

Aging Boilers Necessitate Replacement by Belvidere School District

Case Study



Summary

Customer

Belvidere School District

Location

Belvidere, Illinois

Industry

Education

Laars Product Installed

MagnaTherm FT boilers

Sales Representative

Helm Group

Challenge

Heating for Illinois School Districts is always a priority. Last school year Sean Winter, facility director for the Belvidere School District, worked hand-in-hand with the school board as the district had multiple buildings with boilers nearing the end of their lifespan and needed to be replaced prior to the next school year. With a combined enrollment of over 5,000 students in the schools needing new equipment (8,000+ in the district), the consequences of a heating system failure were serious. Additionally, it was agreed that any solution chosen had to be uniform and scalable across the district.

Solution

The Belvidere School District put a bid out to the public for the pre-purchase of equipment. There were many responses to their request, and the school board ultimately chose the proposal from Laars Heating Systems Company to equip each school with their Laars MagnaTherm® FT boilers. Helm Group's Service Division, who provides HVAC, Piping, Automation, Electrical and Plumbing for the District, is a strong advocate for Belvidere School District, and because of that relationship, they were able to provide valuable guidance and insights to the district about brand differences and differentiations. They advised the district to consider the MagnaTherm® FT boiler. The school board discovered that this product checked all the boxes to meet the Belvidere School District's needs - high efficiency, O₂ combustion control, and high turndown to match each school's heating profile. However, the Laars commitment to field support with their industry-leading extended warranty proved critical in the decision-making process.

"Laars differentiated themselves not only with their product offering but with their extended warranty," said Pattie Krippendorf, Vice President of Service at Helm Group. "Because that's the type of company they are with the quality craftsmanship to stand behind their product."



When the district chose Laars MagnaTherm FT® boilers and issued an RFP to find a partner for installation and maintenance of the new systems, Helm Service immediately responded. Highlighting their ability to take on the entire project, from assistance with acquisition of the equipment and installation to support and maintenance, plus the value of their familiarity with Laars equipment and existing working relationship with the manufacturer, Helm Group won the job.

"It's those value-driven propositions that we all want to pursue - being a solution provider, and a trusted partner," Krippendorf said.

The work started quickly once the partnership with Laars and Helm Group was in place. Because of the synergies between the two companies, the "four-legged stool" of contractor, owner, engineer and manufacturer provided a strong foundation for the project. As Laars sales representatives from Herkowski, Stickler & Associate worked directly with the installation team in a boots-on-the-ground fashion, those on the Helm Service team were able to organize the many components and react to needs in real time. This level of collaboration enabled the team to keep to a tight three-month timeline while avoiding any major issues.

Results

The project took place while the Belvidere School District was on summer break, giving Laars and Helm Service a strict three-month window to complete installation. They successfully stayed on-target for the initial six school installation, and the district added a seventh school to the project upgrade. All installations were completed in time for the heating season.

With the installation of the new systems, the savings began to be realized. Once the new, energy-efficient Laars MagnaTherm® FT boilers were in place, the school district was able to harvest a \$80K gas incentive rebate from NICOR, the gas provider in the area. Plus, the long-term utility savings generated by the high-efficiency boilers will add up quickly.

"It's gratifying to help a community organization the size of Belvidere School District save money and provide safe conditions for students with the installation of our products," said Chuck O'Donnell, director of marketing at Laars Heating Systems Company. "Our Laars MagnaTherm® FT boilers are built to last, and we are confident the professionals at Helm Group will keep them running at optimal performance for years to come."

Money isn't the only thing being saved by this project in the long term. Standardizing equipment across a district this large will save space and money by the ability to stock fewer parts. This will be achieved as more of their aging boilers across the Belvidere School District near the end of their life span, they will have the opportunity to standardize around the Laars brand with support from Helm

