

# Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Powering tourism goals with creative financing, advanced technology and thoughtful implementation



At its peak, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center welcomes hundreds of thousands of guests a year, making it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the area.

With a high volume of visitors passing through its doors each day, as well as live animals and exhibits on site, maintaining a safe and comfortable indoor environment is crucial. For aquarium leaders, this meant updating to the latest Metasys controls systems while investing in ongoing preventative maintenance. To make these much-needed improvements without delay, the City of Virginia Beach facilities department turned to long-time partner Johnson Controls for an immediate

financing solution that wouldn't strain its budget further during the ongoing pandemic.

## Creative funding and thoughtful implementation support long-term success

As a trusted collaborator since 1994, Johnson Controls has been instrumental in numerous upgrades and improvements to the aquarium over the years, from building

renovations to exhibit changes. Working with city and aquarium leaders, Johnson Controls Capital was able to identify and develop a custom financing plan tailored to the customer's unique needs. Johnson Controls proposed a five-year subscription service agreement to fund the necessary Metasys upgrade and premium service work. Rather than paying upfront, the city can pay out of its operating budget over time to address capital needs in the short term while setting itself up for lifecycle

## Case study



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replacements in the future. Through this method, Johnson Controls assumes full ownership and responsibility of project assets, including HVAC equipment, giving the city the option to buy the asset outright at the end of the term. This flexibility allowed the aquarium to modernize its facilities quickly while retaining much-needed capital and minimizing risk.

With the subscription service agreement in place, Johnson Controls got to work. With almost 30 years of experience working in the aquarium, the implementation team understood the extra care and thoughtful communication and coordination required when working around animals and exhibits. Through this strategy, the aquarium's operations could continue uninterrupted throughout the upgrade process, helping to maintain revenue generation for the City of Virginia Beach.

### Welcoming aquarium visitors with a safe, comfortable and connected environment

Upon the implementation's completion

in June 2022, the aquarium's managers will gain the state-of-the-art technology necessary to operate and monitor the facility comfortably and safely for the animals and guests. Because of the aquarium's impact on tourism in the City of Virginia Beach, any down-time or service interruptions could result in massive loss of revenue. The upgrade to Metasys 11 ensures the aquarium remains operational, while the maintenance included in the customized premium service agreement will extend asset and building lifecycles, delivering future-ready outcomes. Johnson Controls will continue to support the City of Virginia Beach's goals through an additional five-year \$250,000 agreement.

By upgrading equipment and software, the City of Virginia Beach will save on the cost of repairs as well as enjoy reduced utility bills due to the more efficient nature of the new technology. The advanced controls and insights provided by Metasys 11 will unlock a new level of optimization for the aquarium, allowing its leaders to deliver a safe, comfortable and enjoyable environment for guests that will keep them coming back year after year. And

by exploring new financing options with Johnson Controls, the aquarium can achieve its goals while preserving capital, minimizing risk and gaining newfound flexibility.

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