

## **Recreation Resources \* editorial in APRIL 2001 edition: 'Preparing your Pool Facility for Summertime'**

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Spring is just around the corner and the word 'swimming' starts to conjure up the excitement and anticipation of the summer season to come. It's time to start thinking about preparing your pool facility for the summer!

OpenAire Inc, a pool enclosure company with over a decade of experience, specializes in 'opening up' aquatic environments. OpenAire understands that preparing an outdoor swimming pool for the swim season is no small feat – it is a 'start from scratch' ritual that includes checking, cleaning, and installing of all pool and pool related equipment. Each season. Every year.

But given the choice, wouldn't we all prefer swimming in summer-like conditions all year-round? Even in inclement weather conditions? OpenAire's experience provides a unique perspective on the spring pool process and suggests considering extending the season year-round by enclosing your pool facility. Since swimming pools and aquatic environments are long term investments, there are alternatives available that can extend your facility's season - alternatives that are both patron-pleasing and profitable.

Generally, pool enclosures come in a variety of configurations that range from the traditional indoor pool to fabric/vinyl bubble domes to all-glazed enclosures. Each solution has unique features and benefits with key technical considerations shared by all (ie. dehumidification, air exchange, heating/cooling, light requirements etc).

The least expensive way to convert an outdoor pool is an air-supported structure. These removable bubble-like domes are inflatable and take at least a day to erect and take down. An average lifespan is approximately 10 years and careful storage is required to guard against fabric damage. Although relatively low in capital cost, operational costs tend to be higher due to the power required maintain air pressure as well as the heating and cooling system.

From a traditional standpoint, the most common way to provide an all season aquatic environment has been to build a brick and mortar indoor pool structure - commonly referred to as a 'black box". While many buildings constructed this way are efficient and attractive, problems tend to arise if corners are cut to keep construction costs down. And while a completely enclosed environment may be acceptable to the athletic swimmer, unfortunately, to the recreational swimmer, it may not. This is particularly true during the summer months when everyone would rather be outside.

Developments in pool enclosure technology now provide a third type of solution. Aluminum-framed, glazed enclosures with retractable roof panels provide an indoor-outdoor experience in the warmer seasonal months as well comfort in the bleaker winter months. The best of both worlds. Convertible structures feature motorized retractable roofs, some of which can open to 50% of the roof area and have walls of sliding glass doors or roll-up type doors thus extending the aquatic season. Larger spans of over 100 feet are common. Key to this type of design are thermally broken frames, low deflection allowances and proper glazing. The open concept in warmer months means minimal costs running a mechanical system. And with a variety of

glazing options, the result is an aquatic environment that is dynamic, attractive as well as light and airy.

So, preparing your pool facility for summer does not necessarily have to be a seasonal event. A well-designed pool enclosure can truly offer the best of both worlds to swimmers - an outdoor feeling in the summer and a natural, light and airy atmosphere in the winter months. Summertime all year-round!

By line credit:

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