

ILLUMINATED LEARNING



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CUSTOMER

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC)

PROJECT

West Hall Innovation Center

CONTRACT VALUE

\$2.1 million

LOCATION

Traverse City, Michigan

START DATE

September 2018

COMPLETION DATE

August 2020

PARTNERS

Spence Brothers, Hallmark Construction, Summit Fire and Safety, Intertek Testing Service, Grand Traverse Communication, D&W Mechanical, Cooke Sheet Metal, Bouma Corporation, Molon Excavating, Bloxom Roofing, Schepers Concrete, Pioneer Steel

SUMMARY

In September 2018, Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City broke ground on a \$14 million project to renovate and expand its West Hall. The new West Hall Innovation Center features a multi-story library and flexible learning space—all powered by Windemuller's electrical work and lighting systems.

OVERVIEW

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is a community college in Traverse City that recently executed a significant reconstruction of its 50-year-old West Hall building. The \$14 million project revitalized West Hall, which will henceforth offer modernized classrooms, conference rooms, flexible learning space, a huge cafeteria, a campus radio station, and a multi-story library to students and staff at NMC. The 54,000-square-foot space was completed in August 2020, in plenty of time for the fall 2020 semester. Windemuller played a key role in the West Hall project, handling all of the electrical work, general circuitry, equipment wiring, fire alarm systems, underfloor wiring, lighting, and specialty lighting controls for the new space.

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CHALLENGES

NMC owns the majority of its own campus utilities, most of which are underground and not documented or marked. As a result, knowing precisely where to dig to install a new electrical service to the building proved difficult.

To make matters more challenging, the subcontractor that installed the geothermal for this project was not able to follow the design indicated on the project plans when doing their underground work. When Windemuller came in to do the electrical work, there were not as-built drawings from the geothermal crews, which meant we were going to have to take great care with our underground installations not to damage anything.

Finally, we faced scheduling delays throughout the project that were made more problematic by COVID-19. In March and April, as Michigan entered stay-at-home mode, our crews and the rest of the trades involved in the West Hall project had to stop working for several weeks. When work restarted again, the client was still focused on keeping the original schedule, due to the importance of completing the building in time for the fall 2020 semester. We needed to figure out an effective way to mobilize our team and finish all our work on a condensed timeline.

SOLUTIONS

We solved most of our challenges surrounding unmarked underground utilities by opting to use underground boring or hand digging rather than digging in the conventional way. Our boring approach proved extremely effective and very safe in allowing us to do our job in spite of somewhat unique circumstances. The additional investment by our team provided for a high quality installation for the customer.

To keep the client's schedule intact, we went back in with our original team as soon as we were allowed to resume work and also brought in extra workers to speed things up and hit our milestones on time. Being able to fluctuate our manpower allowed us to operate more speedily and efficiently, which helped ensure that we could meet the college's scheduled commitments to its students.

We're proud of the finished project that is the new West Hall Innovation Center and believe it will benefit the NMC community (and the broader Traverse City community) for years to come. It's a beautiful space with a lot of character, and Windemuller's work is on full display throughout—particularly in the unique indirect lighting design and specialty lighting controls.



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