

# Profiles in Design™

ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS COURTESY OF COUNTY MATERIALS CORP.



## PROJECT PROFILE



### UW-Stevens Point Noel Fine Arts Complex Stevens Point, Wisconsin



The arts addition includes more than 45,000 units of Ultra® Burnished decorative concrete masonry units in the Autumn Oakleaf color mixture.

## College arts building inspires with concrete

**Stevens Point, Wis.** – The nature of any fine-arts building should be one of inspiration, which students and visitors will experience the moment they enter the new Noel Fine Arts complex at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

This nearly 80,000-square-foot addition, built over nearly two years, blends the age-old artistry of music and song with the latest in concrete masonry and ready-mix innovation.

“We wanted to update the look and match it to other buildings on campus,” said Roxanne Nelson, Minneapolis-based lead architect on the project from Hammel, Green and Abrahamson Inc. “The interior aesthetics were very appropriate for an arts building. With all the Ultra® Burnished block we used, it was like a blank canvas in many ways.”

Nearly every corridor in the Noel building is lined with 45,921 units of Ultra® Burnished decorative concrete masonry in the Autumn Oakleaf color mixture,

which consists of fall-colored aggregates in a predominantly brown CMU.

The Noel’s marriage of form and function is embodied by a three-flight concrete staircase that connects the lobby with the two floors above it. The open staircase was framed and poured over three weeks and contains about 100 cubic yards of ready-mix. Behind it is a wall of copper paneling about 30 feet high and 60 feet wide, inspired by copper banding found inside several other campus buildings.

The project utilized more than 9,000 cubic yards of ready-mix, including 4,000 yards of a “lightweight” mixture that comprises the upper two floors that jut outward on the north face of the building. While this design element was intended to avoid having to dig up buried utilities, it also lends itself to Nelson’s concept of openness by allowing for windows along the ground level. Also lending itself to Nelson’s concept are

skylights near the junction of the two buildings, which helps visually equalize an elevation difference between the old and new structures.



The Noel Fine Arts complex includes a freestanding concrete staircase that melds form with function and also serves as a sculpted centerpiece, of sorts, in the glassed-in lobby.



**COUNTY**  
MATERIALS CORPORATION

Proud to be American based & American made

Chicago North • 1430 North Elston Ave. • (773) 489-2423

Chicago South • 2217 South Loomis St. • (312) 421-8432

Champaign • 702 North Edwin St. • (217) 352-4181

[www.countymaterials.com](http://www.countymaterials.com)



## PROJECT PROFILE

### Student union merges 'wildlife' with college life

#### UW-River Falls Student Union

River Falls, Wisconsin

Buildings take on a new function when they become bridges between natural surroundings and new development. Such is the case with the new student union at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, scheduled to open this fall, as it fills the gap between modern development and neighboring wildlife.

Architect Jan Van Den Kieboom called for 9,000 cubic yards of ready-mix as a base for 110,000 units of structural concrete block from County Materials. That serves as the backbone for more than 70,000 units of Ochs clay brick, along with some timber to harmonize with the natural elements of nearby wetlands and the Kinnickinnic River.

"There's an organic portion to the project," said Van Den Kieboom, with *Workshop Architects in Milwaukee*. "The south faces the Kinnickinnic River, and the north faces a pedestrian mall. We wanted to weave the organic nature of the river into the campus."

It was no accident that concrete played such a significant role in the construction.

"It's because of sustainability that we chose concrete," Van Den Kieboom said. "Plus, we were able to use local materials, and concrete is easier to remodel and renovate over time; you don't have the fire-code concerns of steel."



*Designers of UW-River Falls' new student union used a lot of concrete construction products from County Materials primarily because of their sustainability.*

One academic tenet that guided much of the design was that of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the ideas from which led to such innovations as rooftop basins that collect rainwater to

flush the toilets. The south face includes an abundance of glass, which allows for grand views of the wetlands and the river, as well as ushering in sunlight from the Southern sky.

#### A Solid Company at a Glance

- Founded in 1946 in Marathon, Wisconsin as a producer of concrete block.
- Acquired Tews LaFarge of Milwaukee in 2001; acquired Wisconsin Brick & Block Corp in 2001; merged WBBC & County Concrete in 2003. Acquired manufacturing assets of the Best Block Company in 2003. Acquired Quality Concrete Products Company in 2004. In 2005, we acquired the assets of Elston Block, Illinois Concrete Company, Anderson Concrete Products, Eastern Illinois Precast and Southern Illinois Concrete. Rebranded all companies into County Materials name.
- Serving Wisconsin, eastern Minnesota and central and northern Illinois, including the Chicago market, with state-of-the-art manufacturing plants, *Homescape Studios* and sales stores.

- > Premier Glazed® masonry
- > Premier Prestige Series® masonry
- > Ultra® Burnished masonry
- > Decorative architectural masonry
- > Heritage Collection® Designer Concrete Brick
- > Sound absorbing & thermal block
- > Hollowcore Roof & Floor Systems®

\*Available at select locations.



Proud to be American based & American made

Chicago North • 1430 North Elston Ave. • (773) 489-2423

Chicago South • 2217 South Loomis St. • (312) 421-8432

Champaign • 702 North Edwin St. • (217) 352-4181

[www.countymaterials.com](http://www.countymaterials.com)