

Enterprise KAN STEP project is a triple treat for city

It was in September 2003 after the final inspection of the KAN STEP water project in Enterprise that officials from the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Rural Water Association, North Central Regional Planning Commission and the City of Enterprise were eating lunch in the local café. The topic of discussion was the successful completion of the water system project and the dedication of the volunteers that made the project possible.

“The idea for the second KAN STEP project popped up during the conversation,” remembered project spark plug and Enterprise City Superintendent Paul Froelich. “And would you believe that it made its way as a drawing onto a lunch counter napkin?” Four years later that small drawing became a reality.

Identifying the need

While there have been many unique KAN STEP projects across the state, none have incorporated a fire station, a community meeting facility and a city library in the same project. The need for the new fire station was obvious. The present Enterprise fire station which housed two fire trucks was costing the city almost \$1,500 a month to heat during winter months due to the age and type of construction. The firefighters did not have a meeting or training facility. The need for a new library was also at the top of

the city’s needs list. There are not many towns the size of Enterprise with a library that has 18,000 titles or the number of patron visits that its library experiences.

Having successfully completed a KAN STEP water system improvement project, Enterprise officials and volunteers turned to a new KAN STEP application and

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“Our old library building was not near big enough. It had also been a lot of work to keep a leaky roof from damaging books. I think the building is the oldest structure in town,” Enterprise Public Library Director of 28 years Sally Frank explained.

began the process of filing the pre-application.

Work gets started

Once the project received preliminary approval the architectural firm of Rosemann and Associates, Kansas City, was



*Shane Holthaus
KAN STEP Tech*



The Enterprise library signage came from the facade of the old building, which had been in use since 1982. The letters were a donation from an Enterprise library patron during that time.

City Superintendent Paul Froelich knew that the city already owned a piece of ground adjacent to the present city hall that would work well for the proposed combined facility. The site was not very usable because of the grade.

assigned to the project and the process of demonstrating that the cost savings of at least 40% began. Final project approval and award of the grant was announced during the summer of 2005. Volunteers began work in September 2005 with the

disassembly and reassembly of a 40 by 85-foot steel building that was on the site of the new facility. After the relocation of the building, excavation work began only to be halted by the discovery of a very

There were many other obstacles and challenges that had to be overcome. These included obtaining enough forms to pour a nearly 10 foot tall basement wall. It required pouring a single-sided

form wall against the existing city hall that had been built on unstable fill. That wall ended up being almost 5 feet thick.

“One of the things that bit us on the project budget was finding the



Left: The Hamm Quarries Terminator rock crusher spent 20 minutes doing a job that the KAN STEP crew had run out of ideas and equipment on. It took far longer to unload and load than to do the job. **Above:** Lead sparkplug and Enterprise City Superintendent Paul Froelich with a typical smile on a cool winter workday. The crew was working to get the basement's 10 foot tall walls formed and ready to pour concrete.

large mass of concrete that was the old base of a milling machine.

“The concrete we ran into was 5 feet thick, 8 feet wide and 25 feet long. From overhead it looked like a cross. We tried jack hammering it out with our air hammer – wouldn’t do it. We rented a hydraulic hammer – wouldn’t do it. The county brought in their excavator – wouldn’t do it. We finally asked folks at the Hamm Quarries office in Perry who operate quarries in Dickinson County. They brought in their Terminator rock crusher and had it broken out in twenty minutes,” Froelich said. “What a relief and what an obstacle to overcome!” Companies such as Hamm Quarries often prove to be a great asset to the very concept of the KAN STEP program by donating time and labor to volunteer projects.



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“The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of a cheap price is forgotten.”



Above: Workers strip forms from the intricate concrete work on the handicap basement entrance. Two switchback ramp turns as well as steps made the building feature a challenge. Metal handrails were installed atop the walls.
Inset: Gary Fieldler, asst. city superintendent, is pictured removing a metal form from the entrance concrete walls.
Right: Jan Mai of the local nursing home, used the new basement training facility to conduct a continuing medical education class for area healthcare workers.

required ‘undisturbed soil.’ On the fire station side we ended up using quite a bit more concrete in the footings and stem walls that needed to be 4 feet tall instead of two

because we had to find undisturbed soil to keep away from a settling problem,” Froelich lamented.

