

SHEDDING NEW LIGHT ON BYRON CENTER SPORTS

CLIENT

Byron Center West Middle School Athletic Complex

PROJECT SIZE

\$1,124,000.00

LOCATION

Byron Center, Michigan

START DATE:

October 2017

COMPLETE DATE:

July 2018

PARTNERS:

Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.

SERVICE CATEGORY:

Electrical – Building & Site Lighting, Outdoor Utilities



OVERVIEW

In May 2017, residents of Byron Center, Michigan voted in favor of a \$68 million bond for Byron Center Public Schools. Construction for the projects and improvements made possible by that bond is expected to last for years—through the start of the 2020-21 school year. The very first project, though—the completion of a new athletic complex at Byron Center West Middle School—was ready to start by October 2017.

For the project, Windemuller was entrusted with the electrical and lighting work for the entire complex, including both indoor and outdoor utility installations. In total, our end of the project included primary and secondary electrical services, new site and roadway lighting, new lighting for six tennis courts and a soccer field, and indoor electrical and lighting utilities for the complex's team buildings, locker rooms, concession stands, and equipment storage buildings.

THE CHALLENGES

Due to the bond vote timing, the West Middle School Athletic Complex project wasn't ready to commence until late fall. That start date contributed to two of the bigger challenges Windemuller's crews faced on the job.

First, an October start date meant that much of the site work would fall into the winter timeframe. When installing outdoor lighting and utilities, our crews were encumbered by cold, wet conditions. The ground was completely frozen in some places,



while other spots quickly turned into slippery masses of mud. The conditions, combined with the clay soils at the worksite, made for some very difficult installation work. The weather also slowed down other trade teams, making scheduling more difficult for everyone involved.

Second, an October start date meant that the vast majority of project would be playing out while school was in session. For Windemuller, that factor meant dealing with the existing site utilities that were feeding lighting and electricity into the middle school. The plans for the new athletic complex went right over the top of those existing utilities, which meant the utilities had to be lowered to make way for the new facility. We also had to find a time to do a main changeover from the old utilities to the new utilities— all without disrupting classes at the school.

THE SOLUTIONS

To install soccer field lighting and other outdoor utilities, we installed temporary mats and platforms on the site so that we could get our trucks and equipment to the installation area. These mats made it possible to cross the site without our vehicles spinning their wheels on the slippery clay or getting stuck in the mud. For the frozen parts of the worksite, meanwhile, the only option was to wait for a thaw.

To execute a full electrical changeover without disrupting the school year, we needed to wait for a break in the class schedule. Based on how the project schedule worked out, that meant we were targeting spring break, which didn't start until the tail end of March. Rather than delay our part of the project, we kept the utilities at their existing grade and dug out everything around them. By the time spring break rolled around, we'd accomplished a substantial portion of our construction and installation work. All that legwork meant we were ready to activate the changeover and get the middle school on the new utilities well before students returned from vacation.



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