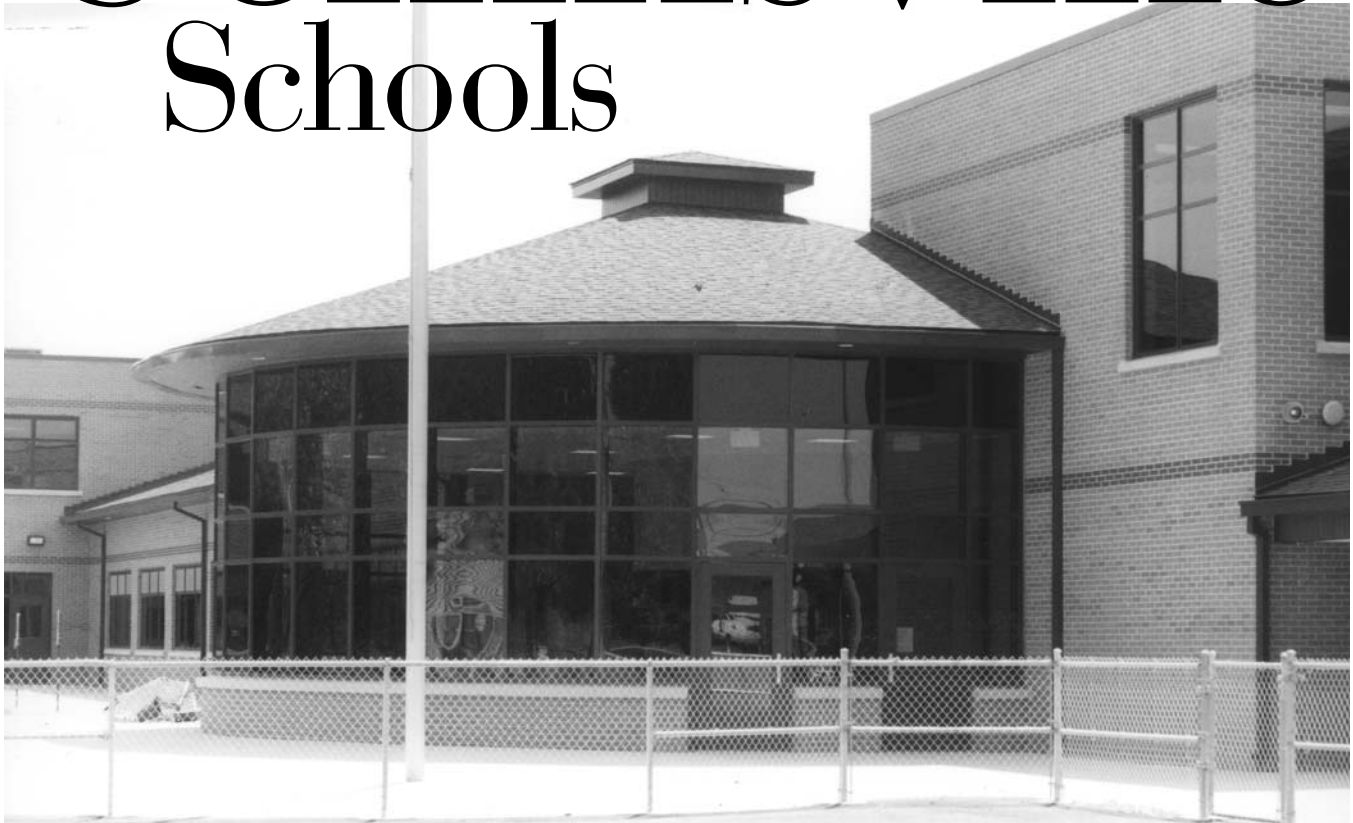


Collinsville Schools



The Collinsville School District's \$59 million construction program included renovations and additions such as this new entry at Webster School. Photos by Kathie Sutin

Wind Up Gargantuan Project

by Kathie Sutin

No matter how you look at it, the recent \$59 million upgrade to schools in the Collinsville (Illinois) School District was a gargantuan project.

It included:

- Renovation of eight elementary schools including installation of new HVAC systems, thermal windows and upgraded ADA-compliant entrances and restrooms, and installation of computer labs in schools that didn't have them
- New additions to three of the elementary schools
- Conversion of a junior high school into a fifth and sixth grade center, and construction of an eight-classroom addition to the school
- Major additions to the high school and
- Construction of a new 126,000-square-foot middle school.

Then, consider the schedule. While the

work was completed over three years, scheduling was crucial because of the short time the schools were free of kids.

The real race against the clock came this fall with the August 24, 2004 school opening date breathing down the backs of the construction crews rushing to complete the middle school. With the portable trailers that had provided classrooms at the overcrowded elementary schools gone, a glitch in the construction timetable would be disastrous, something Cal Morris, principal of AAIC, Inc. of Collinsville, architect for the project, knew well.

"The biggest challenge there (at the middle school) was trying to get it done in time," he said. "If it wasn't ready this fall, the backup would have been horrendous. We had the intermediate school kids planning to go to the renovated junior high. They couldn't go there if the seventh and eighth graders weren't in their new school, and most of the portable class-

rooms had been removed from the grounds of the elementary schools."

