



The Aquatic Center was able to reduce its lighting fixtures from 38 to 20, saving 20,000kWh annually.

IMAGE COURTESY OF JASON HOSS/WHIRLIEE

IN THE SWIM OF IT

An LED upgrade by MaxLite and Colorado Electric Supply helps the aquatic facility at Breckenridge, Colorado's Recreation Center successfully navigate the waters.

by Susan Bloom

LOCATED AT THE BASE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS' Tenmile Range, the nearly five-square-mile town of Breckenridge, Colo., offers a memorable mix of breathtaking views, spectacular outdoor activities, and rich history. A former 19th-century mining town marked by a range of colorfully painted Victorian-era buildings that currently house a collection of upscale restaurants, shops, and galleries, Breckenridge has been a renowned ski destination and resort since 1961, offering more than 180 trails and mountain summits peaking at nearly 13,000' as well as a new Fun Park that hosts summer activities.

Year-round, the expansive Breckenridge Recreation Center actively serves its community—from the town's local resident population of 4,500 to the more than 35,000 tourists who swell the area during peak season from No-

vember to April—with a broad range of activities, from fitness and tennis to ice skating, a rock climbing wall, and more. So when outdated lighting created aesthetic and visibility issues for guests and staff members alike at the Rec Center's Aquatic Facility, Colorado Electric Supply (CES) teamed up with MaxLite to deliver a high-performing and cutting-edge new pool experience.

A Lighting Dilemma

Originally constructed in the early 1990s, "our Rec Center has been renovated a couple of times over the years, but this past year it has undergone extensive upgrades that include a brand-new tennis center, a reception/lobby area, and TRX/weight/cardio rooms as well as a new youth wing complete with an indoor playground," said Carmen Brashier, aquatic coordinator. In the spirit of this bene-

ficial overhaul, the management team agreed that it was also time to upgrade the lighting in the Aquatic Center, which features a 25-yard, four-lane lap pool; a leisure pool with a slide and resistance swim stream around its perimeter; and indoor and outdoor hot tubs.

Lit by an outdated system of 38 800W induction lighting fixtures, “the lights shone directly downward onto the pool like a spotlight and didn’t distribute the light evenly, creating a lot of dark corners that required us to reposition our lifeguards, especially in the deep end of the pool and by the slide,” Brashier explained. “The lights created an almost gloomy effect, which made it difficult to see, especially on an overcast or snowy day, making safety in the pool a main concern.”

She also noted that their induction lamps and ballasts were difficult to get parts for when they failed. “We often had to juggle lights from other areas while we waited for the new parts to be shipped,” she said of a maintenance challenge that required the use of a lift before or after pool hours to access.

Brought in by Breckenridge-based electrical contracting firm F.D. Taylor Electrical Construction and Flint Hansell, principal of Integrity Sales in Arvada, Colo., the team from the Frisco, Colo., branch of CES assessed the lighting situation at the pool and recommended a high-powered solution involving LEDs from MaxLite.

After observing the pool, taking measurements, and conducting an in-depth lighting layout with MaxLite, “we agreed that MaxLite’s StaxMax 540W high-output LED floodlights would be an ideal solution for this application,” said Ted Lunn, energy specialist for the 16 Colorado locations of CES. “We wanted to be able to shine light down adjustably and MaxLite’s IP65-rated, three-bar lighting fixtures allowed us to disperse the light as we needed it, engaging down-

lighting onto the pool deck area using the lowest bar and uplighting on the top two bars so as not to cast reflections on the water that could obscure visibility.”

Smooth Sailing

Since completing the installation in September/October 2017, the Aquatic Center was able to reduce its number of fixtures from 38 to just 20, saving 20,000-plus kWh annually between the 33% wattage reduction per fixture and delamping process the center was able to enjoy.

“We drain and/or resurface our pools annually every September, and when we returned in October, the new lighting made it seem like a whole new pool area,” raved Brashier. “There are no dark spots anymore. The lighting looks much brighter and crisper and, along with new cobalt blue tiles that we installed in the pool, adds a whole new quality and inviting blue appeal to the water.

Guests compliment our Aquatic Center all the time and often assume that we updated the whole pool area when it was just the new lighting that made such a difference.”

From a safety perspective, Brashier added, “our new lighting ensures that there’s one less thing for me to worry about as an aquatic director. We no longer have to go out of our way to teach our guards how to monitor dark corners or the slide area anymore, a benefit that has helped new guards in particular feel more comfortable in our pool area.”

As for its distributor partner, “the team from CES was extremely pleasant and professional to work with,” she continued. “They always wanted

to know my opinion; I discussed my concerns and the areas I wanted to see brightened up and they definitely listened to my input and adjusted the lighting accordingly, especially by the windows, over the lifeguard stand, and by the slide. Overall, we’re excited to have created a brighter, safer, and more enjoyable environment for our members and staffers.”

“With the pool in operation from early morning until nighttime every day and a wood ceiling that doesn’t

reflect light, it’s important to get the right light shining upward and we were successful in that pursuit,” Lunn said of the upgrade. “While the old lighting was truly a liability, the new lighting is so much brighter and helps lifeguards see activity so much better. Along with improving the lighting quality, the upgrade also saves money, which the Rec Center can now put toward other activities



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and services for its members.”

Lunn said that he appreciated the support of his partners from F.D. Taylor and MaxLite and, thanks to the success of the pool upgrade, will soon be collaborating with them on similar upgrades for the center’s ballfields and ice arena.

“We’re thrilled with the results of the recent pool upgrade and are delighted to help the contractor and the city of Breckenridge further upgrade all of these experiences for the local community,” Lunn said. ■

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