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Welcome Center receives 2011 Minnesota Construction Association Award

Summary: The award recognizes resourceful blending of construction techniques and professionals.

(December 3, 2010)-The University of Minnesota, Morris Welcome Center has received the 2011 Minnesota Construction Association's (MCA) Special Recognition Award. The MCA annually recognizes a project that was completed as a result of "resourceful blending of construction techniques and professionals." Completed in February 2010, the Welcome Center formerly served as the Community Services building and is listed on the National Register for Historic Places.

JE Dunn Construction managed the historic restoration of the Welcome Center with design by Meyer Scherer and Rockcastle (MS&R). MS&R was tasked with redesigning interior spaces to house individual offices, open offices, and conference rooms to meet the University's goals to retain the original character of the building, coupled with modern amenities and energy performances.

Early in the design stage, JE Dunn worked with MS&R to balance the program requirements with the University's budget. JE Dunn ensured that local community businesses were extensively solicited and able to participate in the reconstruction project. Nearly 50 percent of the construction was awarded to and performed by Morris area contractors.

Chilled beams and in floor heating were installed for heating and cooling of the space. Chilled beams are relatively new to the United States. This technology eliminates ductwork to move the volume of air that is traditionally required to heat and cool a space. These systems enhanced the energy efficiency of the facility, which aided in building to LEED standards and moving another step towards becoming a carbon neutral campus.

Special attention was given to products and materials. The existing woodwork, tongue and groove ceiling, and wood doors were re-used to maintain the historical feel of the space. Old cedar siding removed from the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center was reused to create an elegant new entry feature. Metal and glass office fronts were implemented to provide offices that allow natural daylight to enter each space. Knee-walls at the open offices were capped with acrylic panels embedded with prairie grass, symbolizing the natural landscape of western Minnesota.

The MCA is a nonprofit organization that provides networking, business development, and education opportunities for construction managers, project managers, general contractors, subcontractors, owners, engineers, architects, attorneys, suppliers, developers, educators, and students involved in the construction industry.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.