



Crafty Lighting Upgrade Improves Retail Operations

Faced with managing over 300 stores in 26 states within the nation's heartland, Hobby Lobby, an Oklahoma City, OK-based arts and crafts retail chain, was experiencing illumination difficulties in both its retail stores and warehouse. The facilities suffered from a combination of outdated, inefficient lighting, low light levels and non-standardized lighting systems, which resulted in excessive product stocking requirements. The Hobby Lobby team decided to replace its older system of two eight ft 40-W T12 slimline fluorescent lamps driven by a magnetic ballast with a more efficient fixture housing four T8 32-W fluorescent lamps by Philips Lighting Company that uses one Advance Transformer Company REL-series electronic ballast.

THE PROJECT: Hobby Lobby's craft retail chain of stores located throughout the Midwest

THE CHALLENGE: Replace the older fluorescent based system with a more efficient unit

THE SOLUTION: A combination of electronic ballast and fluorescent lamps

Work began promptly on lighting upgrades throughout Hobby Lobby's entire network of stores. With designs developed from Hobby Lobby's CAD team and product drop-shipped by electrical distributor Voss Lighting, Hobby Lobby's in-house construction crews managed the upgrade of the 800-900 lighting fixtures that typically resided in each 50,000 sq ft store.

In the chain's three million sq ft warehouse, 400-W metal halide aisle-lighter fixtures were also converted to T8 32-W fluorescent lighting. This action improved footcandle levels more than four-fold under its 25-35 ft-high ceilings and also improved comfort and productivity levels among the chain's 1500 warehouse employees.

"Aside from the energy we've saved per fixture and the increase in light output and lighting quality we've realized, a 10 percent reduction in lighting costs is like putting six percent directly towards your bottom line," said Hobby Lobby energy manager Ray Chambers. "And the standardization in products throughout our stores and warehouses avoided the need for us to stock multiple lamp products, ultimately enabling us to optimize our warehousing." Each upgrade will also achieve payback within two years and yield a return on investment in excess of 50 percent.

Since 1998, over 170 of the chain's stores have been upgraded.

—John-Michael Kobes