

Whitehead & Associates Assists Habersham High School Drive \$6,000 in Annual Savings into New Parking Lot Lighting



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Curt Arulf Jr.
Habersham Electric Membership Corporation

Challenge

Habersham County School System is in Northeast Georgia, located in the Appalachian Mountains and a short two-hour drive away from the Smoky Mountains. Largely a retirement area, the county only has about 6,900 students K-12 in 14 schools. In 2011, the high school was expanded into a second location across the street to allow for more students.

The new facility boasts more modern athletic accommodations, modern instructional technology, and additional classrooms. In building the facility, the school board asked Curt Arulf Jr. VP Engineering and Operations at Habersham Electric Membership Corporation to come up with a plan for

the facility’s parking lot lights.

He explains that originally, the plan was to install 52 high pressure sodium lights. “We have used these in the past but I thought it might be a good idea to see if we could instead think about LEDs as an option.”

Light-emitting diodes (LED) offer potential energy savings, better color, longer life, and improved directionality. Their long-life, energy efficiency, and low maintenance make them an attractive lighting solution.

“So I contacted Carley [Abner, at Whitehead & Associates] and we had a design drawn for LEDs and approached the school. The only drawback I saw was

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that the original plan called for 52 lights and with the LEDs, we needed 70. However, I knew the energy savings would more than make up for it.”

Solution

Abner from Whitehead & Associates agrees, “The power consumption was still going to be half then that of the 52 high-pressure sodium lights and since these are metered lights, we didn’t think the number of fixtures would be an issue and we were right.” Whitehead’s team of professionals regularly work with utilities, consultants, and engineers to design and procure the most effective solution possible to suit the individual needs of each client.

The school board approved the installation of LED lighting in the parking lot of the new high school and installation began in a matter of weeks.

“The longest part of the process was getting approval to proceed,” says Arulf. “After that, it was only a matter of weeks from ordering to installation. I was also really impressed with the lighting product company’s involvement. At one point during the process the school indicated they were hesitant to be the first to try out this solution and lighting product company offered them a three-week no-question guarantee. I thought that was great, very respectful of the process we have to go through and showed a lot of confidence in the solution.”

In the end, Arulf and the high school expect that the new lights will save nearly \$6,000 annually in energy costs, not counting what would have otherwise been spent on maintenance.

“It is hard to put a number on something that didn’t exist before, but we know that in the past less efficient solutions have cost time and money to fix and use. We are glad the LED solution is working well and saving the school money. Hopefully, it will lead to similar decisions being made across the county.”