

City of Mankato Public Safety Center

Transforming a lockup for law-breakers to a workplace for lawmakers.



When the City of Mankato decided to renovate and expand the Blue Earth County Jail into a new Public Safety Center, nearly every former design aspect of the building went the way of the old narrow jail cell windows.

The design of the interior layout was created to masterfully fit the new work and operational flow of both Mankato's public safety units—police and fire. The new center combines Mankato's police and fire staffs. This co-location was critical in making the best use of public dollars to enhance services while actually saving money.

What's New

This project brings many updated, state of the art features to Mankato's Public Safety units:

- ✓ Extensive exterior renovation included opening up solid stone walls and narrow window openings to provide natural light and energy to the new interior spaces.
- ✓ A full upgrading of the heating and ventilation system was achieved, as well as the removal of toxic asbestos.
- ✓ Technically updated offices for both police and fire staffs.
- ✓ Innovative spaces such as new interview rooms for the police staff and detectives that offer privacy and comfort to individuals making reports and for witnesses to give sensitive information.
- ✓ A fitness center and locker rooms for both police and fire staff as well as dorms for overnight firefighters.



Benefits

Here are just a few of the carefully planned for benefits of this new project:

- ✓ Keeping an existing city building to continue reinvestment in City Center Mankato.
- ✓ Optimizing response times to surrounding neighborhoods and business district.
- ✓ Doubling the use of a large training room that can easily switch to an emergency operations center for the city and county that is wired to the multiple cameras located throughout the community.
- ✓ Protecting Public Safety vehicles against damage and severe weather conditions with a new parking ramp, while adding more parking for the urban lot.

Fun Facts

Incorporating a historic fire pole and old jail doors for reuse in the new building adds a historic, yet creatively fin element to the Public Safety Center design. The old fire pole was integrated into a new stairwell to speed up access from the second floor fire department dormitory to the main level fire truck bays below. The original jail cell doors were re-used to make the second floor hand railings above the main floor lobby. The doors were turned on their side and refitted with steel cables to meet code, but still have the original look of the jail doors.

Landscaping

This project was also one of the first in the area to use “gabion walls” in the landscaping surrounding the building. Gabion walls are cube-like metal frames that are filled with rocks and rubble, which can be used to build larger retaining walls and still let water flow through them.

