

2014 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Atascadero City Hall Rehabilitation



Proud citizens of Atascadero gathered in front of their newly restored City Hall

When the San Simeon earthquake struck on December 22, 2003, the City of Atascadero watched as the symbol of their city, the Atascadero Administration Building was torn apart by the 6.5-magnitude earthquake. City officials rallied around the building, dedicating themselves to finding a way to repair and restore the symbol of the City.

Atascadero City Hall was originally designed and constructed in 1918 to be the centerpiece of the Atascadero Colony. Founded by Edward Gardner Lewis, the utopian colony was the first master planned community in California. The building functioned as the headquarters of the Colony Holding Corporation until the colony went bankrupt in the 1920s. After that, the building went through a number of uses as offices, a bank, and several schools. When the City of Atascadero incorporated in 1979, the building was returned to the city to function as City Hall; it has been the primary symbol of the City ever since. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and designated a California Historical Landmark in 1984.

Three packages of work were developed for the rehabilitation project: Volume 1 – Demolition; Volume II – FEMA Damage Repair & Hazard Mitigation; and Volume III – City Funded Rehabilitation. The scope of the work had to be separated for funding purposes per FEMA. Numerous alternatives were developed by the architectural team that would aid in the overall rehabilitation of the building, utilizing the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The resulting design expunged years of unfortunate alterations and maximized the aesthetic potential. The lower rotunda was reprogrammed as the primary lobby, information counter and permit center for the City. Overlooks that once looked out over the lower rotunda were reopened and fitted with clear, fire-rated glazing that complies with current building

code. Upper lunette windows that once filtered daylight into the lower rotunda were retrofitted as light boxes, and new millwork re-introduced design motifs original to the building architecture.

The project team and the community rallied together and fully supported the project. Residents came forth with memories of proms and weddings in the building. With carefully located portals that allow visitors to see the original structure and enhanced reinforcement, the building itself has become an educational tool. The Atascadero Historical Society developed a concept for displaying the history of Atascadero throughout the building. Two rooms on the first floor, restored to their 1918 appearance, serve as museum space for highlighting the history of the City.

Estimated at \$25,000,000, the actual final cost for the project was \$21,700,000. 94% of construction dollars went to contractors from the local Central Coast region. Keeping it local not only helped support the community of Atascadero, but it ensured staying true to a deeply-rooted history, and a sense of community pride and involvement.

To view photos of the renovations done at the Atascadero City Hall click the link below:

http://www.atascadero.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1004&Itemid=2021