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Project of the Month: Harriman completes extensive renovation project for Acadia Insurance headquarters

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Completed almost one year ago, Harriman's design of extensive renovations for Acadia Insurance's headquarters, has improved the facility's functionality and workflow. According to Kay Whitmore, Acadia's vice president of human resources and administration, "The redesign of our amphitheater, kitchen, work, and common areas has significantly improved the functionality of our offices and has had a positive effect on the way we work and interact."

Redesign of a 10,550 s/f section of the regional insurance company's home office provided expanded operating, meeting, and training space. The phased renovation minimized disruption to ongoing operations.

Renovations included designing a larger and flexible lecture hall/meeting space with three large retractable overhead-doors that can be opened and lowered to accommodate various size groups. When completely opened, the meeting space can accommodate 230 employees. The previous meeting space could only hold 80 participants in a lecture setting.

An equally important component of the renovations was expanding and reconfiguring the open office and mail room, both of which had grown organically with additional staff. It was this organic growth that hindered the ability to handle the typically large flow of incoming and outgoing mail experienced by an insurance company. The redesign has resulted in a highly efficient space with additional workstations, in addition to maximizing the amount of natural daylight available to the open office environment. "We created spaces that work for Acadia," said Peter Pinkerton, Harriman senior interior designer.

Audio/visual systems throughout the space were upgraded. Perimeter space was reconfigured to increase storage and improve flow in the kitchen and vending areas. The redevelopment of the central portion of the lower level - known as the "Acadia Commons," created a communal breakout space and cafeteria themed as an outdoor space. Varied-sized drum lights at different heights created a bright cloud effect. "Use of the cafeteria and kitchen facilities has significantly increased since the redesign," said Pinkerton.

"Every effort was made to increase access to natural light," said Pinkerton. "Use of borrowed lites with privacy glazing allowed daylight to penetrate deeper into the work environment."

All the lighting was upgraded to high efficiency LEDs and fluorescents providing the same lumen output. A warm color palette and chrome accents were used in this now brighter interior space to give it an inviting modern feel.

Planning on the project began in 2012, with design completed in late 2013. Construction of the gut renovation began in January 2014 and was completed in March 2014 by Portland-based contractors Langford and Low.

