



 **mitsubishi  
electric**  
HVAC Advanced Products Division

case study

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product  
**Jet Towel**  
market  
**Educational Facilities**  
location  
**San Francisco, Calif.**



## California Academy of Sciences Transforms

The California Academy of Sciences is nestled in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and is a sanctuary for all things related to nature. The Academy is committed to cutting-edge research, educational outreach, and finding new ways to engage the public. The Academy's mission is to explore, explain and protect the natural world. This mission extends to all aspects of the institution from training teachers and developing interactive displays to the Academy's newly built headquarters. The headquarters—a multi-level, single structure filled with hundreds of innovative exhibits and thousands of plants and animals—contains an aquarium, a planetarium, a natural history museum, and a four-story rainforest. In addition, there is a 3D theater, a lecture hall, a Naturalist Center, two restaurants, a garden and aviary, a roof terrace, and a store. The building also houses the Academy's science labs and administrative offices, including an extensive library and archive consisting of more than 20 million specimens. The building also represents new heights in sustainable architecture and blends seamlessly into the park's landscape.

### The Quest for LEED®

During the design and building phases of the headquarters that spanned almost a decade, the Academy demonstrated its commitment to

sustainability in all facets of the facility—from the bike racks and rechargeable vehicle stations outside, to the radiant sub-floor heating inside, to the energy-generating solar panels on top of the building. It was important to the architect, Renzo Piano, that the new look of the Academy take into consideration three dimensions—displaying the collection, educating the public and researching science. The spirit of this new building is to announce and enforce this complexity of function. Other green features include using six inches of soil substrate as roof-top insulation; incorporating an expansive floor-to-ceiling glass wall that enables 90 percent of the building's interior offices to use lighting from natural resources; and installing recycled denim for wall insulation.

Because of these sustainable advancements, in October 2008 the Academy's headquarters earned the Platinum rating (highest rating possible) for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The Academy's headquarters building is now the largest public Platinum-rated building in the world, and also the world's greenest museum.

### Mitsubishi Electric HVAC's Jet Towel and LEED

How did the world's largest LEED-certified natural history museum

and scientific center design its public restrooms to be eco-friendly? "It was our internal Green Team that came up with the idea of installing an automated hand dryer in the public restrooms," says Erin Riley, project manager for the California Academy of Sciences. "We had made the decision to compost paper towels used in the staff facilities, but wanted something with a sleek design for guests of the Academy. It was an add-on that wasn't suggested by architects, but by our own people."

When the Academy professionals began researching automated hand dryers, they knew they wanted the best in the market. "We tested Mitsubishi Electric HVAC's Jet Towel and one other brand," says Riley. "We found that the Jet Towel is quieter, sleeker in its design and its drying time is quicker than its competitor, not to mention the fact that the Jet Towel offers users a heated stream of air rather than a cold blast like they are used to. One of the biggest complaints about automated dryers is that they don't actually dry ones hands, they simply blow cold air. This was not the case with the Jet Towel. We were actually amazed at how well and how quickly it worked."

The Academy called on PACARC Distributors, located in Seattle, Wash., Jet Towel's U.S. distributor,

and ordered 30 JT-116EH-W-CA Jet Towel automated hand dryers for eight public facilities. Rosedin Electric, San Francisco, Calif., installed six Jet Towels on the main museum floor, and two Jet Towels in each restroom of The Moss Room, the fine-dining restaurant. The entire installation took only a few weeks and Rosedin Electric was finished in plenty of time for the grand opening.

Two months after opening, the Academy added two more Jet Towels to one of the "hands-on" attractions. The staff had noticed that a large amount of paper towels were being used per day at the Touch Tidepool, a hands-on pool where visitors can interact and touch live sea creatures such as starfish and sea anemones. "We noticed how many paper towels we were going through and then we realized that by putting Jet Towel next to the exhibit, we would not only save money on the continual purchase of paper towels, but also reduce the waste produced by the Academy each day," says Riley. "The Jet Towel is just as fun as the Tidepool for many of the children as well as the adults, just not as educational."

Incorporating Mitsubishi Electric HVAC's Jet Towel is just one of the many eco-conscious installations at the Academy's headquarters. Because of an ongoing commitment

The California Academy of Sciences installed six Jet Towel automated hand dryers on the main museum floor, two in each restroom of its fine dining restaurant and two more at the Touch Tidepool attraction.



**Jet Towel Equipment Installed:**  
(30) JT-116EH-W-CA Units

to providing the public with an environmentally friendly learning center, the Academy is thinking about achieving LEED certification for ongoing building operations. If the Academy moves forward with this endeavor, Jet Towel will be a factor in its overall rating.

The Academy is open daily from 9:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and hosts evening events almost every night of the week, resulting in thousands of people visiting the Academy's facilities every day. Mitsubishi Electric HVAC's Jet Towel hand dryers haven't failed in the quest for sustainability since being installed. "The best part is watching our visitors exiting the restrooms making the hand motion of how the Jet Towel works; it's absolutely fascinating how intrigued people are by this piece of equipment," concludes Riley. "It's like they don't even notice that they are surrounded by millions of years of natural history."