Volunteers/staff anchor a project

Through all the challenges and problems that the project presented, the local volunteers stuck with it and as of October 1, 2007 were able to see the rewards of their work. More than 50 volunteers of all ages have contributed in some way. In every community and every KAN STEP

project there are those volunteers who stand out and the Enterprise project is no different. Besides the three full-time and two part-time public works staff there has been a core of four volunteers who have logged more than 4,800 hours on the project. The youngest of the four is 63 and the oldest just turned 84. It is the dedication of volunteers such as these that make the KAN STEP program work.

A KRWA project view

My overall experience with the Enterprise project is one of rewarding challenges. A total of 404 cubic yards of concrete were poured in the entire project.

With the basement under the library, there were some extra challenges that do not occur on most KAN STEP projects. The winter of 2005-2006 was mild, allowing good progress to be made during those normally cold months. Without that progress, the project would not have been completed in the allotted time that the Department of Commerce allows, two years from the award date. The handicap ramp leading out of the basement was particularly challenging in that it has two switchback turns and a set of steps for regular traffic. Next to the ramp is a driveway approach for the fire station. Many feet of hand rails were welded together to provide a safe environment for all the height changes that exist. The fire bays

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have individual trench drains. In the fire department area the fire chief has a separate office; there is a bathroom with a shower for firefighters to use after coming in from a run; and on the east end of



the fire station there is room for expansion and storage. A fire wall was included that separates the fire station from the library and training/general purpose rooms in the basement. An access through the fire wall leads to a landing that allows access upstairs to the library or downstairs to the meeting room. The city added motion sensors for lighting through the entire area.

Enterprise Public Library has moved several times; having the collection in a fitting home is a dream realized for the library board, many of whom have been project volunteers.

“We are happy to see the old ‘Library’ signage on the front of the new building,” Sally Frank said. “Those letters were originally purchased with a memorial donation from local resident, Helen Dingler, in memory of her husband Herman.”

On the other side of the wall, just behind the signage is a unique, vaulted suspended ceiling. It is the handiwork of core volunteer Clell Reschke. After a little thought Clell altered the original plan to that of a stepped design that would accommodate the height of the door and window panels at the front of the library. These are a few extras in the facility that are rewarding to all who worked on it.

Rewards – more than a building

Because of the persistence, dedication and hard work by all the volunteers and city staff, the city of Enterprise now has an impressive fire station, library, community



you appreciation meal for all the volunteers and specially recognize that core group of Clell Reschke, Lee Barry, Duane Bing and Art Kidwell,” Froelich said. “The Day will also have a special ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony headed by Enterprise Mayor Mike Lynch.”

The project’s four core volunteers to be honored for their many hours of service are pictured on this page.

Far left: Art Kidwell makes some notes on framing materials.

Left: Lee Barry steadies a length of red iron that is being lifted in the crane sling.



Center: Clell Reschke describes how he planned and installed the stepped suspended ceiling in the library pictured at his right.

Below: Duane Bing pulls concrete from the chute on the final pour in the front of the building. City Fire Chief Charles Carpenter directs the discharge chute.

meeting room and training facility.

“A project like this brings the town together and gives paid and volunteer staff a focused goal. It is a way they can demonstrate community pride. There’s not one of the workers who have worked on the building that hasn’t brought folks by to show it off to others,” Froelich said. “The usable square footage of the facility is more than 14,000 square feet; it is energy efficient as well as handicap accessible; it will serve the community for decades to come.”

“We will have a late October or early November grand opening and at the same time we’ll have a thank



The city of Enterprise, located about five miles southeast of Abilene in Dickinson County, has used volunteer labor from the community valued at \$168,972. KAN STEP funding of \$253,500 from the Kansas Department of Commerce paid for the materials and special services for the project.