

INSIGHT

Innovation in campus construction

As colleges and universities face increasing competition for students, state-of-the-art residential facilities can provide an edge for campus recruiters. With the convergence of residential, dining, entertainment and business space, there are many considerations to create facilities flexible enough to accommodate a variety of needs.

Kansas State University met this challenge head-on with the construction of a new 540-bed residence hall and the expansion of an adjacent dining center.

“They needed flexibility to host events just like a large hotel or conference center,” said Bill Naeger, project manager for Bartlett & West. “That’s the goal — they could essentially compete and host the same types of events.”

Bartlett & West joined the Wefald Hall team to deliver mechanical, electrical, plumbing and structural engineering services. Through a phased approach to construction, the overall project concluded in 18 months and stayed within the $75 million budget.

"During construction, the existing dining center remained in full service and the existing residence rooms were occupied as well," Naeger said. "Kramer Dining Center is a hub for campus life, and we transitioned it from a facility that served 1,200 to one that served 1,800 without disrupting service."

Because Wefald Hall has eight stories, it required several special considerations. A domestic water booster system was designed to provide adequate water pressure throughout the building. Domestic water distribution systems included PEX piping systems served from valve manifolds at each bathroom cluster and each of the eight food venues. A four-pipe hydronic system with variable flow provided personalized climate control throughout the building.

Stairwells and elevator shafts were equipped with roof-mounted fans and pressure sensors to maintain positive air pressure in the event of a fire. Emergency power generators will power emergency lighting systems to ensure a safe escape route if needed. Each of these steps help to ensure a safe and comfortable living environment for Kansas State University students.





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