

From Plan to Punch List: Effective Collaboration for Successful Courthouse Renovation Projects

Hon. Jay Tlusty
Lincoln County Circuit Court

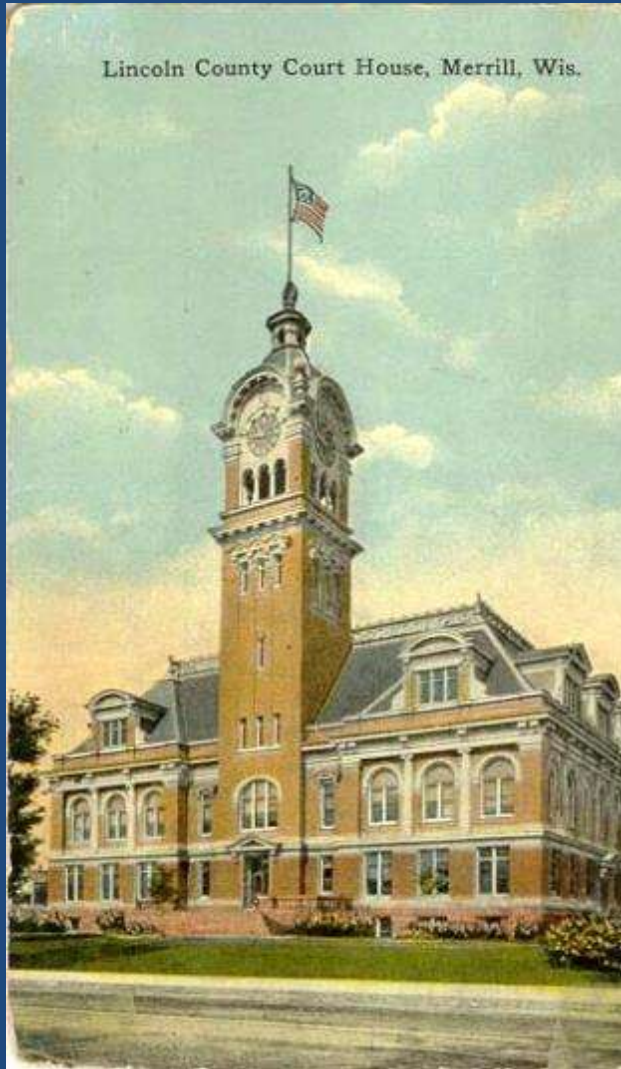
Hon. Andrew Voigt
Columbia County Circuit Court

Moderator: Patrick Brummond
District Court Administrator, 7th Judicial Adm. District

Lincoln County, Wisconsin



Historic Courthouse



- Built in 1903
- Added to National Register of Historic Places in 1978



Community Symbol

- Important part of city and county identity
- Figures prominently in county seal



Renovation Project Overview

- Part of larger, 3-phase project begun in mid-1990s
 - Phase 1: Lincoln County Jail renovation
 - Phase 2: Relocation of non-court administrative offices to new county administration building
 - Phase 3: Remodel courthouse and add security features to enable secure movement of prisoners from jail (across the street) to courthouse.
- Project completed in 2010

Goals of Courthouse Project

- Improve security for judicial and clerk offices
- Reduce public and victim/witness contact with in-custody defendants
- Eliminate need to use public elevator for court transport
- Relocate second branch courtroom and add jury box

Challenges

- Balance desire to stay in historical building against space and security needs
- Minimize interference with historical elements
 - Rotunda area could not be added to or modified
 - Plans reduced building symmetry
- Cooperation between County Board, State Historical Society and the State Court System















Architectural Details



Image: Ayres Associates



Image: Ayres Associates

Overall Project Outcomes – Lincoln Co.

- No renovation project can be perfect
 - Compromise needed for success
- Relocation of court functions saved time and money
- Benefits of the project outweighed the drawbacks

Columbia County, Wisconsin





Columbia Courthouse History

- Historic courthouse constructed in 1865 and demolished in 1962
- County administration building constructed in 1962 on same site as courthouse
- Housed county administrative offices as well as court functions
- Some county functions had been moved to annex space

Project Genesis

- County Board approved initial project concept and funding in 2014
- Total cost of \$45 million
 - New county administration building
 - New Health and Human Services building
 - Renovated building for court-related functions
- Completed in June 2018
- Dedication of courthouse in August 2018

Renovate vs. New Construction

- Desire to retain downtown location for courthouse
- Renovation less expensive than design and construction of new court complex adjacent to law enforcement center

Renovation Project Goals

- Completely renovate county administration building to become a dedicated court facility
- Provide secure chambers and staff areas
- Dedicated public entrance with security screening during business hours
- Addition of conference rooms and hearing room

Temporary Relocation

- Initial plan was to remain in building during renovation
- Court functions moved into newly-built HHS building space temporarily



