When the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina undertook the renovation of its new Raleigh location, it wanted it to be a community project. Cree, a neighbor, stepped up with an “awesome” lighting solution.
Opportunity

For more than 30 years, the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina has been a godsend to many thousands of people at risk of hunger throughout 34 counties. A nonprofit organization, in fiscal year 2015-16 the Food Bank distributed more than 64 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through its partner agencies.

It’s always been about partnership for the Food Bank. So when it came time to expand operations in its hub city of Raleigh, leadership was keen on making it a community effort.

The Food Bank had outgrown its headquarters facility in Raleigh – staff members had been relocated and warehouse space was insufficient – and a search had been underway for a while for a new location.

About two and a half years ago, the right space was found – an 11.5-acre lot with a 108,000-square-foot building on Capital Boulevard, on Raleigh’s north side – and a major renovation project was launched.

“That’s when we began to engage multiple parties in the community,” recalls Charlie Hale, the Food Bank’s Vice President of IT and Operations. “The surrounding community invests considerably in the Food Bank, so we wanted this to be a community-focused renovation.”

Among those the Food Bank reached out to was Durham-based Cree, less than 20 miles down the road.

“Cree stepped up to the plate and did a fabulous job of lighting this facility,” Hale says. “It’s just awesome.”

Solution

Cree, a leader in LED solid-state lighting components, provided a solution for 69,000 square feet of dry warehouse space and 23,000 square feet of office space. The new facility not only affords the Food Bank expanded storage space but additional room for thousands of hours of increased volunteer time, allowing it to get more food out to neighbors more quickly and safely.

“As the Food Bank said in a statement to the community: “The Raleigh distribution center represents a vibrant community of donors, volunteers and those who dedicate their lives to hunger relief.”

The Cree LED solution includes 143 of its CXB Series High-Bay luminaires, 400 ZR24™ Troffers and 36 KR6™ Downlights. The Cree® CXB High-Bay series offers a color rendering index of 80-plus and greater efficiency of 113 lumens per watt, thus lowering operating costs. The ZR24™ Troffers, powered by Cree TrueWhite® Technology, provide up to 5,000 lumens of superior 90 CRI light quality. And the KR6™ Downlights, also powered by TrueWhite® Technology, deliver high-quality light with efficacy up to 76 lumens per watt.

“This lighting solution was an opportunity to install something that was not only more energy efficient but avoids maintenance issues.”

Charlie Hale  |  VP of IT and Operations,
Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina
Hale says the installation of the LEDs went very well. “It was a simple process. The lights were brought in, and the place was lit up within a couple of days.”

**Benefits**

And what a difference, by all accounts, the LEDs have made.

“Every time our Senior Manager for Food Safety and Warehouse Compliance walks in here,” Hale attests, “he says, ‘Man, this lighting is great.’”

Jessica Whichard, the Food Bank’s Senior Manager of Communications, says her team is already taking advantage of the superior lighting to herald the new facility throughout the community.

“We’ve been shooting quite a few videos,” Whichard explains, “and the production teams have been really impressed with the lighting. The facility looks just phenomenal in the videos.

“This new lighting has allowed us to get our story out to the community in a much brighter fashion than we otherwise could have.”

Whichard adds that the Food Bank’s graphic designer has also taken full advantage of the new look by experimenting with paint colors and decals that are accentuated by the lighting. Those then make for interesting backdrops for volunteers to take pictures of their experience at the Food Bank to share on social media.

“That’s something we couldn’t do before,” Whichard says. “It’s allowed us to enhance our social media presence with quality images. It gives a great sense of who the Food Bank is.”

The LED lighting also provides an enhanced workspace for the volunteers who repackage and sort food items. “Coming here is a fun team-building activity for companies,” Hale says. “But at the same time, they’re working, and you’ve got to have good lighting to do it correctly. After all, we’re talking about food safety.

“Now when they’re reading a label, they don’t have to shine their cell phone flashlight on it.”

Another strong consideration in the renovation was energy savings – “Obviously, we wanted to be as frugal as possible given we are largely community-funded,” Hale affirms – and Cree has helped deliver in that regard. It’s estimated that the Food Bank will be saving 48 percent in energy costs compared to traditional lighting options. Meanwhile, thanks to the Cree lighting, it’s earning incentives from its utility company.

Ultimately, Hale says, “this lighting solution was an opportunity to install something that is not only more energy efficient but avoids maintenance issues. These lights will last quite a long time before anything at all needs to be done to them.

“They pay for themselves very quickly, and you’re trouble free for years to come.”

That’s a testament to a solid community investment.
Cree® LED Lighting Used

- ZR Series Troffers
- KR Series Downlights
- CXB Series High-Bay

Participants

End User: Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina
Architect: McDonald York Building Company

Visit lighting.cree.com or contact a Cree lighting representative to learn more.

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