



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY: RILEY CONSTRUCTION

Carthage's Straz Center earns an 'A'



For Riley Construction project manager Paul Miller, it's the details — whether they're the light fixtures that resemble molecules or the DNA-like pattern on the carpet — that set apart the remodeling and expansion project at Carthage College's David A. Straz Center for the Natural Sciences.

"When people first come in, they see the big things — the openness of the building, its beauty, the site that overlooks Lake Michigan," he said. "But the longer you're in there you notice those little touches more. Many don't realize it, but it is something that's really special."

The Straz project included a remodeling of the current 70,000-square-foot building and adding a 35,000-square-foot expansion. The building includes lab space, classrooms, offices, an outdoor stone classroom overlooking Lake Michigan and informal areas throughout where students can gather.

"The new science center has been carefully designed by the architects, and the scientists who will work in it, to facilitate both teaching and, more importantly, undergraduate research experiences with students," said Carthage Provost Julio Rivera.

PROJECT ESSENTIALS

Carthage College David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Natural Sciences



Location: Kenosha, Wisconsin
Project size: 105,000 square feet
Project cost: \$34.4 Million
Start date: April 2014
Completion date: August 2015

Submitting company: Riley Construction

General contractor: Riley Construction

Architect: Stantec Architecture

Owner: Carthage College



The building takes advantage of its surroundings — bringing in a lot of natural light, as well as showcasing views of Lake Michigan. The \$34.4 million building project includes a glass-enclosed atrium. Many of its classrooms and labs also have glass walls.

"We used a lot of glass in the project so you could see what the students were doing in the lab, for example," Miller said.

The building relies on some of the latest advances in renewable-energy technology, using both a wind turbine and a solar panel. Miller said it also has an energy dashboard that helps make it apparent how much energy is being used.

"The college really wanted this building to be science on display and I think we accomplished that," he said.

One challenge facing project crews was that they were working in an occupied campus, Miller said.

"We had to work around the existing utilities to keep everything going" while putting new systems in, he said.

To help keep disruptions to a minimum at the college, prefabrication was done off-site and the noisier, more involved parts of the project were planned to be done in between semesters.

"We didn't want what we did to affect the students' learning," Miller said. "We also took a lot of precautions to keep students safe while attending classes in what was an active construction site by implementing an interim life safety plan."

Keeping on schedule was essential throughout the project, Miller said.

"We met weekly with everyone involved on the project to make sure we were where we were supposed to be since falling behind might affect the students," he said.

—MaryBeth Matzek