

The Commonwealth Quarterly

News from around the circuit.

Summer 2021



Commonwealth Electric Company of the midwest

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Omaha Celebrates the Efforts of Our Line Crew with an Appreciation Dinner/Spring Kick Off Event

Jon Folkers – Manager of Business Development

We had a good turnout of approximately 30 attendees for our Line Crew Appreciation/Spring Kickoff event that was held on Friday, April 30th. Keeping in line with being Covid-safe, we employed the services of a local food truck vs. using the traditional buffet method.

We had 402 BBQ Truck catered in for the event and everyone enjoyed a delicious meal outdoors. Neil Davidson, Vice President/Omaha Branch Manager, addressed the line crew and expressed his appreciation for all their efforts. President, Michael T. Price, echoed Neil's message to the group and showed his gratitude for this team also.

There were 5 lucky line crew recipients that walked home with various raffle prizes that included lawn chairs, gift cards, a cooler, and more. Each member of the team received a small bundle of clothing consisting of safety t-shirts and a high-viz safety jacket with the Commonwealth logo on back.

A group picture was taken in front of the newly revealed line crew trucks. All attendees huddled together under the 8' x 12' American flag, that was proudly flown overhead between two of our new auger trucks.



REVEAL

Cathy Maddox – HR

On May 28, 2021, Commonwealth Electric held its annual Reveal, where the new stock price was revealed, and all participants received their Participant Statements.

President T Michael Price and CEO Dave Firestone welcomed all employees via a Team's meeting and talked about the outstanding year the company had, in spite of COVID and the sporadic shutdowns that occurred. Price gave a historical look-back to when our ESOP plan was formed and reflected upon the growth of the company since then.

Both individuals thanked the employees for all their efforts in making this a successful year in 2020 and remarked that we are off to an excellent start in 2021. Price also commented on how Employee-Owned companies are more profitable, more successful, and have happier employees, and that all this and more are what have put us where we are right now.



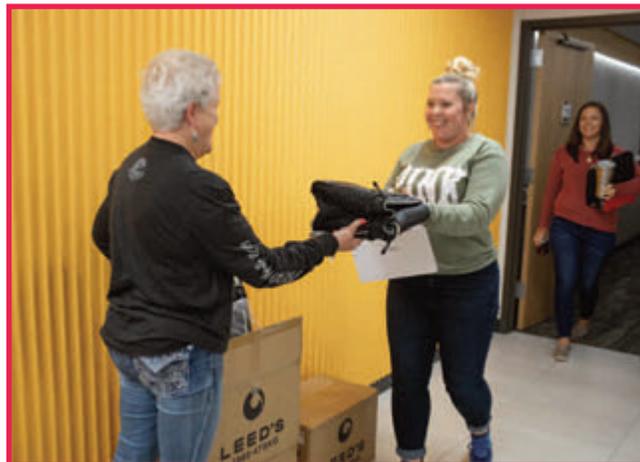
Greater NE

Price announced the winner of the “Guess the Stock Price” contest, which was submitted by Taylor Bruce, who works in the Columbus office. She received an Amazon gift card equal to the amount of one share – Congrats, Taylor!

A new video, produced by the Marketing Team, was shown. The video focused on the Employee Ownership Committee and their role in educating our employees, regarding the plan.

Congratulations to all employees of Commonwealth, and many thanks to each

and every one of you for the part you play in the success of our company, whether your role is in the field or the office. It is because of everyone's efforts that we continue to be a strong company.



Corporate



Des Moines



Corporate



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Memorial Day Preparation Brings Omaha Team Together

Jon Folkers – Business Developer & Marketing



Flag Placement at Westlawn-Hillcrest Cemetery: Commonwealth Electric – Omaha was on hand May 26th to help Westlawn-Hillcrest Cemetery place flags above the head stones of all veterans who served our country. Each year we do this to help remember and honor these veterans for their service prior to Memorial Day weekend.

This year we had close to 20 associates who volunteered their time to place flags for Westlawn-Hillcrest staff. Although we were not the only group who volunteered our time, we may have been one of the largest.



Altogether, approximately 8,000 American flags are flying on the lawns at Westlawn-Hillcrest cemetery to commemorate the holiday and paying tribute to those who served.

