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Keating Sports Center Unveils New Lighting System

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CHICAGO, III. – On Wednesday, August 17, the Illinois Institute of Technology unveiled new LED lighting in the Keating Sports Center. Pioneered by Dr. Mohammad Shahidehpour, Illinois Tech's Director of the Robert W. Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation, the lights enhance the building's energy efficiency as well as the student experience.

The new lighting is powered by solar paneling installed on the Keating Sports Center's roof. Power is then run direct current through storage batteries operating off of Illinois Tech's first hybrid AC-DC nanogrid, isolating the lighting's power from the rest of campus.

"This project will greatly increase energy efficiency," said Shahidehpour. "The solar energy and the batteries installed here reduces the total energy consumed by this building, which overall, helps the university."

The new innovation allows Keating's functionality to dramatically change in a positive manner.

"In case of emergencies, we will be able to separate the building from the rest of Illinois Tech's grid and keep the lighting powered on," explained Shahidehpour. "Furthermore, we will be able to manage the lights to the point that if certain parts of the gymnasium is not being used, those lights can be dimmed or turned off."

New lighting inside of the Keating Sports Center was on the radar of Director of Athletics Joe Hakes since he joined the Illinois Tech family in 2014.

"An updating of the lighting in this building was much needed," said Director of Athletics Joe Hakes. "The new lights are much brighter, cleaner, and will have increased longevity. Since our students are involved in energy and sustainability, we think they will be excited about the athletic department being one of the lead groups on campus to take advantage of this technology."

"I believe the gymnasium is a focal point of the university where many students come to spend time," said Shahidehpour. "The more money we can put into the Keating Sports Center, the better as far as the university is concerned."

In addition to the excitement of the student body, Illinois Tech's coaches and staff members also see the benefits of the new lighting.

"I think it will have a lot of impact just in our day-to-day practices," said Head Men's and Women's Volleyball Coach Katie Reifert. "With the glare sometimes in this building, the lighting was something we had to worry about before. The new lights brighten up the place and mood of everyone. I think it will have a long-lasting, positive effect on our programs."

The Illinois Tech athletic department is thankful for all of the work put in by the various parties involved in implementing and installing the building's lighting.

"Dr. Shahidehpour, Azimuth Energy, and a lot of people behind the scenes have been involved in making the project possible," said Hakes. "We really are appreciative of them for thinking of our athletic department and of the Keating Sports Center."

Students, faculty, and fans can check out Illinois Tech's varsity teams in action under the new lights throughout the school year. Women's Volleyball begins its home schedule on Friday, September 16 against Moody Bible Institute at 7:00 p.m.

