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School District of Fort Atkinson

DETAILS >>

As its huge steam boiler systems approached the 70-year mark, the School District of Fort Atkinson knew changes had to be made. Tighter budgets, rising energy costs and escalating maintenance problems demanded it. After carefully reviewing its options, it was decided that a geothermal system would be the most effective and cost-efficient way to heat and cool four of the District's schools. For systems controls, they turned to ESI (Environmental Systems, Inc.), a long-time, trusted solutions provider and partner.

CHALLENGES >>

“There were plenty of challenges to this project,” says Dennis Kuchenmeister, Director of Buildings and Grounds for the School District of Fort Atkinson. Probably not the least of which was the goal to retrofit as much of the work as possible for cost efficiencies. Then, there was the timeframe. “The project could only be done during the summer. We absolutely had to have the buildings ready for the first day of school. And, we wanted to fully air condition all four schools for the first time.”

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SOLUTIONS >>

According to Kuchenmeister, “ESI probably knows our buildings and systems better than anyone. We were confident they'd be able to figure out what was necessary and meet our goals for the systems controls.” ESI worked with the project team to refine and improve a plan that called for a combination of retrofitting to make use of as much existing infrastructure as feasible and upgrading where needed. The controls solution implemented by ESI now enables the District to control and regulate temperatures room by room. It added the convenience of being able to monitor and control each building remotely. And, ESI customized the system's interface to make it user-friendly and reduce training time. “The retrofitting helped us meet our budget and time requirements; and ESI gave us a level of control and energy efficiency that we never had before...even with the addition of air conditioning.”

Kuchenmeister points out that the schools did not have the luxury of relocating people to another building while work is being done. “We had to work during the summer. And, it was an absolute requirement that it was completed before the first day of school,” he says. “ESI lived up to that schedule commitment.”

THE BENEFITS

As Wisconsin's only geothermal system appended to older school buildings, the School District of Fort Atkinson is already reaping benefits for its bold move. In a message to the community, Dr. James Fitzpatrick, Superintendent for the District, said that the new system “has helped us preserve our older buildings for many years to come. We can now heat and cool our buildings at a savings estimated minimally at \$80,000 annually.”

Kuchenmeister also notes, “Even with the addition of air conditioning, the geothermal system and the added efficiencies we get from our systems controls are saving us in the range of 12-14%...and I expect that figure to double.” According to Kuchenmeister, the savings are just part of the overall advantages. “We're also dramatically reducing our environmental footprint.”

Maintaining an ongoing relationship with a trusted partner like ESI also has ongoing benefits, notes Kuchenmeister. “The people at ESI always go above and beyond,” he says. “They customized the system so that it's intuitive and easy to use. Plus, they're giving us hands-on training. We ask questions and they have the knowledge to answer them. It's good to know that the support will be there when we need it.” Kuchenmeister also says, “We could not have done this by ourselves. We needed someone like ESI to help us through the process. Anytime I need something, I just call them. They're always there for me. They were with us before this project and they'll be with us long after it.”

From innovative designs and installation to comprehensive management and support, ESI provides integrated, performance-building solutions that generate success stories. Contact us to find out how we can help you improve your building performance.



Building Solutions. Building Performance.

SUCCESS STORY