In groups of two, we navigated our way through the rows of head stones. Each group is assigned two rows of head stones and loaded with enough flags to equal the number of veteran's names on the list. The cut off golf club, used as a poker to help break the ground prior to flag placement, makes the work of flag placement easier.

We respectfully placed a flag at the head of the stone bearing the name of each veteran who served our country; and as we do this, we find ourselves humbled, while performing such a small act of respect and recognition for all who served.



Baby Boom in the Des Moines Service Department!

Danielle Thompson – Service Coordinator

Last year, as everyone knows, was a difficult time with all the stress of COVID. It was not very often that good news was shared throughout the office. However, the Des Moines branch had a lot to celebrate! Out of our 7 service drivers, four of them announced that they were expecting.

On December 22nd, the first of the four babies arrived, little Miss Blaire Schmidt. Her parents are Cory and Lexi Schmidt. Cory's advice to new dads would be to invest in a sleep coach. He said, "It is worth it!"

In January, Ben and Nikki Schneider welcomed Bennett into the world. This was not their first rodeo though, their daughter Kaycen is already 2.



A few months later, on May 19th, Chase Kohler and his wife Megan got to meet their bundle of joy, Landon Kohler. Hopefully their first baby, their Great Dane, Roxie, likes Landon as much as they do!

And finally, Jake Leverich and his wife Becca are expecting their first baby at the end of July. Jake said the name is TOP SECRET, so unfortunately that is all the information we can give you! It has been exciting to welcome these little ones into the Commonwealth family!

SAFETY

Todd Longenecker – Safety Director

From a safety perspective, the first half of 2021 has been going very well. The Safety Department is out in full force conducting training and doing our best to support our crews with their safety needs. Recently, our company was awarded the NECA Recognition of Safety Excellence award, which is awarded to only the safest electrical contractors in the nation. This is a testament to our workers in the field being committed to their own safety, and the safety of others, while working in one of the most dangerous industries.

To thank our employees, and to celebrate May being "Electrical Safety Month" many of our job-sites across Commonwealth have held safety lunches for their crews or have done other activities to get the involvement of our employees. Pictured is a safety lunch from one of our jobsites in our Omaha Branch.



Phoenix Essay Contest

Skye Graham – Office Manager

The results are in! Phoenix Branch Management challenged all its employees to write an essay on, “What Safety Means to Them,” in honor of Electrical Safety month. Everyone was eligible to enter, and the winner would receive a \$100 gift card. The Phoenix safety committee, a collaboration of field and office employees that meet monthly to ensure safety is a primary expectation branch wide, was asked to choose the winner at their monthly May meeting.



The committee selected the essay of Jayce Amavisca, 2nd year apprentice, and son of Joe Amavisca who has been a Phoenix field leader at Commonwealth since 1983. Congratulations Jayce for understanding the importance of safety in the work environment. Below is a copy of Jayce’s winning essay:

What does safety mean to me?

When the topic of safety is discussed in our industry in either weekly meetings or annual trainings like the first aid training, I feel people can tend to forget/neglect its significance and vital importance in the workplace. Safety is not only the responsibility of every individual on the jobsite, but an obligation to each individual as well. Every life is precious and should be protected with the utmost measures necessary to ensure every worker leaves the jobsite unharmed. Coming home to your family and loved

ones safe and sound day in and day out should be expected and without question. Taking into consideration the loved ones of each and every individual on the jobsite puts into perspective the impact safety has in the workplace and why we need to be constantly reminded of it. Safety should never be neglected for the sake of taking shortcuts and saving time because doing so will not only risk the well-being of others, but shows the lack of pride you have for the trade, company, industry, and union you represent.

Raising the Flag at Commonwealth Corporate

Kristin Callan – Senior Marketing Coordinator



On June 29th, multiple Commonwealth employees and guests stood outside of the CECM Corporate office building to witness the raising of the American flag. A joint Honor Guard team from posts all across Lincoln conducted the raising of the flag, which was an exciting moment for all to watch.

The ceremony began with an audio message discussing the importance and history behind the American flag, followed by the raising of the flag and the playing of the national anthem. David Theisen, Commonwealth Electric’s Fleet and Tool Manager, concluded the ceremony by providing more insight into the symbolization behind the American flag and thanking the Honor Guard team members for assisting with the event.

