the building had an outdated and insufficient electrical infrastructure to meet the needs of a multi-family structure and needed to be updated. This upgrade was going to cost about \$750,000 – a price tag that wasn't in the project's budget.

That's when Watts started looking into alternative energy sources to electricity and discovered the multi-family reimbursement program and energy efficiency rebates offered by Oklahoma Natural Gas.

"Right away, I saw natural gas as a selling point," said Watts. "It's cheaper to run natural gas appliances and natural gas cooking ranges are highly desirable for people who like to cook."

Oklahoma Natural Gas partnered with Watts and his team to discuss the scope of the project and collaborate how to meet the energy needs. The biggest challenge the team faced was identifying a location for 65 meters within the limited footprint of the historic building.



BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL METERS

- Residents can monitor individual gas usage
- Oklahoma Natural Gas bills resident directly
- Residents can make informed decisions to optimize energy performance
- Oklahoma Natural Gas is responsible for service line and meter maintenance and regulatory requirements
- Less downtime for maintenance and repairs

“ In my experience, it’s unique to work with a utility with such a customer-focused approach. ”



STEVEN WATTS
CEO, ROSE ROCK DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

SOLUTION

Collaboration results in a creative solution.

After several renderings, the Oklahoma Natural Gas team of engineers found an innovative way to meet everyone's needs. The best location for the meter placement ended up being a narrow alleyway between the Adams Building and another historic property. Each unit has its own individually tagged meter, which allows Oklahoma Natural Gas to safely access and maintain the meters to ensure the residents of the Adams Building are served in a safe manner.

For convenience and even greater reliability, Watts also chose to install natural gas backup generators for each of the units in the Adams Building.

"With a natural gas generator, there's no need to worry about refilling fuel, like with a diesel generator," Watts said. "It gives you peace of mind knowing there's already a fuel source to support our residents during an emergency."

RESULTS

Offsetting capital costs helps the project's bottom line.

The Adams Building was 90 percent leased out within about three months, with the studio apartments and one-bedroom units getting booked first. Once the Adams Building is at full capacity, the annual usage of the property is estimated to be 18.72 million BTUs.

Oklahoma Natural Gas also reimbursed Watts more than \$200,000 to help cover the cost for the natural gas piping and venting, as well as provided him with a check for more than \$50,000 in energy efficiency rebates.

"Oklahoma Natural Gas is great to work with and I enjoy interfacing with their team. It's nice to have one person to call if we have a question or issue," Watts said. "In my experience, it's unique to work with a utility with such a customer-focused approach."

To learn more about the Oklahoma Natural Gas Multi-Family Reimbursement Program, contact us at (918) 732-8485.