With a lot of hard work, the school was ready for the students. Opening day went off as usual although the site work was still under way and workers were finishing up odds and ends.

To handle the multiple facets of the multi-school project, the district hired Chesterfield-based Landmark Contract Management as program manager.

"We planned to phase the renovation work. During late spring, contractors were allowed to work on the building roofs and work in areas of the building not occupied by the staff or students. As soon as the summer vacation began, we turned the buildings over to them to commence with the full scope of renovation," said Bud Price, program manager for Landmark.

"There was such a scope of work and the limited budget each elementary school building took intense planning, schedul-

ing and coordination between the Collinsville School District, AAIC, Landmark Contract Management and the contractors."

"The real challenge with the building renovation work was to complete a large scope of work in old buildings within a very short period of time," Price explained.

The project used 13 prime contractors plus two specialty contractors, who the school board hired to install the data systems and to supply and install furnitures, fixtures and equipment, Price said.

Price said the construction program began in the summer of 2003 with renovation work at the five smallest elementary schools. The degree of difficulty progressed to the larger projects that were performed in the summers of 2003 and 2004.

"We started on the first day June 2002 and renovated five elementary schools in less than three months," Price said. "It was a lot work, but we packaged the work in five specialty contracts, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, windows, and general works, and the owner furnished equipment. We got five really good specialty contractors and Landmark, while hired as the program manager, served as their general contractor.

During that first summer "we learned a lot about renovating these school buildings," Price said.

When renovation activities began on the remaining elementary schools in the summers of 2003 and 2004 with new general contractors, Landmark shared their lessons and experience from renovating five elementary schools in 2002. Landmark even gave the new general contractors its construction schedules from 2002 to serve as guides for their renovation work.

Schools also got air conditioning, with thermostats in each classroom. Crews installed a total of 212 roof top air-conditioning units, Price said.

A particularly unique part of the job was constructing classrooms in an "open school" type of elementary school built in the 1970s. "It was basically one huge open room. I was shocked when I walked in there three years ago. The teachers were actually building walls out of bookcases and boxes in efforts to claim space," Price said.

AAIC's Morris called the renovation of the elementary schools the most challenging aspect of the entire program.

"Those all had to be done over a summer so work started the day the kids walked out of school and most of the time it was finished a week ahead of the kids coming back to school," he said.

Complicating the situation was the fact that some of the schools got new construction as well as renovations.

Complicating the situation even further was the fact that the additions used



The Fine Arts addition to Collinsville High School has an unusual sloped roof.

different structural systems.

"Some of the construction is conventional structural steel with metal studs and brick veneer," said David Birk, vice president of construction operations for Holland Construction Services, the general contractor on the high school addition.

"Some of it is tilt-up concrete panel and some of it is masonry block bearing walls with brick veneer. You basically have three different types of exterior wall construction so you're using different methods.

Cost was a big issue so they had to do what was economically feasible."

High School Gets Two Additions

The high school got a band and choral rehearsal room, classrooms, a cafeteria and a kitchen that serves the entire district built onto the west side of the existing gymnasium. And it got a secondary gymnasium that seats 400 people and a performing arts theatre that seats 600 people built onto the east side of the previously existing gymnasium.

"The high school was a challenging job because we were working all around the existing faculty, students and staff," Price said.

Birk agreed. "A lot of people think there are three months of summer vacation, but that's really not true because they've got summer school and that consumes about a month of that time," he said.

"There was remodeling to do inside the existing gymnasium. We only had eight weeks to get that done rather than 12. There was just a lot of work to get done in a pretty short period of time."

Still, he said, his crews "made good time." He added: "We met the deadline on the classroom building and the rest of the project deadline.

We'll be ahead of schedule on the rest

of it." The auditorium is slated to be completed in December 2004.

New Middle School

Although new construction is generally regarded as less problematic than renovations, the construction of the new middle school held its own challenges.

One of the biggest was weather, said Leesa Zick, project manager for Morrissey Construction Co., the general contractor for the middle school project.

The project had the misfortune of being launched in the wettest spring in history.

"We had eight inches of rain in June (of 2003) which really delayed things," Zick said. "It was the wettest spring on record. That was probably the biggest challenge of the whole thing because that's what shoved all of the masonry (work) into the dead of winter. It was solid masonry construction, which through the winter is a little bit difficult to manage.

"And, we had a pretty rough winter. With solid masonry, everything depends on getting the masonry walls up and it was really cold this winter so we had a little bit of a challenge there."

Even with weather problems, the project stayed on schedule. "We came back and were able to open the school anyway. It was squeezed down a little bit but we still managed to get open in time for school," Zick said.

She noted that the "interesting architectural features" like the clerestory in the commons area and a 1,000-square-foot gymnasium were "a little bit of a challenge." But, she added: "It's a nice building all the way around."