David played a huge role in the formation of this event, and everyone here at the Corporate Office is so grateful he put the time and energy into recognizing the strength of our nation and those who have served. David himself is a 20-year United States Air Force veteran, and had this to say at the event: *“This means a ton to me...knowing that I work for a company that values the United States flag and its veterans that it has working for them. This is a great symbol of the type of employer Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest is.”*

The flagpole was recently installed by our own Commonwealth employees that are employed out of our Lincoln branch. Thank you to Paul Hoegemeyer, Tyler Stuart, Vince McClement, Stacy Markel, and Kevin Lugenbeel for setting the foundation to make this event possible. The flagpole located at our Corporate Office is just one of many flag poles located at Commonwealth Electric locations across the Midwest and Southwest. CECM President Michael Price has been determined to place a flagpole at each of our locations to honor our country, those who have served, and the many veteran Commonwealth employees.



Thank you to David and every other individual who attended or assisted in the creation of this event, and thank you to those who have served and continue to serve our country. You can view the whole ceremony here: <https://youtu.be/ue5JUUpTnlSE>.

Growing Relationship with I2Tech

Mark Hollingworth - Project Engineer



PIC L to R: Jeremy Williams, Daryl Patterson, Gage Irwin, Nathan Olesen

I2Tech is one of the lucky businesses to grow because of Covid-19. In the past year and a half, I2Tech has seen business grow by more than 75%. With all this growth, I2Tech is working on an expansion of their current production facility and has chosen Commonwealth for their electrical needs.

Electrician Jay Williams and his team have already installed a new switch gear. Next, they will be running power to new injection molding presses including a 610-ton, two 1,900-ton and one 4,400-ton injection press. The 4,400-ton press is one of the largest injection presses in the state of Iowa. A 30-ton and 50-ton Craneway will round out this project with I2Tech.

Des Moines Low Voltage Division Partners with Barton Solvents

Kalee Findlay - Low Voltage Coordinator



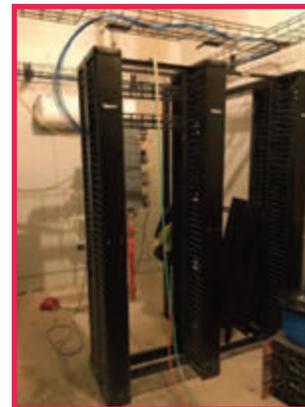
Terry Huss and Lindsay Leslie are the Des Moines Low Voltage Systems Division leads behind a job that recently got started at Barton Solvents. Terry is the Project Manager with Lindsay being the lead Low Voltage Systems Foreman. Lindsay will be installing a new camera system and future access control work on an outdoor gate with Low Voltage Systems Foreman David Vander Horst working alongside her.

Lindsay and David are both very knowledgeable technicians with a lot of experience in various camera and access control systems. The Low Voltage System Division is excited to see Lindsay, David, and Terry go above and beyond for Commonwealth's customers.

Des Moines Low Voltage Continues Relationship with Des Moines Airport

Kalee Findlay - Low Voltage Coordinator

The Low Voltage Systems Division in the Des Moines branch recently wrapped up a project for the Des Moines Airport Flying Services department. Clint Bailey was the Project Manager with Jake Belcher being the lead Low Voltage Systems Foreman. The Des Moines Airport has been a reliable customer for Clint and Jake; they are very happy with the work that was done by all teams involved. Jake and his crew installed complete paging, access control, security cameras, and voice/data systems throughout the new building. We look forward to the continued work with the Des Moines Airport, nice work Clint and Jake!



The Omaha Office Has Added Bench-Strength With the Additions of 2 New Employees

Jon Folkers – Business Developer & Marketing



Commonwealth Electric – Omaha, NE: We are pleased to welcome to our Omaha branch the addition of Kevin Hill. Kevin has joined our Service Department as an Estimator/Project Manager.

Kevin has been in the construction industry for 40 years. Starting as construction worker at 16, he brings to us a vast array of knowledge to share with our team. Before coming to Commonwealth Electric, he has worked as a manufacturer's representative and as a distribution sales representative.

