

Polk County

Board of Supervisors Office News



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Polk County Holds Ribbon Cutting & Dedication of Historic Courthouse

DES MOINES, Iowa – Polk County Board of Supervisors, and members of Iowa’s 5th Judicial District, on Tuesday, officially opened the newly renovated Historic Polk County Courthouse. The 116 year old courthouse, located at 500 Mulberry St. in Des Moines, is the final part of a multi-year multi-facility renovation of the Polk County Judicial Campus.

The \$39 million historic courthouse renovation is the result of a 2013 bond referendum passed by Polk County voters. At the time, the courthouse building was outdated, in disrepair and already overcrowded with no room for expansion for the states most populous county. The bond issue not only provided funding for the renovation of the historic courthouse but also for adjoining satellite court space for Iowa’s 5th Judicial District. The bonding also transformed a former J.C. Penny store into what is now the new Justice Center and the former Polk County Jail into a criminal courthouse. This historic courthouse now serves cases involving civil, probate and family law.

The renovation of the historic courthouse returns the buildings original architectural features including: revealing 33ft high exposed ceilings, restoration of hand painted artwork and 7 ft. tall chandeliers. As importantly, the expansion to 3 buildings provides for much needed courtroom space with an upgrade of modern technology for security and visual exhibits. The renovated courthouse also now includes central air conditioning (something never available in the buildings history).

Polk County Board Chair Angela Connolly says, “This historic courthouse is an architectural gem and a real source of pride for the community. It provides for a safer and more efficient way for our 5th judicial district to conduct the business of the courts and serve the people of Polk County. We are grateful Polk County voters entrusted us to be the stewards of this new campus which will serve our growing community effectively for years to come.”

The ribbon cutting was attended by the Polk County Board of Supervisors, Representatives of Iowa’s 5th Judicial District, Iowa State Supreme Court, Iowa lawmakers and members of the Iowa Barr Association. Judge Arthur Gamble was also recognized for his role in getting the bond issue passed for the renovations to be possible.