



Carl's Jr. Signs

A Case Study: Restaurant Chain Gets a Facelift with LEDs



The renowned red and yellow “happy star” logo that appears on Carl's Jr. signs recently brightened up since several signs were converted from neon to an LED light source.

Founded in 1941 as the flagship restaurant chain of parent CKE Restaurants, the well-known California-based Carl's Jr. franchise consists of 1,000 restaurants on the west coast and overseas. When an electrical fire destroyed the face of one restaurant's sign, CKE representatives along with their lighting maintenance company, Daylite Maintenance, were open to alternatives. A system involving highly-efficient LEDs driven by Philips Advance signPRO® LED drivers were the optimal choice.

Daylite Maintenance worked with LED system integrator Permlight to convert the damaged sign from neon to LED technology. Once designed, the project involved the use of roughly 65 red and amber Permlight LED modules driven by one Philips Advance signPRO 60W LED driver and required about half a day of labor to complete the installation. Input watts for the system immediately declined from 200W with the previous neon source to 38W with LEDs. This 80% reduction in energy consumption will equate to roughly \$60 a year in energy cost savings per each of the smaller signs that are retrofit on top of significant reductions in sign maintenance; based on the cost to retrofit the sign, these combined savings will generate an attractive 1-2 year payback on the investment for CKE. In addition, the movement away from the high voltages required by neon to the low voltage (UL Class 2) characteristics of LEDs introduces a heightened level of safety and worry-free operation for restaurant management.

“So far, we are very satisfied with the new LED technology in our signs and plan to work with our

suppliers to retrofit all of the signs in the region to LEDs as each one comes due for maintenance,” says Jim Sheradin, Manager of Facilities for CKE. Maintenance issues and economics were big factors affecting CKE's decision to convert to LEDs. “We did some comparative analysis and found that it was costing us about \$600 per year to maintain each neon sign,” said Sheradin. “For about \$1,100, we could just convert the whole sign to LEDs and hopefully remove the entire maintenance issue for the better part of the next 10 years or more, which makes a lot more financial sense for our organization.” Concludes Sheradin, “Our signs are critical to our image and presence. Based on the simplicity of the system, its safety, energy efficiency, and ease of installation, LEDs are an optimal solution for our chain.”

Project Overview	
End User:	Carl's Jr. (west coast-based chain of fast-food restaurants)
Project Site:	Several franchise locations in Southern California
Project Scope:	Retrofit of small Carl's Jr. sign from previous neon system to LED technology after a fire destroyed the sign's face
Project Timetable:	Spring 2003
Products Involved:	Conversion of the sign involved 65 red and amber LED modules (Permlight) driven by one Philips Advance signPRO® 60W LED driver
Estimated Annual Energy Savings:	\$60 in energy costs plus an estimated \$500-\$600 in avoided sign maintenance costs per year
Estimated Payback Period:	1-2 years, or a 50+% return on investment (from combined energy and maintenance savings)



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Philips Lighting Electronics N.A.
10275 W. Higgins Road
Rosemont IL 60018
Tel: 800-322-2086 Fax: 888-423-1882
Customer Support/Technical Service: 800-372-3331
OEM Support: 866-915-5886
www.philips.com/advance