He is anxious to learn the contractor side of the electrical/construction industry and is excited to use his 40 years of knowledge and experience to assist him along the way. As a member of our Service / Project Management team, he joins a solid team and will work to ensure future growth for the Commonwealth Electric Company, our brand, and deliver the type of service we are known for.

Kevin graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from Bellevue University.

He is the father of four children – Emily 30, Jacob 27, Delaney 21, and McKenzie 15.

Hobbies: Enjoys spending time at the shooting range and using his in-home ham-radio studio

Favorite Movie: About Last Night & Coneheads

Best Advice to Live by: "Carpe Diem", otherwise known as Seize the Day.



Commonwealth Electric – Omaha, NE: We are pleased to welcome Samantha Kilian to our Omaha team. Samantha joins our safety team and comes to us with previous experience in data center new construction and data center active facility retrofit work.

Sam is currently working on-site at the PNB Data Center in Papillion, NE. This August will be Samantha's 5th year as a safety professional.

Sam holds the GSP (graduate safety practitioner) and CHST (construction health and safety technician) designation from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

Samantha attended college at the University of Central Missouri, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Occupational Safety & Health. She also was a member of the UCM bowling team. She has been a bowler for 20 years with her highest score being a 298! The perfect game of 300 remains a goal of hers.

Hobbies: Bowling, Reading, and Traveling

Favorite Musical Artist: Eric Church

Advice to Live by: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." – Winston Churchill

Providence Medical Center

Trey Burdick - Project Manager

Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest, Greater Nebraska, was recently awarded the contract for Providence Medical Center imaging, surgery, and clinic remodel and addition in Wayne, Nebraska. Commonwealth Electric will be covering both the electrical and low voltage systems with Kevin Knapp serving as the on-site foreman and Trey Burdick, Project Manager.



The project consists of two phases: A 20,000 square foot addition and a 20,000 square foot remodel spanning over 24 months. Areas included in the construction are the outpatient clinic, radiology, and surgery.

We look forward to working with Darland Construction on this project.

PNB Data Center Team, Commonwealth Electric Company, and Turner Construction Combine Their Efforts for Food Bank for the Heartland

Samantha Kilian - Safety at PNB Data Center

Commonwealth Electric – Omaha combined our efforts with the Omaha PNB Data Center team, and Turner Construction to support the Omaha local food pantries.

The Food Bank for the Heartland is a non-profit organization created to distribute food to 600 food pantries, schools, emergency shelters, and other nonprofit partners serving 93 counties in Nebraska and Iowa. Food Bank for the Heartland's Mission and Vision Statements are listed here:

Mission: *"To provide emergency and supplemental food to the people in need in Nebraska and western Iowa."*

Vision: *"To eliminate hunger in our community."*

In 2019, only 2 percent of the food provided was received from food drives, so to help fight food insecurity in our community, the CECM PNB Data Center Team participated in an onsite food drive competition. Over the past few weeks, the jobsite was divided into two teams. At the end of every week, each team's collection box was weighed. One pound of donation = one point.



Pictured (L to R): Jose Reicks, Mike Lesac, Scott Logan, Erik Anderson, Corey Barber, Brian Legge, Rene Santiago, Daniel Gonzales, Heath Schneider, Jason Escher, Ryan Newman, and Bob Bergamine. Not Pictured: Dan Cahalan, Samuel Ouedraogo, Walt Secord, and Wyatt Hunter-Johnson

To help push our team in the winning direction, our crews came together and donated a pallet of Macaroni and Cheese, which is one of the most requested items by the food bank. Our donated pallet had a combined 1,440 boxes of macaroni and cheese.

If you would like to learn more about Food Bank for the Heartland you may visit their website at foodbankheartland.org



Flagship Facelift for Huskers

*Commonwealth Electric Co.
of the Midwest upgrades
University of Nebraska library*

By Claire Swedberg

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—LINCOLN'S (UNL'S) EAST CAMPUS LIBRARY BUILDING was constructed in the 1960s and designed for its time. That means the C.Y. Thompson Library was centered around book research and independent, quiet study. Learning styles have evolved since then, so the school opted to renovate the structure—making it a space for contemporary study habits—which meant fully gutting and rebuilding the electrical system.

