Re-lighting the Hall of Governors

Featuring portraits of New York State’s past governors dating back to 1797, the second floor of the state Capitol serves as a rich historical gallery. The Hall of Governors recently underwent a lighting facelift, destined to reduce energy costs and enrich the observers’ experience.

The original lighting, combined with dark paint and wood tones, rendered an overall gloomy effect over the exhibit. Halogen portrait lights, using 160 to 240 watts per luminaire, cast heat and glare directly onto each painting, obscuring color, details, and texture. Glass pendants, originally installed as central hall lighting, detracted from the portraits by drawing the eye to hot spots created by clusters of CFLs at their center.

Contracted to redesign the lighting, LRC DesignWorks used high CRI (color rendering index) 2700 K, 25-50 watt LEDs to enhance the artwork and reduce degradation.

The portraits of Theodore Roosevelt (above) and Franklin Roosevelt show considerable improvement. Color and fine details, such as pin-striped trousers, are more noticeable.

Spill light from portraits allows observers to read the descriptive plaques and vinyl lettering of the timeline. Spread lenses, louvers, and custom baffles were used to refine beam spreads, reduce glare from light sources, and soften frame shadows.

The new lighting system was integrated into the existing architectural cornices. The glass pendants were retrofitted with a single, long, compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) to soften their effect.

Annual energy costs are reduced by 68% from the original design. Combined with reduced lamp replacement and maintenance costs, savings total more than $15,000 per year.

Sponsor
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority