



RENTAL MANAGEMENT

The Official Magazine of the American Rental Association

May 2021

PLANNING AHEAD

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

- Adding versatility to your inventory with light towers
- Surviving hurricanes and a pandemic in Louisiana
- Knowing where your inventory is with new technology

Adding more versatility to your rental inventory with LED towers

LIGHTING

the way

Light towers and the equipment and event rental industry have had an ongoing relationship, and with improved technologies over the years, rental companies and their customers are seeing different uses along with greater efficiencies.

A number of companies see great opportunity and growth with light towers. Anything from road construction to sports venues, concerts and festivals, weddings and more, light towers give end users a viable option to rent rather than purchase.

There are a number of models to choose from for rental inventory. LED light towers have become the preferred method of providing light in many markets over the metal halide variety, according to Erin Brown, product specialist senior, Doosan Portable Power, Statesville, N.C.

Brown says upwards of 70 percent of light towers now are equipped with LEDs, where energy consumption is half of that of traditional metal halide. And, light towers have become more compact.

“Generally speaking, the smaller the light tower footprint, the better,” Brown says. “From a logistics standpoint, the more machines that can be transported on a single truck, the better the overall total-cost-of-ownership of the machines.”

Brian Astl, president, Lind Equipment, Buffalo, N.Y., says his company’s sales strategy for light towers targets the rental industry as its main customers.

“The rental market has the dominant role to play in ensuring

customers have access to light towers when and where they need them,” Astl says. “Since light towers are not an everyday use for most people, the rental market is the key way for us to get to market.”

Manufacturers are finding technologies bring more options as light towers become mobile, versatile and can check boxes for multiple applications from construction to party and event industries, serving both indoor and outdoor uses.

“As a lighting manufacturer, we are constantly researching methods to improve our products,” says MacKenzie Perez, executive vice president, Airstar America, Orlando. “We anticipate that light output will increase dramatically in the next few years as LED technology continues to advance. To that end, we’re actively working on more energy efficient solutions that increase lumens while reducing wattage consumption.”

“Light towers have always been prevalent on job sites,” says Vincent Hunt, senior product manager, Generac Mobile, Berlin, Wis. “Advances have opened up light towers to entertainment and events applications. For these applications, it is advantageous to have light towers that are compact, fuel efficient, quiet and easy to operate.”

Advances in technology have boosted interest in light towers in various ways. Astl says the light tower also is a perfect platform to deliver many different technologies to the rental market and its customers.

“We believe that the future of light towers is in mobility,



Photo courtesy of Allmand Bros.

versatility and multiple applications,” Astl says. “There is no need any more for large generators on light towers with the advancements in LEDs. Customers can receive the same amount of light using high performance LEDs that are mounted on towers that can plug into a 15-amp circuit or be powered by a small suitcase generator.”

Astl explains that light towers can be viewed as a platform to not only deploy light, but also work with other products, such as surveillance cameras and multiple kinds of lights, such as flood lights and balloon lights.

“In fact, we believe that these things can all be deployed on the very same tower platform and be interchangeable as needed by the rental company and allow a rental company to deliver many different applications with one lightweight, portable and versatile asset,”

Astl says. | To Page 70



Photo courtesy of Wacker Neuson Corp.

Combining products with intelligence

Light towers follow technology, and with it, different applications or even a combination of uses. One company, Thermal Intelligence, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, offers BASECAMP, a smart 3-in-1 heater, light tower and generator.

The product delivers efficiency as a flameless heater, provides a 360-degree LED lighting package and 27kW of available power. The machine includes 2,500-hour service intervals and 24/7 remote monitoring and control. The equipment tells the user if there are any problems via a SmartTalk wireless alert system.

“By combining heat, power and lights, we have an incredibly versatile platform for almost any work site,” says Brian Tiedemann, director of innovation, Thermal Intelligence.

Tiedemann says combination packages, such as the BASECAMP model, gives end users the ability to drive operating costs way down while eliminating multiple pieces of equipment.

“From a rental company’s perspective, they can carry less overall inventory and do a better job of taking care of their clients,” Tiedemann says. “This is the first time a rental company can rent a heater year-round, because it can be used as a generator and light tower regardless of the temperature outside. Utilization is key to running a profitable rental business, and 3-in-1 products like



Photo courtesy of Thermal Intelligence

BASECAMP offer three ways to rent the same piece of equipment.”

Tiedemann says smart equipment is the future.

“Once users experience the numerous benefits of smart equipment, they will simply never go back,” he says. “No one is trading their smartphones in for land lines, and the same will be true for smart, connected rental equipment.” ♦

— Stephen Elliott



Photos this page courtesy of Airstar America

Doosan's Brown says light towers also can be powered by different methods.

"The emergence of light towers that can be used with shore power — without the use of the engine — allows for lighting to be used in applications where there might be electricity available, but no lighting," Brown says.

"For example, in a new building construction that has electricity where lighting hasn't yet been installed, the light towers can be plugged in and used inside the building without the need for the diesel engine. Solar lighting and balloon lighting can also be used in this way," she says.

Fred Paul, Wacker Neuson University manager, Wacker Neuson Corp., Menomonee Falls, Wis., says the company's LTV series is designed with rental centers in mind. Compact body design and vertical mast allows for more units to be transported on a single trailer as 18 units will fit on a 48-ft. flatbed truck.

Even with a smaller footprint, light towers still offer full features needed for rental applications, Paul says.

"Most manufacturers offer an LED light option and large fuel tanks to provide long hours of continuous lighting," Paul says. "The life expectancy of the LED lamps is up to 50,000 hours and with improved fuel economy, rental customers can expect up to 200 hours of run time when you use lights only."

Paul says telematics technologies are popular with light towers, monitoring location and runtime, which can be useful to identify service needs.

"Auto programming is also a popular feature for man-less start and stop times and can be activated by a photo cell, or a programmable controller that can determine run times and sequences based off of GPS locations," Paul says.

Chip Hicks, south east territory sales manager, Allmand Bros., Holdrege, Neb., says the rental market is a primary market for the

entire Allmand Bros. product lineup, including light towers. Hicks says technology is pushing light towers in a customer friendly way.

"We're seeing a significant push for Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled equipment, which allows rental customers to gather and use diagnostic, location and performance data," Hicks says. "LED light technology is really gaining speed in the market and becoming more mainstream, while light control systems are being improved upon to be more user friendly and reliable. We're also seeing innovations that extend engine maintenance intervals, which helps to decrease downtime while increasing run time."

Hicks says Allmand Bros. also is seeing increased interest among rental houses in electric light towers that use batteries, photocells or plug in like the Allmand Nite-Lite™ GR-Series Chain light tower, which offers towability to the company chain towers and allows for any power source with 15- or 20-amp connection to illuminate most any application with LED lighting.

Paul says Wacker Neuson has provided additional security lighting around the Las Vegas Convention Center for shows such as World of Concrete and CONEXPO-CON/AGG. He says the compact design has allowed light towers to be less conspicuous for special event rentals.

"Applications for light towers are really wide open," Paul says.

Airstar America's balloon lights provide 360 degrees of glare-free coverage to the work area. With the company's safety lighting, contractors can reduce the number of towers they need, while improving site visibility and reducing the harmful effects of eye fatigue and light pollution, Perez says.

The experts agree the future looks bright for light towers.

"Solar power presents exciting possibilities for lighting, and we can't wait to see how renewable energy solutions and more efficient lighting systems can work hand-in-hand to revolutionize the industry," Perez says. ♦