



Janet Wilmoth
 Special Projects Director

Firehouse is pleased to present the eighth annual Station Design Awards showcase of fire and emergency services facilities. Sixty-four entries, across seven categories, were submitted by 45 architects/construction companies from across the United States. Nineteen architectural firms are first-time entrants.

Because the 2021 showcase is a collection of nationwide facilities, remember, cost per square foot can vary greatly depending on region, and styles vary based on locale, size, budget and department responsibilities in the community that's served.

Every year, the Station Design Awards judges are asked to review each entry carefully before selecting three finalists in each category. Listening to these discussions always is quite a learning experience. I wish there was a way to capture the analysis of the entries and invite others to participate.

The Station Design Awards judging once again was graciously hosted by Chief Scott Walker at the Addison, IL, Fire Protection District. This year's six judges included a mix of fire chiefs and architects who are experienced in emergency response facilities.

This year, the Gold winners in three categories were unanimous decisions. That said, all of the 2021 Gold winners exhibit particular commitment to the health and safety of personnel. Since formally introduced in 2015, the Hot Zone design concept has changed fire station floor plans substantially. If this year's entries serve as an appropriate example—and we suspect that they do—the trend continues in full force. Joining this design effort, many of the stations that are recognized in this year's competition have their decontamination areas located on the far side of apparatus bays. Further, airlock hallways, for the transition from Hot Zone to Warm Zone to Cold Zone, emerged as more prevalent than previously.

Several 2021 entries included a return to watch rooms off of apparatus bays, a concept that was popular among the judges. On the flip side, because the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) affects all fire stations and emergency response facilities, a lack of elevators and/or ADA-compliant parking and building accessibility created a downgrade of an entry.

Most entries paid increased attention to the physical and mental health of department personnel. Natural lighting was predominant among this year's entries, particularly in meeting areas and dayrooms, but also in fitness rooms, which represented an evolution in thinking by designers. In a few fitness rooms, overhead doors opened to the outside. (Notably, one fitness room included a "panic button" in the event of a workout accident.)

An increase in mega natural disasters the past few years caused millions of dollars in disruption to communities and, unsurprisingly, to emergency services entities in those communities. Given the effect that a major disaster can have on a fire department, the Bay County Fire Services' Southport firehouse, which is in Panama City, FL, created a lot of discussion among our judges, including how critical that it is for a fire department to re-establish a facility and continue operations.

In 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in Bay County, and three fire stations were destroyed. Because it would take years to design and build permanent stations, the decision was made to construct temporary facilities. The Southport station was erected in six months. The structure meets strict building codes and is designed to meet Miami-Dade County's requirement regarding hurricane-force winds. (See page 104.) An added benefit: After the completion of permanent stations, the temporary structures can be relocated if needed.

Over the past 10–15 years, fire station designs have changed quickly. What's the reason? Three, in fact: increased responsibilities, a focus on firefighter health and safety, and a dedication to research on the part of fire chiefs, project managers and building committees.

The 2021 Station Design Awards showcase is a keeper. It's filled with ideas and trends from fire and emergency departments across the nation. Furthermore, with its inclusion of the names of the fire chiefs of the departments that benefited from a new or renovated facility, as well as the architectural firms that were responsible for a facility's design, this section is resource for you and your department now and into the future.

Save the Date
STATION DESIGN
 CONFERENCE
 May 23–26, 2022
 Crowne Plaza,
 Rosemont, IL
 FHStationDesign.com



A historical showpiece fire station with community access and services was the charge from the city of Midlothian. The clearly defined goal, the challenge of the site and the highly visible location energized the design process.

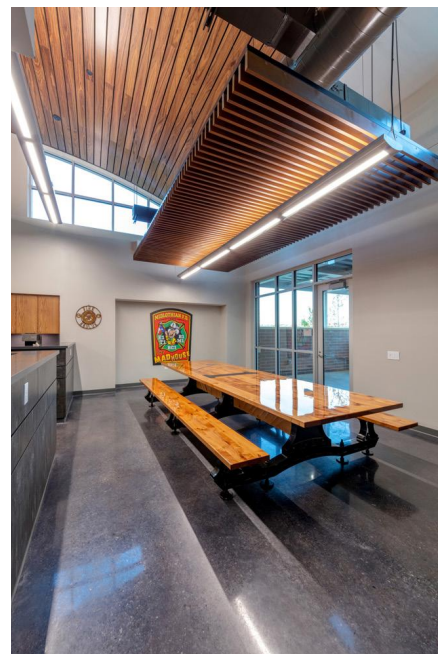
The design started with a skin of brick and cast stone to reflect the building's traditional design. Community access and services begin in the spacious lobby that houses the department's 1918 Ford Model T Howe pumper and other

historical items. The lobby's high-vaulted wood ceiling, brick walls, generous windows, and acoustic panels allow access to a 30-person community training classroom and examination room.

To keep with the showpiece facility style, a rooftop mechanical equipment housing was designed. It's an enclosed ventilated extension of the sloped metal roof and hides the equipment from two elevated highways that had the direct vision of the roof and building walls.

The firefighter space capitalizes on a great room configuration to enhance staff interaction. A vaulted wood ceiling that provides ample natural light sets the tone for the kitchen, dining and day-room spaces. Solid-surface counters, a full-height backsplash, a serving bar, deep sinks, high-end appliances and individual shift pantries accommodate cooking for 11 firefighters. The dayroom has a fireplace and tiered seating. Firefighters use private dormitory rooms and single-user toilet facilities. There are two officer-quarters suites and a battalion chief suite. An alerting system provides call dispatch via status panels and integrated lighting controls.

The four 72-foot drive-through bays feature four-fold exit doors and standard sectional return doors and have high windows for increased daylight. The climate-controlled PPE storage room doubles as an ICC 500 storm shelter. There is a fitness room, a decontamination/extractor room, a workroom and an SCBA compressor room. A training mezzanine accommodates indoor ladder, rope and confined-space training.



Official Project Name: Midlothian Fire Station No. 1

Project City/State: Midlothian, TX

Date Completed: Aug. 15, 2020

Fire Chief: Dale McCaskill

Project Area (sq. ft.): 17,674

Total Cost: \$7,110,367

Cost Per Square Foot: \$406

Architect/Firm Name: Brinkley Sargent Wiginton Architects (BSW)

Website: bsw-architects.com

Design Team: BSW: Don Greer, Principal-in-Charge; Doug Edney, Project Manager; Cathy Pleasant Mukasa-Mugoye, Project Architect; Whitney Womble, Interior Designer; MEP: Michael Smith, MD Engineering; HALFF Associates: Brian C. Haynes, Civil/Landscape; Paul J. Rielly, Structural