

INDEPENDENCE CITY HALL

The Independence City Hall building housed both City Hall and the Police in an 8,000 sq. ft. 1960's era building which was in poor condition and susceptible to earthquake damage. Space was so tight for the 35 staff that people were working out of two converted jail cells, a converted closet, and the most recent hire occupied a hallway space which housed the building's Coke machine. The one positive of the old City Hall was its prime location downtown. Staff determined early in the process that the new site must also be downtown to retain the downtown as the focal point of the community.

A committee helped select the site for the new Civic Center. After reviewing several options, the group settled on an abandoned water facility the City owned. While not in the city's National Historic District, it was close enough to historic resources it was decided the new building should reflect historic styles. The design was even brought to the Historic Commission to ensure compatibility.

The project hit a speed bump when a geotechnical crew encountered petroleum products in soil samples. Fortunately, the City has a good working with the Department of Environmental Quality, who helped the City test the site, determine the extent of contamination, and recommended mitigation measures. By bringing DEQ in early in the process, this potentially catastrophic issue didn't appreciably delay the project.

The project took 4 years to complete with a total project budget of \$12 million.



Construction was completed under budget. This presented an opportunity to build out a portion of the building which had been set aside as future expansion space. The 4,300 sq ft section of the building was developed as a conference center with a 200+ person capacity. The new conference center will help bring more people to the downtown.

The new civic center now anchors the southern end of downtown Independence and will encourage new development in the two blocks between the new site and the current edge of downtown. A project is already underway to restore an old mechanic's shop and turn it into a brewpub. This building likely wouldn't have been as attractive to the developer if the civic center had not been built. The new conference center is already being reserved and has resulted in 4 catering jobs for local restaurants.

