

Packers stadium expansion goes gold with A.O. Smith Xi electric water heaters

Case Study by Rebeca Borrero



South End Zone Construction photo courtesy of the Packers

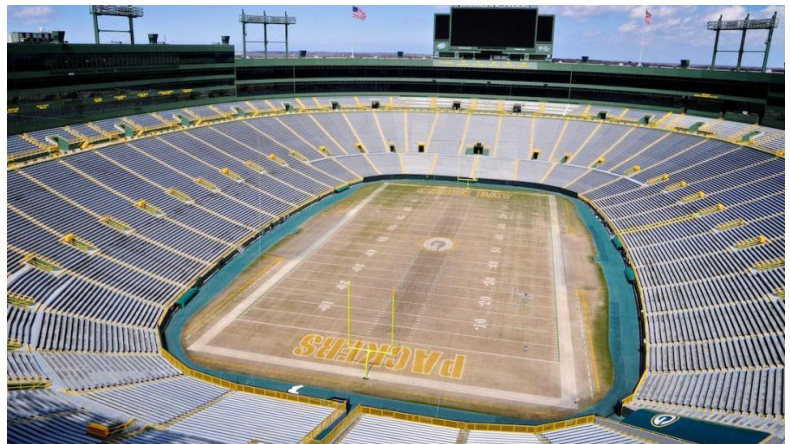
Nearly 80,000 fans will be filing through Lambeau Field during each home game of the Green Bay Packers' 2013 football season—7,000 more than last season—thanks to the newly expanded south end zone. During the expansion of the Packers stadium, which broke ground in January 2012, 21 new water heaters were installed, bringing the total number of water heaters in the well-known stadium to 132. Construction took place year-round, stopping only on Saturdays and Sundays during the football season. The expansion makes Lambeau Field one of the largest stadiums in the NFL.

Business Need

Stadiums present a unique set of application challenges, which Packers staff learned during their initial expansion.

“During the original Lambeau expansion in 2002, to prevent a lot of exposed piping from freezing in the winter, we had to install one water heater per set of restrooms and one per concession stand. This time around, the water heaters are now enclosed, which helped eliminate adding a lot of additional water heaters,” says Bill Miller, Packers plumber and technician.

Making sure that hot water is readily available to fans is a big concern, especially at Lambeau where the water heaters are operated the most on game day, 10-12 days out of the year. Fans go through 250,000 gallons of water, both hot and cold, on game day. “Family Night” in July is the official dry run for stadium personnel and of course operating the water heaters at full force. For most teams, this “pre-season” game is not a big deal, for the Packers, it is always a sell-out, so insuring everything is running smoothly is key.



Lambeau Field Stadium photo courtesy of the Packers

Business Drivers

Attendance at Lambeau is a good mix of male and female fans. Fifteen to 20 years ago, fans were primarily men, which meant on game day more men's restrooms were needed. Today, it's more of a 60 / 40 mix, and the team has equal numbers of men's and women's restrooms. Stadiums have an unofficial restroom to concession ratio of one per every 75 fans. At Lambeau, the ratio is smaller, and there are more restrooms and concession stands than the average stadium.

With this expansion, 20 new concession stands and one new restroom per concession stand were added. The expansion added 7,000 new general seats, 2,000 of which are combination terrace suites that seat 8-10 people, and includes group and outdoor seating. The suites have two water heaters in each suite, and each individual room has its own water heater. There is also a water heater in the laundry room.

Solution: A. O. Smith Xi Electric Waters Heaters

Engineers from mechanical contractor, Tweet Garot out of Green Bay, Wisconsin, chose the A. O. Smith Xi electric water heaters for the Lambeau expansion for many reasons. Electric water heaters are easier to maintain, especially during the off season. One person, usually Bill, simply needs to flip a switch to shut off the water heaters during the off season, and they can easily re-start them in July. For smaller events at Lambeau, like the recent Kenny Chesney concert, they can choose to fire up only 75 percent of the water heaters. It's easy for Bill to look at-a-glance at his list of water heaters and determine which ones he needs to fire up and which ones are already turned on. During the off season, Bill can easily flush them out to prepare them for dormancy.

Due to the size of Lambeau Field, electric water heaters also provided significant savings to the Packers' energy bill; essentially because they were able to turn the water heaters on and off as needed.

Since volunteers staff the concession stands at Lambeau it was also important to choose electric water heaters and set them to a safe water outlet temperature of 120 degrees. Choosing electric over gas also meant there was no need to run gas lines or have flues throughout the stadium.



"We were thrilled to be a part of the expansion, and with our corporate headquarters being right there in Milwaukee (90 miles away) it only made sense. The order and shipment of the water heaters for the Lambeau Field expansion went very smoothly. I worked closely with the sales rep (Peter Bibby at Soderholm and Associates) and the mechanical contractor (Greg at Tweet Garot) to make sure everything went without a hitch," says Ginger Ohlman, project manager – marketing for A. O. Smith.



Due to space constraints during construction and weather conditions in Green Bay, staging the water heaters so they arrived when they were scheduled to be installed was essential to the success of the expansion.

"The Packers gave us adequate time to build the heaters to their exact specifications, and we made arrangements to deliver them in four separate shipments beginning in early February and ending in early April. They were great to work with, planned well in advance, and our folks at the plant of manufacture took great care to make sure each order went out on-time and in-full. It was one of the smoothest jobs of this size I've ever managed," Ginger noted.

A. O. Smith is the primary water heater provider for the Packers. While the water heaters were manufactured at the McBee, South Carolina plant, all the partners involved are from the Wisconsin area. General contractor/project manager Hammes Company out of Madison and Soderholm and Associates in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, both helped coordinate the project for A. O. Smith.

"It's great when Wisconsin-based companies can come together from A. O. Smith to local plumbing distributors and contractors, to support our favorite team, the Packers," says Peter Bibby, A. O. Smith manufacturer's representative from Soderholm and Associates.

Visit www.hotwater.com for more information about A. O. Smith's Xi electric water heaters and find the water heater solution is right for your commercial or residential application . . . or your stadium!