

# LONG BEACH ARENA

## LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

PROJECT CASE STUDY



WIRE TENSION GRIDS AND CUSTOM RIGGING

***“We can do receptions, we can do pop concerts, we can do auto shows with individual lights on the autos. We have lights installed, and sound installed. This breathes new life into an existing space.”***

– *Charlie Bierne*  
General Manager, Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center



TRUSS, LIGHTING, DIVIDER CURTAINS, CONTROL SYSTEM, WIRE TENSION GRIDS AND CUSTOM RIGGING SYSTEM

## CHALLENGE

Turn a decades-old, 45,000-square-foot sports arena into a flexible space that can accommodate events of any size, from intimate dinner gatherings to a ballroom-sized trade show floor.

## J.R. CLANCY SOLUTION

Design and build the largest moveable tension grid system in the United States—powered by high-capacity hoists and a wireless automation system.

## BENEFITS

- Unprecedented flexibility and versatility
- Ability to configure the space in minutes
- Wireless operation from anywhere in the room
- A fraction of the cost of building a new arena
- Personnel access to lighting and sound equipment
- High load capacity for events of any size
- State-of-the-art safety features

## HIGHLIGHTS

Bringing unprecedented flexibility and ease of use to a decades-old arena space takes vision, imagination, and the ability to see new possibilities. That's what the Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau brought to the table for the transformation of Long Beach Arena.

Working with the nationwide facilities management company SMG, Long Beach set out to bring this vision to reality. The SMG management team assembled a design collaborative including John Sergio Fisher Architects, Theatre Projects Consultants and Jerry Sherman, AIA.

To execute the innovative system the design team conceived—and to turn the job around in less than a year—the City of Long Beach selected the entertainment rigging design and manufacturing company J. R. Clancy, Inc.

The arena, originally designed as a sports venue, had expanded its client base dramatically since it opened in the 1960s. Today it accommodates concerts, sporting events, fashion shows, lectures, receptions, dinners, large-scale performances, and more, but its original construction did not permit the kind of flexibility and fast turnarounds its modern uses require.

At the heart of the team's design for the renamed Pacific Ballroom at Long Beach Arena is the largest flying truss and tension grid system in the United States. The one-of-a-kind movable grid system changes the arena into a grand ballroom or a series of smaller spaces, as clients and events required. The result is the only tension grid in the world that can fly up and down. Motorized brail perimeter curtains and additional divider curtains help configure the arena space into smaller event areas. The trusses have self-climbing hoists inside of them, so the operator can bring the curtain up, and the trusses can fly up as well.

In addition to serving as the lead contractor on the project, J. R. Clancy provided the high-capacity hoists and the control system for this innovative grid configuration, and also installed all of the lighting and sound infrastructure. Clark-Reder Engineering, Inc., designed the structural steel for the building modifications to support the new tension grid and the additional load various productions will require.

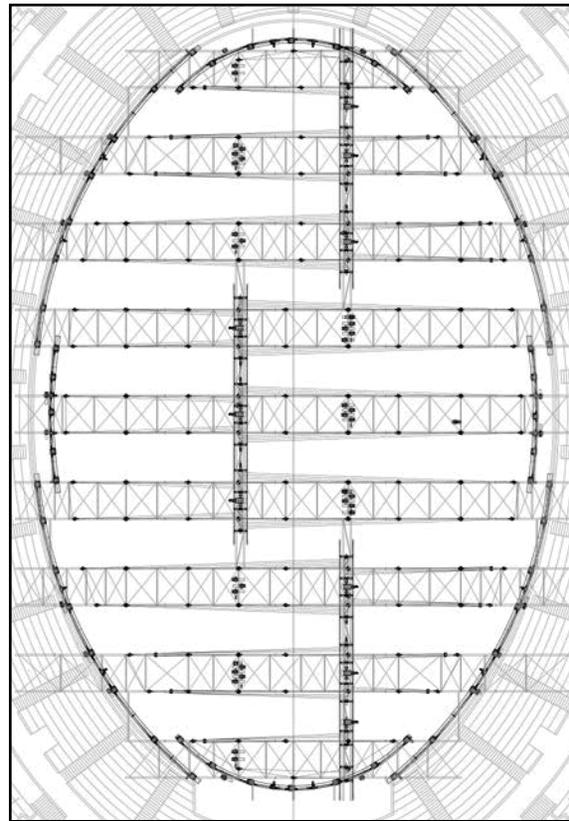
The three-piece traveling tension grid contains more than \$1.6 million in fully integrated LED lighting instruments, hanging over the 45,000-square-foot convention floor. The tension grid panels are flown in with three hoists, each with a capacity of 84,000 pounds. These allow the tension grid to travel from floor level to a storage position sixty feet above the floor, providing personnel with access to hang lighting and mount speakers. A two-person skyclimber above the grid allows personnel to access the assembly by riding down to it. Walkways join the grid sections together, allowing as many as fifteen people to be on the grid itself.

The entire system can be controlled from a simple interface developed by J.R. Clancy specifically for this project. Using the wireless pendant controller, an operator can raise and lower the grid sections from anywhere in the ballroom. The pendant includes a true emergency stop in a wireless automation system for a higher level of functional safety, based on the robust Siemens Functional Safety Model that prevents interference from other signals in the room.

Changeovers that once required a large crew can now be done in a matter of minutes—raising or lowering the ceiling, lowering the draperies, and changing the lighting to create the desired atmosphere for the next event.

The *Long Beach Post* reports that this repurposing of the Long Beach Arena cost “a fraction of what it would have been to build an entirely new ballroom structure.

The return on investment, then, will be huge.”



## PRODUCT LIST

Custom-designed flying truss and tension grid system, custom high-capacity hoists and custom wireless pendent controller



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