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Lighting-Up History While Saving Money: Denver City & County Building

Expected annual operating and maintenance cost savings: \$175,000

Estimated Annual Energy Savings: 66 percent

The Denver City and County building has stood tall as the center of the vibrant western city since 1932. The extraordinary Beaux-Arts Neoclassical building was designed by a number of local architects who strived to make the city hall building a center of government and commerce. Adjacent to the golden-domed capitol building, the city and county building is a striking architectural partner next to the gilded treasure of the city. To brighten the building and make it more visually appealing to Denverites and tourists, county officials began decorating the building in 1935.

Historically, the city and county building was illuminated during the holiday months using incandescent flood lights and spotlights with colored covers to create different lighting schemes. While the result was visually pleasing, the set-up and maintenance created major problems for city and county employees. At the time, all of the lights had to be set-up manually which proved to be a very time-consuming and expensive process. In addition to the lengthy processes, it was very difficult to achieve the desired look and feel for the entire building because the bulbs were difficult to access, change and replace.

In 2009, when the Mayor's Greenprint Denver Office sought to completely overhaul the lighting system of the City and County Building the General Services office put out bids and with the help of Denver-based American Lighting began the process of incorporating new lighting. Eliminating the inefficient and difficult to access incandescent bulbs, American Lighting provided remote-controlled color-changing LED lights called "wall washers" on the City and County Building and Tower. Now, the color of the lights on both the Tower and main building can be changed with the push of a button. The main building is illuminated for the holidays from Thanksgiving to the end of January, and the tower is lit up about half the year with the light color corresponding to awareness months or local events, such as purple for the baseball home team Rockies, and pink for breast cancer awareness month in October.

"The new lights add a vibrant and dynamic element to the City and County Building," said Suzi Latona, Facilities Superintendent, City and County of Denver. "American Lighting has been with us every step of the way to create a customized solution that would work for us and they have proven to be a true partner on this project."

The new décor was achieved using 540 LED Wall Washers from American Lighting with red, green and blue LED lights. By combining the colors in different intensities, the city is able to project up to 16 million different colors using a DMX controller, allowing them to create any display they could possibly want.



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While the new lighting addition is attractive and more convenient for city employees, perhaps the most impressive aspects of the new install are the cost and energy savings. The total savings on a yearly basis, comprised of a reduction in maintenance, equipment costs and labor, is over \$175,000 per year. The city also boasts a 66 percent decrease in power usage for the new lights.

Recently, the new LED lights provided a backdrop for an Independence Day celebration in the heart of downtown Denver. At the Civic Center Sounds Independence Eve celebration this year, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra used the lights as a backdrop for their breathtaking performance. However, instead of merely providing a red, white and blue stage, the lights were actually choreographed to the songs of the symphony. The breathtaking show was orchestrated by Colorado-based Blazen Illuminations.

In addition to the wall washers used on the City and County Building, American lighting is in process of expanding its LED Wall Washer line in 2010 to meet a wide variety of seasonal and decorative needs.

“We never stand still. We are always looking for the next best product and installation method in order to best serve our customers,” said Richard Lyford, Director of Sales, Specialty Lighting at American Lighting. “We have some really exciting things coming up in 2010.”