Then and Now: Community Hospital of Watervliet

In 2004, the Community Hospital of Watervliet installed a Generac generator system. To ensure that their facility would have full power in the event of a utility outage, the hospital’s board of directors invested in a 750 kW Gemini® Twin Pack gen-set. The diesel-powered unit is two 375 kW generators in one enclosure, designed to operate in parallel. Integrated controls combine the two generators’ outputs, providing enough electricity to power the entire hospital if utility power becomes unavailable.

When hospitals are not functioning due to an outage, they place the lives of patients, staff and visitors at risk. The Community Hospital of Watervliet, in southwestern Michigan, was founded in 1949 and serves more than a dozen communities. As one of the primary hospitals in the area, it needs to be able to offer emergency health care around the clock, 365 days a year. It was imperative that emergency and life safety systems remained fully operational anytime utility power was lost.

Glenn Emmert of Wolverine Power Systems, the Generac Industrial Power dealer based in nearby Holland, Michigan, recommended the Gemini® solution. Alone, either generator can carry the most crucial aspects of Community Hospital’s load, meeting all NFPA requirements. However, with two units, it provides redundancy. If one unit is undergoing maintenance, the second gen-set will provide coverage of the load up to 375 kW, which is sufficient for all of the hospital’s critical load, as well as most of its operations.

“The paralleled configuration made sense for us because we needed that redundancy and we were working with limited space,” said Kenny Ashley, Facilities Supervisor of Lakeland Hospital Watervliet. “Over the years, we have had one go down and one stay on during our monthly tests showing us the importance of having redundancy.” Also, with each generator having its own paralleling switchgear on the generator frame, a separate room for conventional paralleling switchgear isn’t required, saving the hospital important space and money.

Fifteen years later, in 2019, the generators are still providing the peace of mind they were when they were first installed. “On average, we see about two outages a year,” said Ashley. “We have had great performances from the generators when they have kicked in. It is a very smooth process.”

An important aspect that has made the generators reliable all these years, and will...
APPLICATION: Healthcare

MODELS: 2 x 375 kW generators in one enclosure

continue to make sure they work properly, is preventative maintenance. Yearly inspections and routine servicing are required for standby generators with less than 250 hours of annual run time. System testing is a practice commonly required by governing bodies. This practice is employed to ensure system reliability. “Our generators do get serviced annually,” said Ashley. “There is a four-hour load bank test that is performed yearly. There are also monthly tests by the facility’s maintenance team and there are weekly runs on Saturdays for a half-hour.”

Ashley said they also get the fuel reconditioned yearly. “If we need a service, I call and have a service technician sent out and they try to make it that day or it will be the next. It is very simple for me to call and set up.” After 15 years, there are bound to be some issues along the way. “We have had a few parts go bad due to wear and tear, but all the issues have been resolved,” Ashley said. “We have a good relationship with Wolverine Power. They answer all of our questions and resolve any issues in a timely manner. I would recommend their service to anyone.”