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Ostrow Electric completes Boston College central heating plant upgrade & expansion - earns ENR award

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Boston, MA In November, Engineering News-Record (ENR) New England announced that the Boston College Central Heating Plant (CHP) upgrade & expansion was awarded the 2020 ENR Best Energy/Industrial Project. Ostrow Electric provided installation of the plant's comprehensive electrical systems on a project team headed by general contractor, Consigli Construction Co.

Extensive upgrades were made to the existing five-story plant and a new 9,000 s/f addition, which connects to the plant and significantly increases the facility's capacity to meet peak load requirements. The CHP provides service to 22 BC campus buildings.

Ostrow's project scope entailed upgrading the existing building's electrical infrastructure. The facility's new electrical distribution system is comprised of a 2500A, 13.8kV to 480V substation which powers the plant, as well as a new 2000A emergency system fed by a 1MW generator. The switchgear powers three existing and two new high-pressure steam boilers.

Additionally, the NECA contractor provided a new fire alarm/life-safety system, security system and low voltage systems that support upgrades to the building's boilers. New energy-efficient LED lighting was also installed throughout the building.

The facility is centrally located on BC's Chestnut Hill campus and special work protocols and scheduling was required to maintain a safe environment at all times for students, faculty, and the general public on the fully-occupied campus. All electrical work was performed while maintaining power 24-7 to the existing boiler plant throughout the project. The project allowed for one 72-hour shutdown of the existing plant over Memorial Day weekend, which entailed extensive planning and collaboration between the BC facilities team and all contractors to develop an hour-by-hour schedule.

The project team met significant logistical challenges on the tight and congested site, which had limited points of access for deliveries and equipment.

Ostrow Vice President and PM Sam Ostrow and Foreman John Mikolajczyk supervised a crew of 10 IBEW Local 103 electricians and technicians in the 16-month project, which was completed in February 2020.

"Ostrow Electric is proud to have been part of the BC Central Heating Plant project team, as the

project is critical to the college's infrastructure," said Ostrow. "Credit goes to general contractor Consigli, the BC facilities team and all the trades, as we worked in close collaboration to ensure a safe project and an effective upgrade to the facility."

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540