

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

CLIENT
MCGRATH AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

LOCATION
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA



CAR DEALERSHIP DRIVES DOWN COST WITH LEDS

It takes a lot of lights – and money – to illuminate a car lot. McGrath Auto Group's deteriorating, inefficient lighting at five of its dealerships was adding to already high operating costs. So the Cedar Rapids, IA, based auto group was all ears when Van Meter Inc. came up with a turn-key solution.

CHALLENGE

Most businesses turn off the lights when they shut the doors for the day. But for safety, security, and showcasing the inventory, most car dealerships leave their lot lights on after dark. That can make for hefty electrical bills and frequent lamp and ballast replacements.

“The old lighting was pretty dull,” said Gavin McGrath, General Manager at Pat McGrath Chevyland, one of the five dealerships that underwent a lighting overhaul. “The bulbs were constantly needing replaced. We had someone out here from the electrical contractor every week at least.”

Munson Electric, Inc. was the company fielding those calls. One of its project managers, Mike Feltman, who teamed up with Van Meter on this project, knew the dealerships could achieve better results by switching to LED (light-emitting diode) lighting.

“With metal halide lighting you have a lot of issues,” explained Feltman. “They always tend to be different colors, dependent on when they were maintained. So, you’ll have some lights that are putting off more of an orange color.”

Inconsistent, dim, and orange lighting is not the best way to show off a new automobile’s metallic paint job. McGrath Auto needed an easy-to-understand, hassle-free, cost-effective solution, and Van Meter Account Manager, Rick Randall, did not leave it in the dark.

SOLUTION

The folks at McGrath know cars. So, rather than spending their time researching lighting products, filling out rebates, and trying to find contractors, they put their trust in the folks who know lighting. “We’re car guys; we don’t understand wattage, Kelvin, and all that,” said McGrath.

“We talked to the McGrath folks,” said Randall, “and just to make it easy for them, we offered them a turn-key solution.” Van Meter’s turn-key lighting program simplifies any project. With this program, Van Meter handles everything – the site assessment, lighting design, product sourcing, rebate filing – and partners with a trusted electrical contractor, like Munson Electric, for the installation. And it does it all for one price.



“The biggest thing they brought to the table was they were able to...bring it to one head,” said McGrath. “They took it all on and then developed a great plan for us financially to be able to handle it and just really shocked and wowed us with the way they were able to execute it.”

Van Meter recommended replacing the 1000-watt metal halide HID (high-intensity discharge) fixtures with 360-watt LED fixtures, which have a 200,000-hour lifespan and light levels that never dip below 90 percent.

To put things in perspective, the old metal halide lighting has a lifespan of about 20,000 hours and light levels that start diminishing right away and decrease by 40 percent over the life of the bulb. “We’re using two-thirds less energy,” said Randall. “And we actually raised their light level by about 18 percent. So, they’re getting more light for less money.”

“That’s huge for a customer to offer a turn-key solution where basically your energy savings pays for the job,” said Feltman, whose crew installed the 460 new LED fixtures.

THE RESULT

With rebates from Alliant Energy and an annual energy savings of approximately \$160,000, McGrath Auto Group will have this project paid off in roughly three years. That means, two years sooner than it takes most people to pay off their car, McGrath Auto will be seeing a nice return on its investment.

“They [five dealerships] all came out perfectly,” said Randall. “Higher light levels, better uniformity, lower operating costs, and lower maintenance costs.” And while the savings are nice, the car guys just can’t get over how good their vehicles look in the lot. “I mean you drive by this lot now with it done versus what it looked like,” said McGrath, “it’s a whole different experience for our customer. Even during the day...how the heads look, it’s just a much cleaner, more appealing look.”

“The light is so crisp and so white compared to the older metal halide,” added Randall. Business at its best is people working together to achieve a common goal. That’s something McGrath Auto Group really seems to understand. Perhaps that’s why it has become the largest family-owned automotive company in the state.

“We’re in the people business just like Van Meter,” said McGrath, “and they’re people that are willing to work hard for you to provide the best experience possible.”

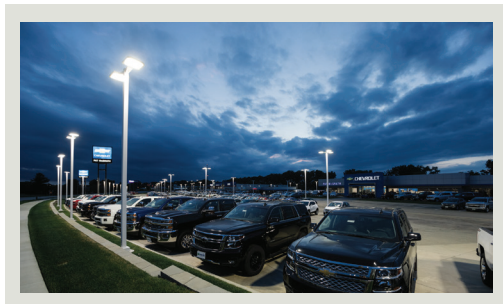


WORTH NOTING



UNLIKE INCANDESCENT BULBS – WHICH RELEASE 90 PERCENT OF THEIR ENERGY AS HEAT – **LEDS USE ENERGY FAR MORE EFFICIENTLY WITH LITTLE WASTED HEAT.**

ACCORDING TO ENERGY.GOV.



YOUR LIGHTING SOLUTION

Van Meter Inc. provides expert advice in the selection and design of lighting solutions and more. We welcome your call to discuss your next project. To speak with a Van Meter representative, call 1-800-247-1410. We'll quickly connect you with the person or information you need.



McGrath Auto Group

McGrath Auto Group has been proudly serving the Cedar Rapids area and beyond for more than 65 years. The largest family-owned automotive company in Iowa has a huge selection of makes and models at its more than a dozen locations. It prides itself on being a “friendly place to buy a new or used vehicle from people who care.”

Munson Electric, Inc.

Munson Electric, Inc. has been helping Cedar Rapids grow since 1964, and it has grown in the process. With more than 60 employees, no job is too big or small. The full-service electrical contractor lends its expertise to industrial, commercial, and residential projects throughout eastern Iowa.

Van Meter Inc.

Van Meter Inc. is a 100-percent employee-owned distributor of electrical, automation, lighting, datacomm, power transmission, utility and clean energy supplies, services and solutions. Headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the company has 15 locations throughout the Midwest.

Everything you need to succeed.

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