

Welcome to our latest eNews

What a great summer to be working on outside projects, especially when one of them was for an outstanding university with whom we have developed an excellent working relationship.

The Northwestern project managers that we work with are all well organized, highly competent and good communicators. It makes for projects that are completed on-time and within budget. The accessibility ramps that we constructed met that standard while making life a lot easier for those who need them. Meanwhile, the Conference Room that we built-out for its world-class functions turned out to be suitably impressive.

Of course, for every outside project we seem to have ten interior remodels. The rejuvenation of Loyola's Credit Union in their Maywood Medical Campus was one such project and one of many that we have recently completed for this fine hospital. It was also a reminder of how large hospitals are becoming mini-cities with a variety of structures meeting an ever burgeoning set of needs.

We complete this eNews with a sustainability article that focuses on the practical rather than the glitzy. Sorry, no rooftop wind-driven turbine to intrigue you with, just some very beneficial improvements in air-conditioning that we have had the good fortune to be working with. Check out VAV and the "displacement method". See what you think.

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Our Latest Projects

Loyola's Credit Union puts out the welcome mat

Loyola University Credit Union's recently remodeled facility caused quite a splash, attracting over 1000 members during its ribbon-cutting ceremony day (October 3, 2007). That's enough of a crowd to attract a presidential candidate or two. It reflects the success (5200 members) of this attractive service-oriented operation in the Maywood Medical Campus.

"I think our members will be very pleased with their new Credit Union office," said Harold J. Tram, Credit Union manager, as he reflected on the effort by all, while he and his staff operated out of a temporary trailer for those few hectic months.





- If this doesn't look like your idea of a typical credit union, it's because it's not. The 1800 square foot office welcomes members with classy wood (mahogany on maple), attractive and comfortable chairs, ample waiting area and private teller windows. Separate offices and after-hours drop boxes offer additional, and appreciated, privacy and security.

The color scheme (maraschino and butter cream) is very relaxing though the calorie count might concern some. With diffused lighting and more curves than edges, the overall effect, as designed by Breanna Yeager (of Teng & Associates) with input from Loyola's project manager Ken Kloss and feedback from Harold Tram and President, Howard Hayes, is professional and inviting.

Not only is it easy on the eye, it's convenient. Members can get their financial services with a smile without having to brave the vagaries of Chicago's weather. Just like with other banks, they are offered on-line account access. To complete the picture, as part of a credit union, they own the "bank" and get to vote for the board of directors. Sounds like the best of both worlds: getting great service and controlling one's destiny.

- We, at Frank H. Stowell, were happy to help this success story move forward. ●



● Navigating outside the Internet

Anybody who has ever been in a wheelchair, or who has accompanied someone in a wheelchair, will know only too well the challenge of navigating through the myriad of obstacles that surround us.

Of course, addressing these challenges with Illinois Accessibility Code and ADA (American Disability Act) ramps is no trivial matter. There's always the issue of how to make them fit in confined space. Then there are all the regulations that make sure they are safe. These cover everything from the correct amount of slope, width and grip to the proper size of landings to allow for turning, to when and where handrails and edge protection are required.

For institutions such as Northwestern University where many buildings preceded the ADA code, this is a continuous process of catch-up. From a construction perspective it may seem mundane, but we are pleased to be able to work with the University to make the lives of people with disabilities a little easier.

A bonus on these latest ramps was the opportunity to work with architects Anne McGuire and Heather Kneezel of McGuire Igleski & Associates, Inc and Andrew J. McGonigle, the Northwestern Project Manager. Unplanned issues are typical on these projects and having them handled quickly and professionally made all the difference.

