

Little White House Ready for the Season

By Michelle Mason

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Unico provides a nearly invisible HVAC system to cool and preserve historic Key West landmark

KEY WEST, Fla. – In just two months, Unico rescued the historic Harry S. Truman Little White House from dirty coils and deteriorating air vents, providing an HVAC system that will preserve the 120-year-old landmark. Frequented by Thomas Edison, Edward Hayden, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, the home once served as the command headquarters of the U.S. Naval Station (photo at www.budurl.com/truhouse).

Located in Key West, the Harry S. Truman Little White House is a state of Florida historic site in an 1890 frame dwelling of 9,000 square feet, surrounded by an acre of botanical gardens. Because more than 85 percent of the historic fabric within the house remains intact, it was extremely important to protect the structure, original furnishings and documentary collections when selecting an HVAC system.

“After extensive research, we selected The Unico System of St. Louis for its features and benefits,” said Bob Wolz, executive director. “We are very pleased with the lasting results and happy we chose Unico over a conventional air conditioning system.”

This historic site has undergone multiple restoration attempts to keep the property updated and comfortable for visitors. Window units were installed in the 1960s and then a conventional air conditioning system in the 1990s, but neither system successfully removed the humidity and caused the coils to become dirty and inefficient. After Refri Air, a Unico certified contractor, installed The Unico System, there is now uniform temperature throughout the house to better preserve and protect the historic artifacts and furnishings.

Visitors to the Harry S. Truman Little White House will neither see nor hear the HVAC system unless they are searching for it. The house is split in five units with five air handling units and one UniChiller. A UniChiller is a completely self-contained outdoor chiller that uses chilled water instead of refrigerant. The environmentally friendly system is more energy-efficient and also less intrusive. A traditional system would have required additional condensing units to achieve zoned cooling, whereas The Unico System allows individual chillers to work in a single area without the entire system running at full capacity (installation photo at www.budurl.com/truporch).

Customizable in both shape and finish, Unico installed circular and flat outlets in the floors and ceilings, blending into the existing architecture. Due to sound-dampening supply tubes, The Unico System also is one of the quietest air delivery solutions in the world.

“The Unico System was the perfect solution for this building’s problem because it immediately starts removing humidity and circulating clean air flow while being hardly seen or heard,” said Eduardo Oyarce, sales manager. “We are pleased we were able to help maintain the value of such a prestigious place in history.”

The Unico System is a small-duct, high-velocity central heating and air conditioning system manufactured by Unico Inc. Ideal for custom home, historic preservation and niche commercial applications, The Unico System takes less than one-fourth the space of a traditional HVAC system and can deliver up to 12 tons of air conditioning in the same space as a 3-ton traditional system. Quieter and less visible than other systems, The Unico System provides superior indoor comfort that is energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

For more information, visit www.unicosystem.com.

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Editor's Note: Unico Inc. is located at 7401 Alabama Ave., St. Louis, MO 63111-9906. Phone: 800-527-0896

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