The electrical construction task went to Commonwealth Electric Co. of the Midwest (CECM). The project also leveraged architect DLR Group, engineer Farris Engineering and general contractor Sampson Construction, all based in Lincoln.

UNL is the state's oldest and largest university, with two campuses in Lincoln and more than 100 classroom buildings and research facilities. Completed earlier this year, the new library, renamed Dinsdale Family Learning Commons, began serving students from its location at the center of the school's east campus.

University libraries have evolved beyond dedicated housing for books. Instead, these facilities serve as meeting, learning and connectivity sites where students bring their homework projects, attend online classes, meet with fellow students or tutors, hear presentations, and find resources. To accommodate today's uses, libraries are trending away from isolated cubicles, such as study carrels, and rows of shelved books.

The Dinsdale Family Learning Commons features well-lighted spaces with seating areas for collaborative projects and mobile computing support. The challenge was for contractors to transform the 50-year-old building into this modern model, within the existing structure, while the school, at times, operated around it. In the midst of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a temporary slowdown.

The library project has a relatively long history. Planning and fundraising for the renovation began in 2015, said Joseph Goodwater, UNL project manager. The goal was to deliver an up-to-date learning center to the campus' 26,000 students and faculty members.

"Technology and study habits have changed drastically, especially in the last few years," he said, adding that those libraries of the past are "book warehouses" in comparison to the way faculty members and students need to learn today. In fact, the new building would contain only about 10% of the books that were housed in the original building,

while access to all of the material would be available through a nearby storage facility.

CECM is a full-service electrical contractor in Nebraska, Iowa and Arizona. It provides commercial, industrial, data center, healthcare and institutional sites with power, low-voltage and technical services.

The company has served the university for decades on new construction and renovation projects. Recently, it installed the electrical system for the UNL College of Nursing's 125,000-square-foot, three-story nursing building. It brought in power and low-voltage for the new University Health Center, a project that was started in 2015 and completed in 2018.

"We've done quite a bit of work on campus over the past few decades," said Ron Lannin, CECM's project superintendent.

Because CECM was familiar with on-campus projects that must operate around a busy student and faculty environment, working within tight schedules, space and limited staging constraints was not a problem. In

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The University of Nebraska—Lincoln campus boasts a new learning center featuring open areas, quiet study spaces, meeting rooms, active learning classrooms, presentation rooms and ready access to technology. The learning center replaces the university's former C.Y. Thompson Library.
Top: Flexible collaboration study area
Middle: East Learning Stairs
Bottom: First-floor student cafe

actually, the UNL library renovation was, what Goodwater called, a typical campus working environment with very little “lay down” space or on-site material storage. To accommodate staging, the team built a road to allow construction vehicles to reach the site.

The remodel work itself was very standard in nature, Goodwater said.

“The main difference would be the great amount of technology and data wiring that was required in the building,” he said. “Case in point: all collaboration and conference rooms have AV and Zoom capabilities to allow most any technology needed to hold meetings, classes or study groups.”

CECM arrived on site in September 2019 to provide data wiring, technology and the overall power services for the design/bid/build project.

Early on, “We did some value engineering,” said Brad Owen, CECM’s CAD technician and estimator.

The three-level, approximately 70,000-square-foot library was gutted when CECM

arrived. Renovations often produce surprises when an electrical system is uncovered decades after it was built. In this case, an early obstacle came in the form of the existing power feed.

“One major item was the failure of an existing duct bank that was to feed the new building transformer,” Goodwater said.

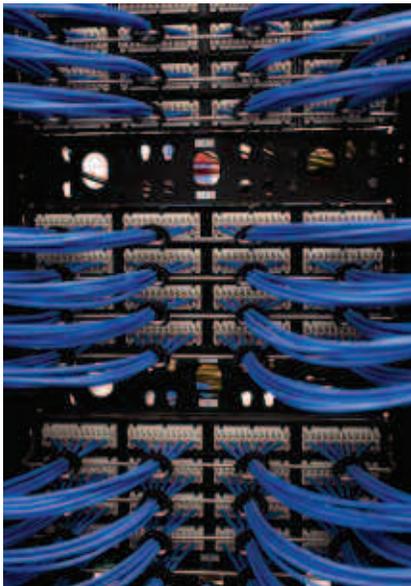
Service had to increase in size and the existing raceways that were installed in the 1960s were compromised. CECM got to work rebuilding the feeder and adding new service.

