



LED LIGHTING SERVES UP SAVINGS AT DODDS TENNIS CENTER

From kids who've never held a racquet to Senior Olympics gold medalist Michael Claffey, players at all levels sharpen their skills at the Dodds Tennis Center in Champaign, Illinois. Featuring six indoor tennis courts, Dodds Tennis Center has been a popular venue for friendly competition for decades. In 2019, the facility's new, high-efficiency LED lighting scored a big win — for players, the Champaign Park District, and the environment.

Metal Halide: Warm Up Required

Until recently, players weren't the only ones that needed to warm up before a set: the outdated metal halide lighting required a lengthy warm up as well. For that reason, once the lights came on with the first match of the day, they stayed on until closing time at 10:00 p.m.

"When we would turn on the metal halide lights, it would take them 20 minutes to warm up. And in some areas they were not meeting the recommended illumination levels for play," says Dan Olson, Director of Operations for the Champaign Park District. *"We also spent a lot of time on maintenance of ballasts and light bulbs."*

Because the indoor facility is not air conditioned, temperatures can soar in the warmer months. The metal halide bulbs added heat to an already muggy environment.

New lighting at Dodds Tennis Center was part of the park district's capital improvement plan for years. But it competed with other projects that often proved more pressing. The green light finally came after Olson heard about Ameren Illinois cash incentives and the long-term energy savings possible with LEDs.

"Lighting can account for as much as 50 percent of electricity consumption in the average facility, so it's a great place to start saving," says Ken Woolcutt, Manager of Energy Efficiency at Ameren Illinois. *"To add to the energy savings you'll see in the long term, Ameren Illinois offers generous discounts up front that make major upgrades more accessible."*

"We're well aware that incentives don't stick around forever, so we decided to push forward with new lighting at Dodds," says Olson. *"A lot of people at the park district were saying, 'How can we pass this up?'"*

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Flip the Switch on Energy Waste

The award-winning Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program provides millions in incentives to help businesses, nonprofits, and public organizations reduce their annual energy costs. Incentives are available for a variety of energy-saving projects, including lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration, motors, steam system improvements, and compressed air.

The Lowdown on LEDs

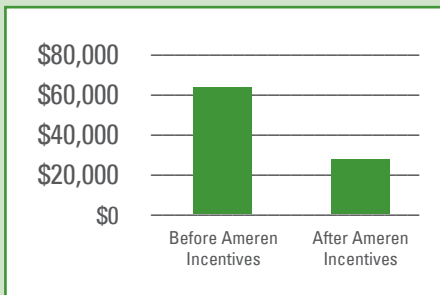
ENERGY STAR® qualified LED lighting uses at least 80 percent less energy than incandescent lighting, which cuts operating costs. And because it lasts 35 to 50 times longer than incandescent lighting — and up to five times longer than fluorescent lighting — you'll save on maintenance costs, too.

Benefits to Champaign Park District:

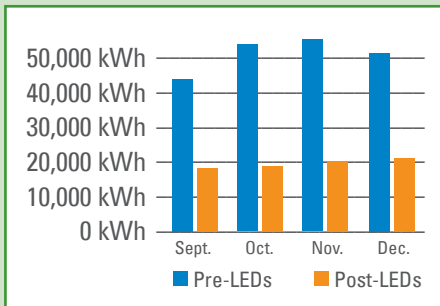
- » More than \$33,000 in incentives
- » Annual dollar savings of more than \$32,000
- » Better quality of light
- » 5-year guarantee on new LED lighting
- » Improved staff and patron satisfaction
- » Reduced maintenance and disposal costs
- » Reduced impact on the environment

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Dodds Tennis Center LED Lighting Costs



Kilowatt-Hour Savings: Four-Month Usage Comparison



Unmatched Incentives

Turns out, they couldn't. The Champaign Park District put out a request for bids and ultimately awarded the job to Energy Harness, a registered Ameren Illinois Program Ally. In late August 2019, work began to remove and recycle metal halide bulbs, fixtures, and ballasts, and install new LED fixtures using the same support bracket system and wiring. The project was completed in just under two weeks while the facility was closed for the summer season.

"We wouldn't have been able to do the project without the incentive. From an administrative standpoint, those incentive dollars are a big sell."

— Dan Olson,
Champaign Park District

"We worked with Ameren Illinois and our vendor to develop a plan that allowed us to leave the existing electrical trusses and wiring in place and simply change out the fixtures," says Olson. "We chose to go with indirect lighting, which diffuses the light more evenly across the room."

Ameren Illinois provided more than \$33,000 to defray the costs of new court lighting at Dodds Tennis Center — covering more than half of project costs.

"We wouldn't have been able to do the project without the incentive. From an administrative standpoint, those incentive dollars are a big sell," says Olson, who saw an opportunity to re-invest those savings into more upgrades at Dodds Tennis Center. "Thanks to the incentive dollars from Ameren Illinois, I was able to get approval for a Phase 2 project to upgrade the rest of the facility to LEDs, from the lobby to the locker rooms."

Net Benefits

Altogether, the new lighting is saving the park district an estimated \$32,000 in energy costs every year.

LED lighting offers other advantages as well. Their amazingly long life means that LED bulbs require little to no maintenance. In fact, the current generation of youth players will be well into adulthood before the new bulbs require replacement.

Unlike the metal halide bulbs, LED bulbs light up as soon as you flip the switch, so they can be turned off when a court is not in use. As an added plus, LED bulbs stay cool to the touch, so they won't add heat to an already warm atmosphere.

"The new lighting has received very positive reviews. Participants in our tennis programs immediately noticed a better quality of light and more even lighting across the courts," says Olson.

"The quality of light and cost savings offered by today's LED technology speak for themselves," notes Woolcutt. "And for any organization concerned about sustainability, like the Champaign Park District, lighting and other energy-efficient upgrades help to minimize their impact on the environment."

As caretakers of more than 700 acres of parks, playgrounds, and trails, the Champaign Park District is keen to reduce its carbon footprint while preserving and enhancing park assets for patrons. And they've found an ally in Ameren Illinois.

"I absolutely recommend the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Programs to other tax-based entities. The incentives and long-term operational cost savings are very, very good," says Olson. "Every dollar we save can go back into other important capital projects. Of all the park district's sustainability efforts, the lighting component is the most impactful."

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