

Churchill Downs Drives Efficiency With Intelligent Services



See how connected building technology helps drive energy savings, optimize building performance, and support an unforgettable guest experience.

Quick Facts

Location: Louisville, KY

Industry: Sports & Entertainment

Products: Building Automation System (BAS) | Chillers | Air Handlers | Cooling Towers | Intelligent Services

Topics: Energy Management | Energy Savings | Building Automation | Sustainability | Facility Modernization

Services: Intelligent Services | Building Automation | Energy Management | Remote Monitoring | Connected Building Services

Results

\$2M

In Energy Savings Since 2020

20%

Below Forecast In Annual Energy Costs

\$100k+

Secured In Utility Rebates

~4,800 Mtco₂E

Avoided Carbon Emissions Since 2020



Highlights

- Intelligent Services turns building data into actionable insights that help guide operational and investment decisions.
- Strategic collaboration offered a shared, data-driven view of the property to support continuous improvement.
- Long-term strategy helps balance operational performance, financial stewardship, and sustainability goals.
- Building automation supports reliable operations during major events, including the Kentucky Derby.
- Remote connectivity enables faster issue identification and resolution.

The Challenge: Churchill Downs Prepares for the Future by Leveraging Building Infrastructure

For more than 150 years, Churchill Downs has been a cornerstone of American horse racing and a prominent fixture in Louisville, KY. Home to the Kentucky Derby, "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports," the iconic venue hosts more than 500 events each year. The property includes a museum, restaurant, clubs, luxury suites, and unique event spaces. Occupancy fluctuates dramatically, from local events to nearly 400,000 guests during Derby week. As Churchill Downs continued to grow and evolve, the team saw an opportunity to take a more connected, strategic approach to managing the property. They needed an operating model that could provide greater visibility into building performance, support more informed operational and investment decisions, and help maintain comfort and reliability as needs changed. Churchill Downs turned to Trane to help design and implement a plan.

The Solution: Connecting Equipment, Controls, and Energy Management

A Shared Vision

Churchill Downs and Trane shared a vision to bring energy management, equipment upgrades, and controls solutions together as part of a long-term strategy for the property. Anchored by Intelligent Services, the approach would connect investments to performance data, giving both teams a way to measure results, refine priorities, and improve over time. Rather than focusing on individual equipment upgrades, Trane brought Churchill Downs leadership together at the Trane Innovation Center in Louisville, KY, to translate that vision into a comprehensive modernization plan. Together, the teams identified how equipment and controls upgrades could work together to enhance performance, help lower operating costs, and enable future growth.

A controls upgrade completed in 2020 provided the secure web enabled connectivity needed to set the foundation for Intelligent Services. This crucial first step provided a means to allow both Trane and Churchill Downs teams to securely connect to the legacy control systems on site and new more modern automation added through expansion. The result is one building automation system providing seamless integration and visibility across the entire property.

Turning Data Into Action

Through continuous monitoring, analytics, and remote support, Intelligent Services gives Churchill Downs and Trane a shared, data-driven view of the property. That visibility helps both teams identify issues early, prioritize opportunities, track performance, and make more informed operational and investment decisions. That approach is also reinforced through ongoing conversations about results and next steps. "We meet with them on a routine basis every quarter. We're showing them how the site's performing, what their opportunities are," said Clayton Smith, Account Manager at Trane.

Ready When It Matters Most

The relationship between Trane and Churchill Downs extends well beyond equipment and technology. The teams share a passion for the venue, and when potential issues arise, they dig into the root cause to build long-term solutions, not temporary fixes. Throughout the year, the teams collaborate on preventive maintenance, building optimization, long-term facility planning, expansion projects, and sustainability initiatives.

Preparation intensifies in the weeks leading up to the Kentucky Derby as the teams inspect equipment, verify system performance, and confirm every guest space is ready for one of the world's most anticipated sporting events. During Derby week, onsite Trane technicians are supported by remote monitoring specialists and rapid response teams, providing an additional layer of expertise so every system is ready when the gates open. "Trane is dependable. They understand both the history that we've built over the years and the importance of the experience we deliver," said Mike Anderson, President, Churchill Downs Racetrack.



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President, Churchill Downs Racetrack



The Results: Greater Efficiency, Lasting Impact

Intelligent Services brings together continuous monitoring, analytics, remote services, and decision support to help Churchill Downs and Trane measure, document, and validate the impact of operational and investment decisions over time. Those insights provide a measurable foundation for continued improvement across the property. Since 2020, upgraded technology, intelligent scheduling, remote optimization, and ongoing system improvements have generated more than \$2M in energy savings. Energy costs are tracking nearly 20% below forecast, saving approximately \$500,000 a year.

Trane also helped Churchill Downs secure more than \$100,000 in utility rebates, maximizing the value of infrastructure investments. As Churchill Downs plans future growth, including the Victory Run Project, shared insights and ongoing collaboration help inform investment and operating decisions. The benefits extend beyond the bottom line. Churchill Downs is a fixture of the Louisville community, and its environmental impact is a genuine, ongoing priority. Since 2020, the venue has avoided nearly 4,800 metric tons of CO2 emissions, equal to the annual feed, manure, and stable maintenance of 482 racehorses.

"We'll continue investing in the property, embracing new technology, and creating an even better experience for our guests. The Trane team shares our commitment to continuous improvement and will help grow Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby for the next 150 years and beyond," said Jason Case, Senior Director of Facilities, Churchill Downs Racetrack. As Churchill Downs continues to evolve, Trane remains focused on helping preserve the unforgettable guest experience that defines the venue while helping create a smarter, more efficient, and more sustainable future for the next generation of visitors.



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