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around the building, it will fit snugly within its site.

In a unique public private partnership, portions of the funding for the project was provided by money that Sauk County received from American Transmission Company (ATC) as compensation for placing a high capacity transmission line across the county. A stipulation of the funding was that it be used to enhance sustainability within the county. In addition to common sense sustainable strategies such as proper solar shading and building orientation, this new park facility employs the use of super-insulated walls and roofing.

A requirement of the design and construction of the new community building was that the structure be built to a high level of environmental performance. Different strategies were utilized to create a building that sips energy rather than gulps it. The building was set into the slope of the hill to shield it from the predominant northwesterly winds. Along the southern face of the building, a series of windows were arranged to facilitate passive solar heating of the space during the winter. Wide overhangs on the building shed the water as well as provide shade on the windows during the intense heat of the summer months. Insulation values far exceed the code required minimums.

Given the difficulty they had experienced with the previous park headquarters; a key concern of Sauk County was that the building be durable and require a minimal level of maintenance. The metal roof of the building is the first line of defense on the maintenance front. A durable 50+ year surface, the roof has wide eaves that help to shed problematic water away from

the walls below. The need for a flame-resistant roof was also necessitated by the fact that the park burns the adjacent prairie on alternating years. Beneath the roof, the walls are also clad in a metal skin. This material, Corten steel, has been chemically engineered to form a thin protective coating of rust on the surface that prevents further corrosion. Should the building be the unfortunate recipient of vandalism, the paint can be quickly wire brushed off the building face and allowed to rust out again.

The benefits to the county by the construction of this new building are hard to overstate. White Mound County Park now has a building that can be fully utilized by the public. The building has become a comfortable home base for activities within the larger park such as ice fishing, stargazing, and hiking. Events hosted in the community room are also attracting those who are not initially inclined to visit the park. This “draw effect” into the park is a great method of introducing the valuable park resources to a new audience.

White Mound County Park, like most natural landscapes, possessed an inherent beauty independent of a building. The challenge this building addressed was how to provide increased access and utility to the public while not degrading the beauty of the landscape that initially drew people to the park. Blending seamlessly with its surroundings, the new community building at White Mound achieves that objective, of providing an understated, respectful building from which to explore the beauty of nature. ♦