Case Study

Convention Center Saves $6,000/Year by Cutting Paper Towel Costs

Schaumburg, Illinois

The Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel, built in the metro Chicago city of Schaumburg in 2006, boasts more than 148,600 square feet of meeting and event space. Attendee capacity in the Convention Center is more than 6,400. The center plays host to hundreds of events each year, including weddings, exhibitions, business meetings and parties. Needless to say, the restroom facilities must function reliably and efficiently to meet the needs of the sprawling, high-traffic space.

**Challenge**

Selecting an easy-to-install hand dryer that would save on facility costs, while maintaining guest satisfaction and supporting facility-wide sustainability initiatives.

“We were challenged by keeping up with the amount of paper towels used during busy events,” says Robert Lang, director of engineering, Renaissance Schaumburg. “We decided to explore other options to limit the amount of waste and still maintain cleanliness and guest safety.”

“We ultimately decided to invest in Mitsubishi Electric Jet Towels for two reasons: quieter operation than competing hand dryers and the ability to contain water rather than spilling it onto the floors and walls,” says Lang. “We could install the units ourselves and the hand dryers helped contribute to facility sustainability at a competitive price.”

**Quiet Operation**

Controlling atmospheric sound is an important requirement for rentable spaces that host speakers, business meetings and ceremonies. Conventional hand dryers can be deafening, allowing sound leakage into spaces beyond the restrooms.

High-speed hand dryers can better contain excess noise and vibration due to dampeners and concentrated air jets. In head-to-head comparisons conducted by Mitsubishi Electric against competing high-speed hand dryers, the Jet Towel rates as one of the quietest at 61 dB* — the rough equivalent of standard elevator music or restaurant conversation.

“We find that quiet hand dryer operation is an important benefit to a number of facilities,” says Michael Blaskowsky, general manager, Pacarc, LLC, the exclusive U.S. Jet Towel distributor. “Libraries, schools, museums, hospitals — any noise-sensitive environment is an ideal fit.”

Quiet operation does not compromise effectiveness. Jet Towel features an air speed of 237 mph and two jets of air, drying hands in an average of only 10 seconds.

**Unrivaled Cleanliness**

“We find that our guests are increasingly conscious about sanitation in crowded public areas, especially the restrooms,” says Lang. “We reviewed other high-speed hand dryers, but most competitors didn’t provide drainage for the excess water. We wanted a drain tank that would keep the restrooms safe and dry for our guests.”

The Jet Towel trademark drain tank collects water from users’ hands. Because of this feature, the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified the Jet Towel for meeting its health and safety requirements, specifically Standard 169 — the only hand dryer to meet the NSF standard. Competing hand dryers drain the excess water onto the surrounding walls and floors, creating water hazards and leaving water trails for bacterial growth.

The drain tank saves maintenance employees time; it typically only needs to be emptied at the end of the day during routine restroom cleaning. The drain tank also minimizes the risk for water damage and eventual deep cleaning of tile and grout.

*Sound level measured 2 meters from Jet Towel unit.

Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel

Project Location: Schaumburg, Illinois

Completion Date: August 2012

Project Team

Facility Manager: Robert Lang, director of engineering, Renaissance Schaumburg

Jet Towel Distributor: Pacarc, LLC, Seattle, Washington

Mitsubishi Electric Equipment Installed:

(20) Mitsubishi Electric Jet Towels (JT-SB116JH-G-NA)

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**Meeting Sustainability Initiatives**

The Renaissance Schaumburg Green Committee is an ongoing internal review initiative that monitors methods to reduce landfill waste and bolster sustainable practices on site.

“Our first step was to review our current recycling program in the exhibit areas and provide a cost study on the impact of high-speed hand dryers,” says Lang. “The next logical step for us was to narrow our focus to areas that produced the most waste and see how we could modify our products or behaviors. Restrooms are perhaps the highest producer of paper waste, so installing Jet Towels lent itself to the broader scheme and goals of the facility.”

**Solution**

Mitsubishi Electric Jet Towels save the facility approximately $500 per month on paper towel costs, have led to zero customer complaints and meet energy efficiency goals.

“A Jet Towel is a smart long-term investment for building owners and facility managers,” says Blaskowsky. “Most organizations see a return on their investment within the first year, with higher-traffic restrooms such as convention centers and airports shortening that time significantly.”

In addition to minimizing paper waste, the energy-efficient operation of Jet Towel can further contribute to facilities’ sustainability goals.

The Jet Towel’s motor is up to 30 percent more efficient than other dryers in its class, requiring only 1,250 watts to dry hands or 730 watts when the heater is turned off. Based on nationwide average electricity rates, the Jet Towel costs only $25 per year to operate with a motor life of 3,600 hours.

“One facility with Jet Towels reduced paper towel usage by 22 tons per year and saved 1,100 hours per year in janitorial labor due to the efficiency and hassle-free maintenance,” says Blaskowsky.

**In-house Installation**

Installation does not require training or a specialized vendor.

“We installed the units ourselves. It was straightforward. My staff installed all 20 Jet Towels in about two weeks,” says Lang.

At the recommended mounting height of 37 inches, the Jet Towel conforms to all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for persons in wheelchairs and the visually impaired.

“We currently only have Jet Towels installed in the Convention Center area of our facility,” says Lang, “We’ve been pleased with the results. Expansion into other areas of the facility will be considered in the near future.”

Jet Towels meet the demands of this high-traffic space by reducing waste and operating efficiently.

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