Oh, that Star Trek looking chamber that seems to be designed to launch one down into subterranea is actually a wheelchair lift. ●



● **Something to savor**

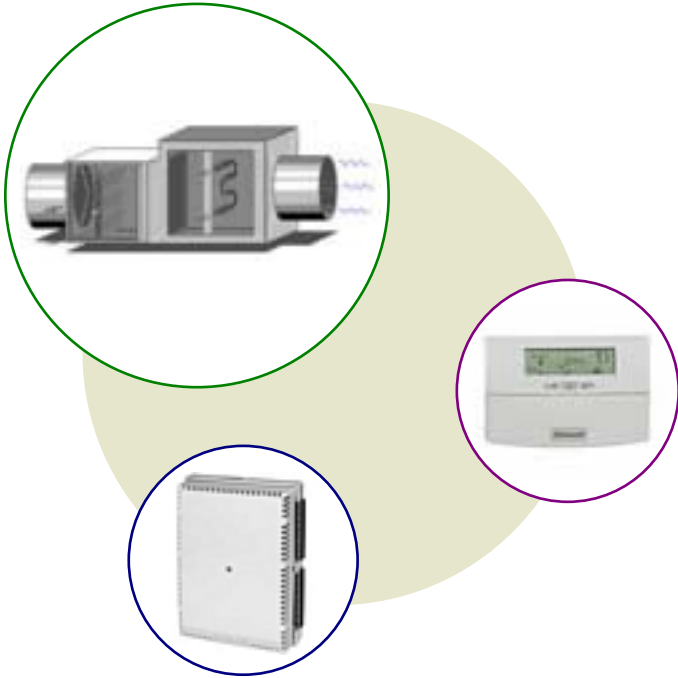
If there was ever a conference room to hide in, this would be it. Imagine fashioning yourself a comfy spot in a disguised corner of the display cabinet.

The reason? What a great place to pick up some instant expertise. Between listening to Northwestern Chemistry PhD candidates defending their dissertations, to researchers explaining the essence of what great theses they expect to confirm, to giants of science and industry presenting and recruiting, one could not fail to become lucid in the complexities of, say for example, how to predict the terahertz vibrational spectra of molecular organic solids. Maybe not.

Still, we at Stowell are proud that we could bring this premier space up to the level of such auspicious activities. That our efforts might enhance seminars by world renowned speakers in chemistry (including Nobel Prize winners) and the 60 year tradition of noontime faculty lunches is a thought to be savored. ●



VAV, for some mystical, for us practical



Sustainability 101: Variable Air Volume and the Displacement Method

Carbon neutrality” and “green technology”, for anyone who has looked at the LEED certification process knows, is the sum of numerous parts. Sure, geothermal exchange systems and solar panels are great but they represent only a small part of a truly sustainable building environment. Worse still, they are often not practical. Efficient fixtures and appliances, appropriate insulation and glazing that doesn’t undo all the work of the insulation are just a few of the many other factors that have to be addressed.

Take air distribution, for example. We all know when the air is not working properly: hot and cold zones, systems coming on noisily, mini-blasts, and sneeze-inducing dust flying around.

Invariably, this reflects a poorly designed, or poorly maintained, ventilation system that can

be wasting thousands of dollars in energy inefficiency. Ducts that have sharp turns, or are undersized, and fans that are oversized are typical problems.

Preparing clinical spaces for high-performance medical systems means we are working with the latest in Variable Air Volume (VAV) technology and can appreciate, first-hand, all the benefits of good design: constant temperature, no drafts, no dust and no noise. With adequate air volume and fan motors with Variable Frequency Drive (VFD), the air flows at a lower speed and passes over the cooling coils longer. Just the right amount of air is delivered to each room diffuser while energy is saved by allowing warmer chilled water temperatures.

Even better can be the results achieved through the displacement method. Historically associated with data centers, this works on the principle of the air intake being delivered through a floor plenum (raised floor) and naturally returning through ceiling vents. The 500% increase in the number of office spaces employing this method in the last decade in the US is testament to its advantages: better air quality by constant refreshment (think the opposite of being in a plane), improved comfort and lower operating costs.

That is not to say that there are not challenges, such as getting the moisture content just right and keeping air leaks to a minimum. Successful installation requires expertise, proficiency and concerted effort; dare I say a typical Stowell project. ●

