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Wausau's Windows Provide Security, Natural Daylighting and Energy-Efficiency for Minnesota Detention Center **- One of AIA's Top 40 Justice Projects -**

Wausau, Wis. – Featuring Wausau Window and Wall Systems® 4500 Series detention windows, Steele County Detention Center, Minn., was honored by the American Institute of Architects' Committee on Architecture for Justice (AIA CAJ) as one of the top 40 justice projects in the nation.

Designed by KKE Architects, Inc., the project also received the Governors Award for Excellence in Waste and Pollution Prevention from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, where Steele County earned a blue ribbon as one of the top five projects in the State for the geothermal system and borrowed light in the jail. Additionally, Steele County Detention Center was presented with a MN GREAT award (Minnesota Governments Reaching Environmental Achievements Together) for demonstrating economic efficiency, an innovative/creative approach, and being a model for others.

The 58,578-square-foot Steele County Detention Center in Owatonna, Minn., replaced the county's existing, out-dated correctional center with an innovative, energy-efficient structure capable of housing up to 160 beds. KKE's architectural solution for Steele County Detention Center helped save \$300,000 in projected energy costs, with total construction costs tipping just over \$10 million.

Addressing correctional systems' needs, Wausau Window and Wall Systems' aluminum window systems are designed to be break-resistant and separation-resistant with heavy 3/16" thick, extruded aluminum frames and hydraulically crimped corner blocks. Additional security and options include tool resistant steel-reinforced frames, aluminum-clad steel bars and detention screens that limit access to bars and glass surfaces. No removable parts are accessible from the interior.

For Steele County's detention center, W.L. Hall Company installed Wausau's 4500 Series windows. The units are vertically stacked, perimeter sealed with "hardened detention sealant," and finished by Linetec in Champagne anodize. Due to anchor accessibility, W.L. Hall field-glazed the 1 3/16" clear laminated glass on-site.

Wausau's detention windows also offer an energy-efficient, thermal option for a quiet, comfortable environment and lower heating, cooling and maintenance costs. This option features exterior glazing and security clips to resist separation.

"The new Center includes some really amazing sustainability concepts that will change the face of jails in the Midwest permanently," boldly states KKE's lead designer Randy Lindemann, AIA.

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Steele County was the first Minnesota correctional facility to be approved for “borrowed light design,” reflecting a new interpretation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) regarding windows. This means that strategically placed window walls illuminate the structure without relying on expensive window units in every cell.

“It was a huge cost savings not to have a little glass strip in everyone’s cell,” emphasizes Steele County Coordinator David Severson. “Instead of using all that exterior wall space for cells, we can now use it for dayrooms and recreational areas with secured outside access.”

“Ten years ago prisons were designed ‘hotel style,’ with a window in every cell. That’s why we see these crazy-shaped buildings trying to get enough exterior surface to accommodate such designs,” explains Lindemann. “These areas are essentially the inmates’ sleeping quarters, so they often taped cardboard or put tinfoil over the windows anyway.”

He continues, “With the ACA’s reinterpretation, we were able to exceed the daylight requirements per inmate and put the windows where they’re really needed – in the dayrooms. This made it more pleasant for both the staff and the inmates. It allowed us to make much better use of the floor space.”

Severson agrees and points out that KKE’s design “moved the cells to the building’s interior where they have indirect light. This leaves laundry, kitchen, booking and other operations to a central core. The pods are arranged along one long hallway, so if we ever need to, the building could be expanded on either end. It’s nice and bright and very functional. It’s earth tones and tip-up construction also look like they blend in with the area’s industrial buildings.”

Nationally recognized for its innovative expertise, Wausau Window and Wall Systems is an industry leader in engineering window and curtainwall systems for commercial and institutional construction applications. For nearly 50 years, Wausau has worked closely with architects, building owners and contractors to realize their vision for aesthetic beauty and lasting value, while striving to maintain the highest level of customer service, communication and overall satisfaction.

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