The design is themed around a central commons area with a media center, gymnasium and offices in a central hub, Morris said. "Then we have two wings of classrooms one for the seventh graders

and one for the eighth graders. They are pretty much identical wings, mirrors of each other in terms of classrooms and science labs."

Morris said the location of the new middle school, however, also presented a challenge. "It sits down in a flood plain so we had to raise the elevation of the building. We had to do some significant dirt work," he said. "That's always a little more expensive and somewhat of a challenge."

Guarantee Electric worked on all of the schools, including the new middle school where the company did all of the telephone, data, the cable TV and security cameras, said Paul Weible, senior project manager of the company's Illinois division.

He, too, lamented the short time frame.

"The window for our work was we had to wait until the construction portion was to a certain point before we could get in there so the last three months have been pretty intense for us to get all our work in, but it all come together," he said.

"They were pretty demanding and [had] aggressive schedules, and our [schedule] was the same way," he said. "A lot of the other crafts' work had to be done before we could start installation of our data [wire]. We were the last ones to come in and we had to hit it pretty hard."

Use of Landmark as program manager was a new twist for some of the companies involved in the project.

"That was really kind of a new endeavor for us—working with a program or project manager like that," Birk said. But it was a new twist that worked out.

"It seemed actually there were quite a few benefits to that," he said.

"A lot of times an entity like that is there to create nothing but paperwork, but on this project it really helped the process along. There was a lot of school work going on at the different locations. They had people that were devoted to the project full time. It kind of added another set of eyes to kind of help us out. We developed a pretty good rapport with their field people and they helped our people out and vice versa."

Morris agreed. "They were great folks to work with," he said of Landmark. "They just did an outstanding job. I don't know if I've worked with anyone that is as well organized and on top of things as their project manager. He was just outstanding."

Dennis Craft, superintendent of the school district, said he is very pleased with the way the construction program turned out. If the area does not experience another growth spurt, the schools should take the district many years into the future, he said. **CNR**

Project Team

Collinsville

Owner: Collinsville Community Unit School District No. 10

Architect: AAIC Incorporated

Engineers: EDM Incorporated
Geopier Foundation Company
Dennis G. Glone, Inc.

SCI Engineering & Materials Testing
APSI Environmental Consultants
Engineering Dynamics International

Program Manager:
Landmark Contract Management, Inc.

High School:

General Contractor:
Holland Construction Services

Subcontractors:

A.S.P. Enterprises, Inc.
Aalco Athletic Equipment
Ahern Fire Protection
Allied Theatre Crafts, Inc.
Alwins, Inc.
American Floor Designs
Archview Metal Systems
Bazan Painting Co.
Belleville Fence Co.
Bel-O Sales & Services, Inc.
Butch Ashmann Excavating, Inc.
Capcom Construction, Inc.
Carroll Seating Co.
Central Electric Contracting, Inc.
Collins & Hermann, Inc.
Design Development Construction
The Edelen Company
Flooring Systems, Inc.
Foundation Services Corporation
Golterman & Sabo
Henges Interiors
Hilson, Inc.
Kehrer Brothers Roofing Co.
Langhauser Sheet Metal Co.
Missouri Floor Company
Otis Elevator Company
Rebel, Inc.
Rednour Steel Erectors, Inc.
Sally Waterproofing
John J. Smith Masonry
Stevens Industries, Inc.
Superior Waterproofing Co., Inc.
Tipton Concrete Construction, Inc.
Titan Contractors Service, Inc.
U-Access, Inc.
Von Alst Operating, LLC
Ron Ward Painting
Wells Plumbing, Inc.

Suppliers: D.H. Pace
E.L. Burns Company
Lincolnland Graphics, Inc.
M.J. Products Company
Martin Steel Fabrication, Inc.
Pawling Corporation

Rehkemper & Sons, Inc.
Steward Steel, Inc.
Wallguard.com

Middle School:

General Contractor:
Morrissey Construction Co.

Subcontractors:

Aalco Athletic Equipment
Allied Theatre Crafts
Glen Alspaugh
API Sign Systems
Archview Metal Systems
Barton Electric
Becker Masonry
Belleville Fence
Contemporary Landscape
Control Line
Fenix Construction
Fire Stop Technologies
Gleeson Asphalt
Golterman & Sabo
Dale Hendricks Plumbing
Henges Interiors
Interior Construction Services
Johnessee Construction
Kane Mechanical
Kehrer Brothers Construction
Kuberski Excavating
The Larson Equipment and Furniture Co.
Missouri Floor
M.J. Products
St. Louis Fabrication Services
St. Louis Metalworks
Sebco & Estes
Skyview Construction and Engineering
Technicote
Total Steel Erectors
Von Alst
Ron Ward Painting
Waterhout Construction
Wiedwilt Tile
Zumwalt

Suppliers: Airweld

Canam Steel
Construction Specialties Group
Fire Safety Inc.
Golterman & Sabo
Hanley Steel
Mechanics Planing Mill
Mid-States School Equipment
Doug Mockett & Co.
Nystrom
Peachtree Protective Covers
Platinum Visual System
Pole-Tech
Polyvision
Roberts Loading Dock
Sears

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