“CECM was very cooperative and did a great job with replacing that duct bank and kept the project on schedule,” Goodwater said.

CECM then ran conduit through the structure’s existing floors into all new ceilings and coordinated with the mechanical contractor to prevent scheduled work overlap.

The contractor also installed the entire electrical system, including lighting, controls and low-voltage connections. The lighting for the new learning center would be a contrast to the banks of fluorescent lamps of





Commonwealth Electric Co. of the Midwest deployed data wiring, technology and overall power services as part of the library's remodel.

traditional libraries. With wide open spaces, high ceilings and clustered meeting areas, the demand for seamless lighting and sustainability meant that LEDs with lighting controls were installed. This smart lighting included 1,140 indoor LED fixtures, outdoor lamps that included four-pole fixtures and recessed and column lighting. All are controlled by the building lighting control system provided by Intelligent Lighting Controls, Edina, Minn. Those controls include time clock and occupancy sensors to ensure the building runs as efficiently as possible.

CECM also worked on the low-voltage systems. Workers ran a total of 80,000 feet

of CommScope Cat. 6 cable to provide communications connectivity. The University of Nebraska manages its own fire alarm systems in all of its facilities.

CECM also installed a 130-kilowatt natural gas generator by Generac Industrial Power/HM Cragg, Minneapolis. The workers wired the 1,000A main distribution switchgear by ABB, Cary, N.C., in the main electrical room, two other electric rooms on the first and second floors and electrical distribution located in the mezzanine and lower-level mechanical room. The CECM team also added the rooftop penthouse for air handlers.

The interior configuration resulted in moving or expanding some of the building's fixtures, including new larger stairwells, elevator and generator.

Construction crews encountered several more unexpected challenges along the way, including discovering the presence of lead paint and some asbestos.

"When it comes to old buildings, asbestos is quite usual," Goodwater remarked.

However, in this case, the lead paint, found on the roof, was uniquely thick. Contractors tried to chemically strip the paint, but ultimately the team cordoned off the site to sandblast it off. That required an additional three weeks in an already tight schedule.

"We had to move the schedule around," Owen said.

A second issue came in the form of a positive COVID-19 test, which meant workers went into quarantine. This caused delays in the late summer of 2020. A skeleton crew—consisting of workers who had already recovered from the virus—was able to keep the project going.

Management stayed on task and many worked remotely. After those weeks of slowdown, all contractors were playing catch up by fall 2020. On-site work continued with limited intergroup or interjob site movement, along with wearing face masks and physically distancing "as much as you can on the job site," Owen said.

Lift equipment helped CECM run cable and install fixtures in the soaring ceilings of the building, enabling electricians to reach 20-foot ceilings in open areas of the library. The company used scissor lifts to apply the new LED lighting in the open areas.

At peak, CECM had 12 men on-site. Substantial completion of the project came on Jan. 6, 2021.

The new library is now in use by faculty members and students enrolled in the



Integrated technology solutions facilitate modern styles of learning and collaboration.

2020–2021 school year. Some of the primary features include an expansive active learning space on the top floor, presentation areas, an arboretum, an exam commons, quiet study spaces, offices and a new entrance on the building's east side. The central stairway serves as both stairs and seating for presentations in the lower level. The Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program is also housed in the new library, and members can hear presentations and hold meetings.

With the latest activities underway in the new facility, Goodwater says it offers functionality and a modern flair. And the mostly glass facade means that the building serves as a beacon that stands out on the campus at night.

The remodeled Dinsdale Family Learning Commons building today "creates a beautiful space for students to study privately or in groups seven days a week and up to 18 hours per day," Goodwater said.

Technology is readily available and designed to be easy to use.

"I am very happy with the way the building turned out and even more happy with the very minimal post-construction issues or warranty items to be dealt with now that the building is in use," he said.

For CECM's own crew, the pleasure is in seeing the building in active use and the modern addition it serves for the students that come to the campus each day. In the future, the library may include a cafe and return more books to its site.

"CECM did a great job throughout the building with the power and structured cabling systems that were required," Goodwater said. ⚡

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