

Leander ISD's High-Tech High

Fast-track construction of the new Vista Ridge High School began in January 2002. This high-tech facility includes 374,000 square feet of multi-component campus space in three buildings.

Vista Ridge is the latest school to be opened as part of Leander ISD's plan to accommodate its growing student base. Though the City of Leander has less than 9,000 residents, the Leander Independent School District (LISD) serves 16,787 students, with a projected growth rate of more than 2,000 students per year over the next five years.

To address overcrowding, Williamson County voters passed a bond referendum in

2000 for \$177 million, of which \$46 million was earmarked to construct Vista Ridge High School. American Constructors, LP was then selected by LISD as the Construction Manager, a role they have filled on previous occasions for the district. Along with a team of innovative architects, engineers, and consultants, American Constructors LP collaborated to build one of the largest state-of-the-art educational facilities in Texas.

The main building accommodates administration offices, academic classrooms, science labs and a library akin to Barnes & Noble, including coffee tables and sofas. A second building houses career and technology instruction, while a third building serves athletics and fine arts, as well as kitchen and cafeteria facilities. The campus is complemented by complete athletic venues for track and field, baseball and softball, football and tennis, plus a full-featured concession building and grounds maintenance complex.

Vista Ridge faculty and students are the beneficiaries of a team whose members were always on the look-out for ways to save LISD money while maintaining the exterior integrity, quality and

aesthetic character of the facilities. Design and construction focus was on life cycle costs, materials and methods that minimize the amount of maintenance required from the school over the life of the facilities. For example, the architectural precast tiltwall construction was combined with masonry accents so that the exterior would require minimal maintenance. Plans for a closed-loop geothermal HVAC system were revised to locate all of the equipment on a special mezzanine for access and maintenance. On the interior, laminate plastic paneling was used on walls that will never require painting.

American Constructors Project Manager, Joe Charlton, summarized some of the recommendations which resulted in substantial cost and schedule savings to the project.

- **Loop Well Piping.**

By removing the loop well piping from the return air plenum, all fire wrapping was eliminated in favor of a double trapeze hangar system that allows ready access to all piping and quick identification of any leaks.

- **CMU Bracing.**

With the design team, American Constructors developed six new details that greatly reduced the cost of bracing the interior CMU walls while ensuring their structural integrity.

- **Mezzanine Handrail.**

Changed the tube steel railing at the mezzanine to sheet metal studs so that the permanent railing could be installed concurrently with drywall studs, eliminating need for a temporary wood handrail and allowing easy installation of air conditioning equipment. Result: significant cost savings plus reduction of construction time and elimination of multiple trade work activities.

Vista Ridge High School Features ~

- Two winding staircases;
- Stars carved into stone columns;
- Gathering spaces in the academic and activities buildings as well as in a courtyard, main mall, and a gazebo with benches;
- A state-of-the-art workout facility;
- A foreign language room with console unit and control trays that lower from the ceiling;
- Three gymnasiums (with bleachers that spell out VHS whether expanded or retracted and a custom-designed sound system with acoustical roof and wall panels);
- Band and orchestra areas with acoustical roof paneling and 11 sound-dampening practice rooms and a hall marked out in five-yard increments so students can work on marching exercises indoors;
- Interconnecting art rooms that share a gated outdoor patio and have a photography darkroom and kiln;
- Metal and wood shops with compressed air systems, a fume collection system, and electric roll-up doors.

- **Expansion Joints.**

Used caulk-type fire-safing for floor expansion joints on the second floor in the main building in lieu of the expansion joint cover.

This highly successful project was completed this summer and in time for full classes that started August 19th. For a first-hand look at the school's construction, check out <http://vrhs.leanderisd.org>.



Students gather in the mall area before school at Vista Ridge High School



Aerial view of the Vista Ridge High School campus

Warranty and Service Program At Your Service

- ~ Proactive commitment ~
- ~ Inspection, prevention, and repair ~
- ~ On-call service 24/7 ~
- ~ Dependable problem-solving ~
- ~ Cost savings & client satisfaction ~

Two years ago, American Constructors, LP (ACLP) created a special in-house team dedicated to a warranty and service program that could be applied to every project. This program provides all ACLP clients with a high level of attention during the initial one-year warranty period and for several years beyond.

