

# Ecoglo Provides Solution to Potential Aisle Lighting Problem

Ecoglo has provided an ideal solution to potential lighting problems faced by the designers of The Arena at Gwinnett Center - a new 13,000 seat building recently opened under SMG management in Duluth, Georgia. Industry veterans Preston Williams and Joey Dennis have consulted on many building projects, but with Gwinnett Center they had more freedom and influence in the design and construction. "It's nice to have authority and responsibility!" says Williams. "The ability to tell the architect and the design engineer what works from an operational perspective - and for that reason we could take on innovative solutions to problems we have encountered during our time managing public assembly buildings. We've done aisle lighting every way conceivable and we had not found a great way to address it." As they saw it, they had three options: "in-chair" lighting, overhead directed lighting, or they could use an innovative new technology they had tested called Ecoglo. Installing lighting in the armrest of a chair was seen as expensive - both to install and to maintain. It consumes power and, as Preston Williams describes it, "By the time the building is two years old, 20% of the lights have stopped working and you start to encounter falls with among your guests." Joey Dennis continues, "This kind of lighting is a maintenance nightmare and having to penetrate through the pre-cast during construction is a major issue. It is expensive to install and maintain." The overhead directional lighting is seen as an improvement on the "in-chair" solution. "If they are focused and shuttered correctly, they are great," says Williams, who has worked with this style of lighting in the past. "The problem is that they are usually installed on the catwalk, which means they move when the catwalk is in use or when the lights are maintained. Additionally, part of the audience may be blinded by the aisle lighting while they are seated during a performance." There are also maintenance and power consumption issues with this solution. Williams and Dennis first saw Ecoglo at an IAAM trade show in Los Angeles. Seeing the potential for an aisle lighting solution, they asked Ecoglo to put a trial installation into a small theatre attached to the performing arts section of Gwinnett Center. The trial enabled Williams and his team to analyse the function of the Ecoglo aisle lighting solution during performances. They were also able to test how easily the product was to clean, whether it disturbed performers or patrons, and whether it continued to stay lit performance after performance.

They liked what they saw and decided to install the Ecoglo aisle lighting solution - a code-compliant combination of step nosings on every step in the arena, glowing handrails, and aisle numbering to guide guests to their seats. And it has worked well since they opened in February 2003. In fact, the majority of comments they have received have been from fellow industry professionals. "Customers seem to take it for granted; they don't stop and stare, they just move on down to their seats. Two industry professionals from another



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arena nearby came to visit, though, and they couldn't take their eyes off it," says Williams.

"The event services manager loved the nosing and handrail lighting from a safety perspective, and the ticketing manager just loved the aisle numbering." "The aisle markers have the row and seat information on them but no section numbering, so when it's dark some customers have an issue finding the right section for their seat. But that just goes to show how effective the aisle lettering is, so we might just change our numbering to include that extra information." And what would they do differently? Preston Williams: "Next time we do a building, we'll integrate Ecoglo even earlier into the design of the building."