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## Looking at Tecumseh Public Schools in an ‘all new light’

Mon, 08/10/2015 - 11:49am [Anthony Alaniz](#)



The white light of the LEDs, pictured above in the foreground, show a contrasting difference to the yellowness cast by the old lights, pictured further down the hall at Tecumseh High School. Photo by Anthony Alaniz.

By [Anthony Alaniz](#)

Approved by the school board less than two months ago, the light-emitting diode (LED) project at Tecumseh High School (THS) is well underway. But the electricians from Brint Electric are doing more than replacing lights. When completed, the entire THS campus will have LED lighting. Those lights will be tied to dimmers and vacancy sensors to further increase efficiency.

“This project can’t be completed fast enough only because we want to see what those savings are going to turn out to be,” said

Bruce Ross, an account manager at GUSCO in Adrian. GUSCO is the energy efficiency division of Brint and is located in Adrian. “We’re excited about this.”

Estimated savings over a 10-year period is \$1.2 million, though that estimate does not account for the dimmer switches and vacancy sensors also being installed. With the addition of dimmer switches, Ross said an additional \$800 to \$1,000 could be saved per classroom per year if the switch is left at 50 percent intensity.

“I get excited about the savings,” said TPS Director of Facilities Michael Smith. “I get more excited to help the kids. We’re going to provide them a better atmosphere to learn in and hopefully help them to do better.”

Businesses in the area that Brint and GUSCO converted over to LEDs saw as much as 60 percent in savings on electric costs.

In the classrooms, the 96-watt lights are being replaced by 35-watt units and if a teacher was to run those LEDs at 50 percent, the light would be running at 17.5 watts — leading to the additional savings. Teachers who have seen the new lights said 50-percent intensity provides plenty of light, Ross added.

Smith said there are about 50 classrooms at THS, adding “Multiply that over ten years and that’s a lot of money.”

For Tecumseh Public Schools, the \$690,000 project also comes with a 10-year warranty on parts and labor, which accounts for further savings for the district.

“TPS will have zero maintenance dollars for the next 10 years,” Ross said, “If something happens, we simply come up and replace it.”

Dimmer switches and vacancy sensors are being installed all throughout the school.

When halls and locker pals are empty, like when class is in session or after normal school hours, the lights will turn themselves off after a preset time until it detects a person, which further increases savings. Bathroom lights will also turn off if no one is occupying them, though instead of using vacancy sensors to tell if the room is occupied, it uses sound detection and body heat sensors.

If a teacher leaves a classroom with the lights on, the lights will shut themselves off after a preset time. When the teacher returns in the morning, the motion sensors will detect him or her and automatically turn the lights back on.

In the wrestling room, the vacancy sensors can detect which areas of the room are being used and, after a certain amount of time, will dim then turn off lights where they are not needed. In there, 455-watt metal-halide fixtures are being replaced by 110-watt LED fixtures. In the weight room, the LED lights near the window feature light harvesting where they can detect sunlight and either dim or turn themselves off completely when they are not needed. The

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previous weight room lights were 320 watts. The LED lights are 110.

In janitorial rooms, a janitor can turn on the light and, if it is left on, it will turn off after a preset time. Even the school offices will have dimmer switches and vacancy sensors.

Down the main high school hallway, the 80 main lighting fixtures — 120 watts each, and about 135 watts with their ballast — are being replaced by 35-watt fixtures. These LED fixtures are also being used down the hallways of the B, C and D pods, of which there are 30 fixtures.

In the cafeterium, 160-watt fixtures are being replaced by 35-watt LEDs. While the LEDs actually produce less light, the whiter light appears brighter because of the color rendering scale, Ross said.

In the gym the old fixtures will be replaced by LED fixtures sporting four to six light bars each.

"When all you have to do is operate the way you do everyday, just come in and do exactly what you do and you just cut your utility costs by sixty percent," Ross said. "That's huge."

The interior of the high school is scheduled to be completed by the time school starts September 8, said Smith. The LED lighting on the exterior will also help with security, making the campus brighter at night and help the school's security cameras better detect people on campus, added Smith.

Last month, the Tecumseh school board approved the LED lighting project at Tecumseh Middle School awarding the work to Brint. The project was originally scheduled to be completed next year due to budgetary reasons, but Brint proposed completing the work now — an estimated \$415,312 project — and allow the school to pay for the work during the 2016-2017 school year as planned.

Work on the middle school is slated to start this week, with the classrooms and hallways scheduled to be completed by the start of school September 8. Work will continue after hours to complete the remaining fixtures inside and outside the school. Smith said work at both schools should be completed by the end of October.

Going forward, Smith said he'd like to work on the elementary school buildings depending on funding, hoping to complete two schools each year for the next two years.

"The sooner we get it done, the sooner we start saving," Smith added. "The nice thing is it helps us fund other energy saving projects."

The board and TPS Supt. Kelly Coffin have been supportive in energy saving projects smith said.

"This is a whole team effort," he added.

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