

WHEN THE SHOW MUST GO ON, ESCALATOR MODERNIZATION SAVES THE DAY

If a convention center has a mantra, it is this: The show must go on! At the San Diego Convention Center, escalator modernization could not impede normal daily operations – and certainly not the facility’s biggest annual event: Comic-Con International.

Launched to create awareness and appreciation for comics and related popular art forms, Comic-Con has been held at the San Diego Convention Center for more than two decades. Occupying every square inch of the facility, some 135,000 Comic-Con attendees routinely fill every step on all eight escalators during a tightly choreographed, week-long schedule.

To ensure smooth operations, KONE collaborated closely with convention center management to develop a schedule side-stepping major events and avoiding Comic-Con altogether. The project was broken into four phases, with a carefully orchestrated pause during Comic-Con.

CAREFULLY PLANNED MODERNIZATION

Built in 1989, the San Diego Convention Center is San Diego’s premiere gathering place. In 2019, the facility hosted more than 130 events attended by 900,000 visitors. From prestigious medical association conventions to the massive Comic-Con International, the San Diego Convention Center plays a leading role in regional economic impact.

The San Diego Convention Center contains about two million square feet on three levels, including a mammoth Exhibit Hall of more than 460,000 square feet. Reliable, dependable escalators are essential to smooth people flow throughout the facility.

In an effort to stay ahead of the escalators’ useful life (the units were installed in 1989), convention center leaders spent five years planning for equipment modernization. In a facility serving thousands on a daily basis, shutting down escalators for the duration of the project was out of the question.

MODERNIZATION MINIMIZES DISRUPTION

Selecting the innovative KONE EcoMod™ solution, convention center leaders avoided the complex and costly challenges inherent in truss removal and replacement. Opting instead for modernization, new escalators were installed within existing trusses, minimizing disruption. Splitting the project into four phases, escalator modernization proceeded with little impact on event attendees.

During the two-year project, work was limited to two escalators in each phase: one on the front of the building and one on the back. Instead of impacting multiple units at either entry point, just one on each side was unavailable at any given time.

Adding another challenge: With a 40-foot rise, escalators on the facility’s front side are more than twice the height of the average escalator. Retention of architectural cladding on all units was essential.



THE CHALLENGE:

- Remedy needed for aging escalators
- Complete replacement is both costly and disruptive
- Convention center must remain open, with no inconvenience to visitors

KONE SOLUTION:

- Because the KONE EcoMod™ solution retains original trusses, costly and disruptive demolition is unnecessary
- Careful scheduling minimized impact on events and visitors
- Phased modernization allows flexibility in budgeting

FAST FACTS:

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER

- Popular venue: In 2019, the facility hosted more than 130 events attended by 900,000 visitors
- Equipment: 8 KONE EcoMod™ escalators



MODERNIZATION DELIVERS FORM AND FUNCTION

At the San Diego Convention Center, the escalator modernization delivered updated controls, safety features and code compliance – and the kind of modern aesthetics demanded by a world-class facility.

“The escalators have new steps and lots of new stainless-steel components,” says Bob Ross, Director, Building Operations, San Diego Convention Center. “It all looks nicer and cleaner. And blue LED lighting on the steps has really enhanced the lobby atmosphere. The steps look especially cool at night.”

“This is a very busy convention center,” Bob adds. “To take any of our vertical people movers out of service is tough for us. KONE worked with our schedule in a very tight timeframe, and they completed the job on time. We really appreciate their efforts to partner with us on this project.”

As part of the KONE EcoMod™ installation, blue LED skirt lighting was installed on the lobby units. “They really enhance the lobby atmosphere,” says Bob Ross, Director, Building Operations, San Diego Convention Center.



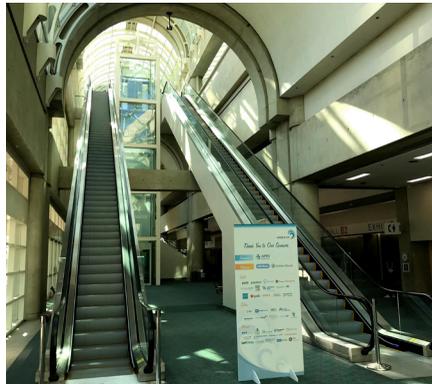
The upper end of escalator number one, completed.



Installation of incline modules is underway on one of the 40-foot units.



Installation is complete on one of the 20-foot rise escalators on the convention center’s San Diego Bay side.



Completion of KONE EcoMod™ installation on two of the 40-foot units.



The KONE EcoMod™ solution requires a smaller barricade, minimizing disruption to normal operations.

ABOUT KONE

At KONE, our mission is to improve the flow of urban life. As a global leader in the elevator and escalator industry, KONE provides elevators, escalators and automatic building doors, as well as solutions for maintenance and modernization to add value to buildings throughout their life cycle. Through more effective People Flow®, we make people’s journeys safe, convenient and reliable, in taller, smarter buildings. In 2018, KONE had annual net sales of EUR 9.1 billion, and at the end of the year over 57,000 employees. KONE class B shares are listed on the Nasdaq Helsinki Ltd. in Finland. For more information, see www.kone.us.