The uniqueness of this program lies in ACLP's commitment to perform periodically scheduled inspections in coordination with each client's cleaning, maintenance, and service departments. This proactive program can prevent malfunctions, shut-downs, water leaks and the like, which might otherwise result in the need for costly repairs or replacement and disruptions to operations. All inspections are scheduled in advance. Services required and actions taken are documented so that clients can include the information in their maintenance reports.

It's a big job. The warranty service manager (WSM) is the owner's liaison to the right repair and maintenance experts whenever they're needed. The WSM identifies maintenance practices that could contribute to problems later on. When the warranty and service team can head off problems before they occur, the result is significant savings to owners and higher levels of project satisfaction.

Customer Support Service

The ACLP Warranty and Service Program is more than its name would imply. It's also a customer support service ready to handle routine and emergency service calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year long.

According to Tommy Lauderdale, warranty service manager for ACLP, "We draw from skilled tradesmen in the company's construction ranks to accomplish a number of tasks. Sometimes it's just assisting our owners with small jobs where additional resources are needed; sometimes it's to correct problems."

If a specialized fix is required, one of the approved subcontractors is called out as soon as possible to make the repair. The WSM supervises the work and may assist in the

process. His team will follow up promptly to ensure that any problems are resolved.

Warranty Coverage

Two months prior to project completion, the WSM attends the owner's training session to become familiar with the new building, its systems and equipment. Then, every 1-2 months after project completion, he checks in with the owner and visits the project to discuss concerns, inspect the buildings, and investigate problem areas. He also follows up on any previous problems to ensure that repairs are holding, such as water leaks after rains or storms.

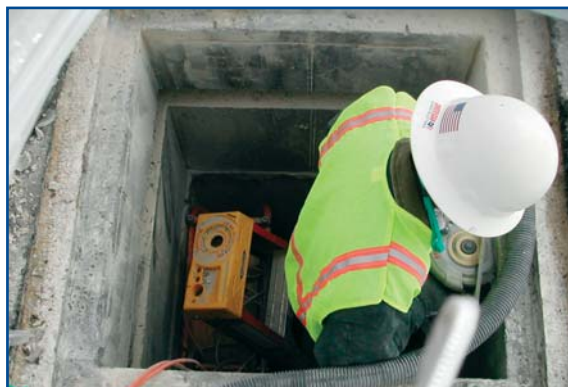
Over the next four years, such visits continue on a reduced frequency or as-needed basis to insure that no problems stem from the construction services. Anything that might crop up is taken care of immediately.



American Constructors, LP
Warranty and Service Program Team

Scott Rouse, Project Manager for the Austin Independent School District, had this to say about the program: "Following completion of construction, your ease of notification and immediate response on warranty work exceeded those performances typically found following project close-out."

The Warranty and Services Program has been extremely beneficial to American Constructor's clients by allowing them to properly maintain their facilities and by providing them with a dependable problem-solving resource throughout their warranty period.



The Warranty and Service Program at work: Juan Guerrero lowers the invert grade of the drop inlet to facilitate better drainage by cutting down and reshaping it.



Check Circuit Breakers

Recent blackouts in the northeast and midwest have heightened awareness of America's dependency on electricity. In the heat of summer in central Texas, businesses increase power usage to keep their offices comfortable, and thrown circuit breakers are a subsequent source of electrical problems. Since not all breaker trips are immediately identified, it's a good idea to inspect and test building breakers regularly.

Coming Attractions

American Constructors is proud to announce that it has been selected as Construction Manager @ Risk for two new clients.

Austin Community College

The pre-construction team is already hard at work with the architect, Page Sutherland Page, on the new South Austin Campus for Austin Community College. The facility will be built on the corner of Stassney and Manchaca, on the site of the previous Albertson's grocery store.

The project requires demolishing and removing the store and constructing a 95,000-square-foot classroom and administrative building in its place. The project also includes surface and garage parking components. Construction is to begin in early 2004 with completion in the summer of 2005. Leading the project team is Tom Peoples, Corey Taylor, Katie Loughmiller, and RC McMillan.

Texas NeuroRehab Center

Pre-construction services for the Texas NeuroRehab Center, a post-neurosurgical rehabilitation facility, are now underway. At \$4.5 million, this project will add 20,500 square feet for 16 new patient beds and supporting facilities to the existing campus. ACLP will be working with LZT Architects on this project. Construction will start early in 2004, with completion targeted for the end of the year. Heading the project team are Gary Keil and Mike Miller.



PROJECTIONS

is published for the friends and team members of American Constructors.

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