

Website blurbs

Museum

Someone once said, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” The museum’s temporary exhibits this summer certainly reflect this theme. Half of the exhibit is devoted to the renovation of our historic building, the former Silver Spur Saloon. The other half includes a wide range of local artifacts that look familiar yet are different from their modern counterparts. Stop by, escape the heat, and enjoy the comforts of modern living while viewing tools from the past.

City Hall

There’s a new exhibit at the new City Hall, provided by the Roanoke Visitor Center and Museum. This temporary exhibit features a collection of antique “sad” irons that were used in the 19th and early 20th centuries for ironing clothes. The display is located in the main gallery, so take a moment this summer to learn more about the fascinating history of ironing and be thankful for the gift of electricity.

Lighting for exhibits

In 2018, the Roanoke Visitor Center and Museum installed new lighting using the IMLS grant. The old lighting was a mixture of two different systems. The track manufacture was WAC Lighting, and the track heads were a retrofit Juno fixture. The WAC track was discontinued and so combining the two manufacturers was no longer an option and the Juno fixture had no beam control. When lighting works of art, the use of glass optics is necessary to help shape the beam in a more precise beam pattern. The previous lighting was surface-mounted on a recessed ceiling not reaching below the lower ceiling level. Thus impeding the light reaching the display cases on one side of the space.

After a lighting demonstration, it was decided to install a Juno T261L LED fixture and track system with a variety of optics that offer full beam lighting control. For their most sensitive artifacts, a dimmer was installed to help control the light intensity. For the cases, we used a 10" pendant mount track (lowering the track heads) which corrected the beam angle needed to light the display cases. We also replaced and added dimmers to canned lights that were never used before because they were too bright.

The museum ordered 46 LED lights, 106 accessories, and 100 feet of track. The museum closed for installation April 22-26, 2019. Readings before installation ranged from 5 to 180 foot candles. Readings after installation read 15 to 18 foot candles.

For visitors, the lighting eliminates shadows that made it difficult to see the items and read the captions. This indirect and low lighting requires less adjustment of the eye from areas of intense light to those of relative darkness. It also allows the use of lamps with a lower wattage throughout the exhibit spaces.