

Blue Earth County Jail and Justice Center

Mankato, MN



Before relocating the Blue Earth County Justice Center to a hilltop site in Mankato, extensive work with the planning committee and local community members was conducted to study multiple site options. It was determined that consolidating from multiple locations throughout the downtown area into a new single facility provided a safer and more efficient way to serve the county's residents.

The building houses four courtrooms, a hearing room, chamber space, jail, offices for judges, attorneys, public defenders, sheriffs, and county administrative staff, as well as a dispatch center. The new 167,970 square foot facility, is designed to increase safety and access efficiencies between agencies; reduce response times and operational costs, and accommodate future growth. A separate corridor connects the back of the holding cells to a secure elevator leading to all the courtrooms. This method addresses the site and sound separation requirements while allowing dual use of the intake and release holding cells.

The site maximized open space for a prairie restoration project, native landscaping and future building expansion. Rain gardens treat and manage the stormwater from the building's roof and parking areas before heading to the pond and watershed, protecting the water quality of local wetlands, lakes and rivers. This project is a showcase for the many possibilities in sustainable design and

received a LEED® Silver certification, making it the first LEED-certified jail in Minnesota.



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