VIRGIN GALACTIC STAYS COOL AND READY FOR LAUNCH

The United States' first purpose-built commercial spaceport can now control its hangar climate as stringently as it manages its spacecraft

Honeywell

BUILDING CONTROLS & SOLUTIONS

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO FOR VIRGIN GALACTIC

At Virgin Galactic's New Mexico Spaceport, the operators needed to get the air handlers under control, as they had been running for years with the supply fans constantly ramping up and down. The supply temperature control was also inconsistent and needed immediate attention. Virgin turned to Honeywell for expertise they can trust, regardless of the type of building.

THE CHALLENGE

Spaceport America is the world's first purpose-built commercial spaceport, designed solely for commercial space use from the ground up. With Virgin Galactic's launch of the VSS Unity on May 22, 2021, New Mexico became the third US state to launch humans into space.

Besides getting the air handlers under control, Virgin needed full access to the system to change set points for the pumps and chillers. The chillers had heat regeneration and were able to maintain the hot water loop. However, as they were not operating correctly, they were heating with the electric boiler – causing very high energy bills.

Another challenge was the novelty of the building – as spaceports are not a well-established type of building, there are not many control solution providers with versatile offerings that can live up to the expectations of Virgin Galactic.

THE SOLUTION

Virgin Galactic worked with Building Controls & Solutions, a preeminent distributor for Honeywell. The team identified the best approach to address the existing challenge, given the stringent space conditions in the hangar.

The solution was to install Honeywell WEB-8000 JACE controllers with Honeywell Spyder controllers for the main integration. The Honeywell controllers connect via BACnet™, giving the end-user more capabilities with the system for changing setpoints.

The solution also included installing and programming new controllers on the main air handlers and central plant. This gives Virgin full access to control and modify their system, and enables the system to perform the way they expect it to. Virgin Galactic is delighted with the final results – finally having the control they need to operate a state-of-the-art spaceport.

THE BENEFITS

- Virgin Galactic's energy consumption has been drastically reduced, with better programming and energy management of the equipment
- Stabilized comfort throughout the facility
- Saved money by not having to pay for repeated service calls to change setpoints

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