

ENERGY CASE STUDY

LEAMINGTON ARTS CENTRE



In 2016, ArtsBuild Ontario offered a one-time grant for energy conservation projects, as part of our [Energy Conservation Program](#). We were pleased to offer the grant to eight arts organizations, all taking on a new renovation or project that would result in lowering their monthly energy use.

One of our grant recipients was the Leamington Arts Centre. They completed a lighting retrofit of the second floor spaces of their facility, heavily used for programming

and community rentals. We caught up with LAC Director Chad Riley to see how their lighting project has reduced energy use and improved the space.

WHY TAKE ON A LIGHTING RETROFIT PROJECT?

The Leamington Arts Centre is a not-for-profit charitable organization operating out of a heritage building in uptown Leamington, Ontario. The LAC offers a state-of-the-art art gallery with three exhibition spaces, the Erie Quest Heritage Shipwreck Museum, a gift shop and community programming space. Having completed a lighting retrofit of the main floor a couple years ago and noticing the difference it made, the LAC was strategic in their decision to target their heavily used second floor programming spaces this time around.

The second floor of the LAC is home to community meeting rooms used frequently by local groups in the community and as programming space. Along with these rooms, the LAC also hosts two local digital media artists in leased office space. With facility demand and programs growing each year, the LAC found the lights in those spaces were being kept on six or seven days a week, often for 12-hour days – making the decision to replace the older fluorescent bulbs an easy one.



IMPACT IN THE SPACE

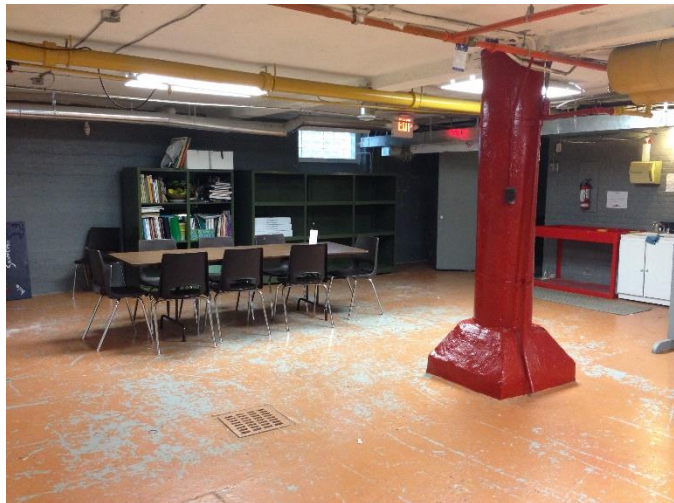
Like many arts organizations, the LAC actively looks for ways to cut costs and save so funds can be directed into programming. Director Chad Riley tells us, “hydro had been on the radar of the board of directors for a while, what with the increasing rates... The consumption hadn’t changed, but the dollar amount certainly had.” With the space being used more and more the lighting project allowed the LAC to offset the rising hydro costs and continue to support growing community programs.

Since the lighting project, the LAC has had great feedback from the community users on the second floor, particularly from the photographer and graphic designer who work out of the space. “For the artists who use this space, quality of light is so important to the work they do,” says Chad Riley. “Projects like this help us retain tenants.”

On top of the usual benefits of LED lighting (lower energy consumption, less heat emitted and better quality lighting) the new lighting features installed by the LAC use two bulbs where previous fixtures used four, resulting in two-fold savings. Chad describes the difference the new fixtures have made to the LAC’s staff team. “Because we’re a small staff, changing the old fluorescent bulbs was a big issue in itself,” he says, “pulling out big 8’ ladders and the frequency with which we had to do that.” With the new LEDs lasting much longer, the team at the LAC hasn’t had to change a single bulb – saving on both maintenance costs and staff time.

OVERALL SAVINGS ON ENERGY AND COSTS

In the year since the completion of the project, the LAC has seen an overall difference of 1,956 kWh and total usage costs decreased from \$3,214.38 to \$3,061.23 – a total savings of \$153.15. It is important to note that since the project, the LAC doubled usage of their rental spaces and brought a third tenant into a previously unused office space – Chad notes without the new LED lighting, their usage costs would likely have been a few thousand dollars higher.



As a great tip for other arts organizations, the LAC took advantage of a visit from Essex Power Corporation (their hydro provider) for an assessment to see what else they can do to save energy “[as a facility] that is dated and might be using more energy than it should,” says Chad. Getting in touch with your local provider is a great strategy for identifying cost-efficient ways to save energy and learn more about incentives available to you.

UPCOMING ENERGY PROJECTS

Extremely happy with the changes they've made so far, the Leamington Arts Centre notes their space is very large and they strategically targeted the rooms with the heaviest usage to see the maximum benefit. They hope in the future to complete the rest of the lighting upstairs and make the whole floor LED. The LAC has renovated a storage space into a functional space that acts as a staff room and Director Chad Riley anticipates heavy use, making it a new priority. With a fully LED basement and main floor and around 60% of the second floor already transitioned, the Leamington Arts Centre is well on its way to being a fully LED facility.