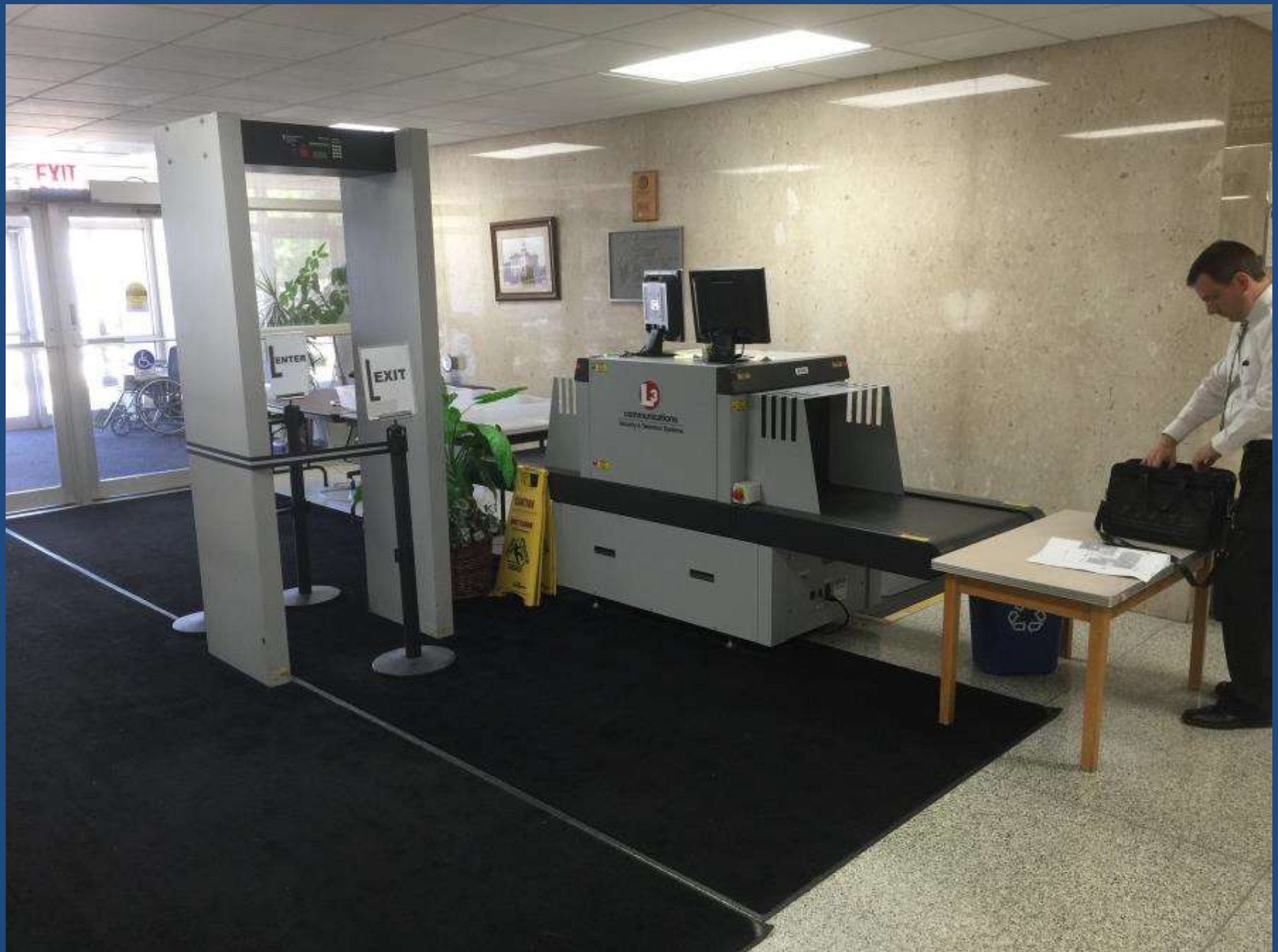
Image: Lyn Jerde, Portage Daily Register

Successes

- Reused marble to the extent possible
- Salvaged a fair amount of wood paneling
 - Stained new paneling to match the old
- Recessed ceiling tiles used in courtrooms
 - Better for acoustics
 - Match style in new administration building

Security Improvements

- Secure entrances for judges from chambers to bench
 - Emergency escape routes
- Retractable walls in 2nd floor hallway
 - In-custody defendants separated from public hallways while in transit
- Addition of sally port with secure inmate transport elevator
- Five conference rooms to provide space for confidential attorney-client conversations



Challenges

- Location of Branch 2 courtroom bench
- Cost overruns
- Sally port reduced in size from 6 cars to 4
- Proposed fence for parking area turned into open-work fence with electronic gate
- Disruption of court functions moving twice – once to temporary space and again back into renovated space

Pre-Renovation Parking Area



Post-Renovation Parking Area



Overall Project Outcomes – Columbia Co.

- Security greatly improved
- Renovation enabled project to be done without excessive expense
- Flexibility of HHS staff and willingness to delay getting into new space so that courts could temporarily relocate was helpful
- New facilities have capacity to serve county moving into the future

Questions?

Lincoln County Court House, Merrill, Wis.



Thank you

