



MEDIA CONTACT: Heather West, 612-724-8760, heatherwest@earthlink.net

Wausau Successfully Combines Security, Aesthetics and Performance for New Mecklenburg County Courthouse

Wausau, Wis. (February 2007) – Consolidating the county’s fragmented justice facilities and eliminating deficiencies and public confusion among three existing courthouses, the new



Mecklenburg County Courthouse opened January 2007 in Charlotte, N.C. and brings all of its courtrooms and support services underneath one roof. Helping protect the new facility and its occupants, Wausau Window and Wall Systems provided a 75,000-square-foot blast mitigating curtainwall system that adheres to heightened security measures mandated by the U.S. government, while maintaining the aesthetic integrity of the architect’s design.

To ensure the most efficient use of space and accessibility, county officials carefully considered two sites for the new facility. After reviewing design and engineering plans from the team comprised of Charlotte-based Schenke Schultz Architects and HDR Architecture Inc. in partnership with Kallmann McKinnel & Wood Architects of Boston, Mecklenburg County officials decided on a nine-story, 568,000-square-foot, triangular structure to be constructed at 720 East Fourth Street.

The Charlotte-based team of Turner Construction and FN Thompson plus minority contractor Walter B. Davis, general contractor Meyers and Chapman, and concrete contractor Doggett Concrete, began construction in July 2003. Selected for its expertise in blast mitigation, Wausau’s project manager Carl Wanta explains, “Wausau’s experience in these types of projects made us a logical choice for this project, along with our ability to work and coordinate directly with other trades such as the architects, consultants and glaziers.”

Relying on these collaborative practices and well-respected engineering skills, Juba Aluminum of Concord, N.C. called on Wausau to develop a unitized curtainwall system that would withstand an extremely high static equivalent blast pressure. Blast consultants at Hinman Consulting Engineers, San Francisco, further enhanced Wausau and Juba’s expertise and ensured critical calculations were correct for modeling, mock-ups and the final curtainwall system.

With sensitivity to system’s blast mitigation features, Wausau fabricated the fully unitized system in its quality-controlled, Wisconsin-based manufacturing facility. The courthouse’s curtainwall also includes 100 vertical pivoting windows, additional fixed windows, and framing depths ranging from six- to 10-inches. All of the aluminum was finished by Linetec in a custom, two-color paint scheme.

“It was a typical tough job requiring a lot of effort on everyone’s behalf,” says Jeff Heinz, project manager for Juba Aluminum. “Given all that needed to get done, Wausau was able to accommodate the necessary timeline.”

(more)

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Fitting with Charlotte's 2010 plan for a unified government district in the city center, the new \$143 million facility is expected to meet the county's growth needs for the next 20 years. Toward this goal, the Mecklenburg County Courthouse offers 35 finished courtrooms, four shelled courtrooms, a basement including 50 parking spaces, 135 holding cells, and a tunnel connecting the courthouse to the jail central across the street.

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 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.

Wausau is a part of Apogee Enterprises, Inc., a publicly held, U.S. corporation. For more information on Wausau Window and Wall Systems, please call 877-678-2983, or visit www.WausauWindow.com.

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