

All power to cost-saving systems

Cold storage businesses are saving big dollars on energy costs thanks to a new electricity management system.

Power remains a major expense of high refrigeration-consuming businesses but due to the complexity of the electricity market and lack of industry knowledge, it is often considered too difficult to review costs.

Austco's frozen and chilled distribution centre in Victoria, recently saved substantially on its power bills by using a new resource developed by Utilacor – an energy management firm.

Utilacor uses the kWatch system to detect faults and unnecessary charges within a business.

Austco managing director Barry Harvey said power was a big bill for the company.

"Electricity costs us between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per month, depending on the time of the year," he said.

"This equates to \$680,000 and \$700,000 in costs on power per year, which is why we have

to keep a close eye on things."

Based in Laverton North, the frozen and chilled distribution centre also runs three boning rooms and has the capacity to store over 15,000 pallet spaces at any one time.

About 95 per cent of Austco's electricity bill comes from its refrigeration costs.

"Initially Utilacor first had a look at our electricity accounts and made a few suggestions on how we can improve the efficiency of the plant, including renegotiating our electricity account.

"We actually ended up with the same supplier but they just gave us the best offer at the end of the renegotiation process," Harvey said.

Utilacor also assisted Austco in completing a major electricity upgrade to increase energy efficiency within the plant.

"We had fairly old sub-stations at the plant, so we upgraded those and installed smart meters.

"After the upgrade and auction, Utilacor went into a mon-



Savings...The Utilacor system has helped Austco's frozen and chilled distribution centre in Victoria saved a bundle on its power bill.

itoring role. They now continue to check our bills for us and keep the suppliers honest. We also now receive a full report from Utilacor every few months which keeps us fully informed on what is happening with all our electricity costs," he said.

Utilacor's business development manager Graeme Pollock said the energy market remained a complex environment.

It was "almost impossible" for businesses to manage their elec-

tricity accounts and optimise their own operations, he said.

"Due to the energy market's complexity and indifference to the concerns of unsuspecting customers, we find there is an enormous demand for the type of service that Utilacor provides.

"There is a desperate need out there for companies to obtain an independent opinion and practical advice that can result in improving the bottom line."