

City of Foley

Alabama



CUSTOMER BENEFITS

- Major improvements to facilities
- Reduced energy use and costs
- Increased energy and water efficiency
- Guaranteed savings
- Low-interest funding sources
- Collaborative marketing to promote results

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Location:

Foley, Alabama

Project type:

Performance contract for citywide energy initiative

Properties

18 sites, including 10 major buildings (133,773 sq.ft.)

Funding

\$2.8M from a federal QECB
\$350,000 ADECA state loan

ECMs

- Citywide EMS
- Major HVAC replacements
- Water conservation, irrigation control, rainwater harvesting
- Irrigation well for sports complex
- Security lighting for airport & hangars
- Interior/exterior LED lighting, occupancy sensors & daylight harvesting
- Solar panel system for interactive kiosks
- VoIP telecommunication system
- On-site pool chemical generation

Annual savings

33% of energy costs totaling \$4.2M over 20-year contract

Installation

2013



This Gulf Coast municipality thinks “big” to enhance energy conservation, cut operating costs and keep Foley competitive for tourism and development projects.

The challenge

Founded as the 20th century dawned, Foley is located just 27 miles west of Pensacola, Fla., and 146 miles east of New Orleans, La. Between 2000 and 2010, the city’s population almost doubled to include 14,618 residents.

Foley’s population growth impacted entities citywide – everything from parks and fire stations to City Hall, the Welcome Center and the airport. By 2013, recreational areas alone encompassed nine city parks with athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts, two swimming pools, a hiking/biking trail, and a horse arena.

Averse to incurring debt unnecessarily, decision-makers are always looking for ways to better manage operating costs while delivering quality services to the growing number of residents. So in 2012 the city launched an energy initiative.

City representatives talked with different companies about multiple challenges – from renovating outdated building systems and upgrading communications technology ... to finding new funding resources and managing rising energy costs.

When decision-makers began talking about potential options with Schneider Electric, they began to consider an innovative approach to their situation. Thinking “outside the box” and teaming with Schneider Electric offered new ways to address existing challenges while keeping the city’s options open for future improvements.

“We liked the fact that we were able to upgrade a number of aging mechanical, lighting and plumbing fixtures without creating a drain on our general fund to get them.”

Michael Thompson
City Administrator

City representatives recognized that Schneider Electric had the experience, expertise and strategic alliances to help Foley achieve multiple goals. More important, Schneider Electric proposed a solution that would allow Foley to take advantage of a broad range of new technologies and systems, state and federal funding opportunities, and a performance contract (turnkey solution) guaranteeing energy savings to fund the entire project. (In the unlikely event Foley does not realize those savings, Schneider Electric will pay the difference.)

After being awarded the contract, Schneider Electric faced typical project challenges, such as working on major sites during the tourist season, coordinating installation of a citywide fiber network, and implementing and testing upgrades while adhering to a tight schedule.

The solution

After performing an audit, Schneider Electric submitted its plan for new systems/equipment and innovative solutions for energy management, HVAC, irrigation, lighting, water conservation and communications. Then Schneider Electric and its strategic partners got to work.

A citywide energy management system (EMS) and major HVAC replacements enable more energy- and cost-efficient operations. Foley also has greater control over indoor comfort levels for everyone in buildings ranging from City Hall and the Welcome Center — to libraries, fire stations and the Justice Center.

A new irrigation solution controls watering efficiency for landscaping and recreational fields, and ties in with the city's new “smart” system. GPS (global positioning system) capabilities gauge expected rainfall and automatically adjust irrigation schedules accordingly.

A new rainwater harvesting system atop the downtown Welcome Center irrigates flower beds

in front of the building, which is located at a main intersection. At the Foley Sports Complex, a newly dug well cuts costs by providing a natural water supply for irrigating playing fields.

Newly commissioned water fixtures also conserve resources. A typical commode uses about 4 gallons per flush whereas commissioning reduces that to 1-1/2 gallons, cutting costs without sacrificing operational effectiveness.

Schneider Electric installed new lighting to enhance security at the airport, in hangars, along the Rose Trail and in the parks. New interior and exterior LED lighting, occupancy sensors and daylight harvesting at multiple sites reduce energy consumption and lower operational costs.

A new fiber optic network enhances communications, connecting major buildings over a redundant backbone network while also housing all building controls and voice over IP (VoIP) capabilities. The city also leveraged a \$400,000 grant for security cameras. Foley hopes to implement Wi-Fi in the future to further enhance communication and security capabilities.

Solar panels atop City Hall are integrated with interactive kiosks at the downtown library and Welcome Center. In addition to informing residents and visitors about Foley's commitment to energy conservation and sustainability, the kiosks demonstrate Foley's forward-thinking approach to making the most of technology.

An innovative solution for on-site chemical generation at one city pool lowers the costs to maintain water quality with a new salt-water system, eliminating the need for expensive chemicals.

In addition, Schneider Electric teamed with the city to launch a messaging and branding campaign designed to raise public awareness about the project, leveraging everything from signage and kiosks to special events, speaking engagements and articles in quarterly newsletters to residents.

The bottom line

Foley expects to generate more than \$4.2 million in guaranteed savings over the 20-year contract, a sum sufficient to fund the \$3.2 million project and to put money back into the city's budget.

In addition to reducing annual utility costs by 33 percent, Foley expects to increase energy and water efficiency for all city buildings and parks.

Schneider Electric assisted Foley in applying for federal and state bonds to self-fund this multifaceted project. A federal QECB (Qualified Energy Conservation Bond) paid for 70 percent of the costs, effectively lowering the interest rate on the balance to 1.3 percent. State assistance amounting to \$350,000 at 0 percent interest for 10 years came from ADECA Local Government Energy Loan Program (Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs).

After commissioning each system, Schneider Electric's Performance Assurance Support Services (PASS) kicked in. PASS provides remote 24/7 monitoring, technical support, and a complete analysis and reporting of energy use to guarantee savings and project performance after the initial installation.

The environmental impact of the improvements is equivalent to:

- Removing 1,663 cars from the roadways
- Reducing CO2 emissions by 8,317 tons
- Planting 2,262 acres of trees to balance the ecosystem