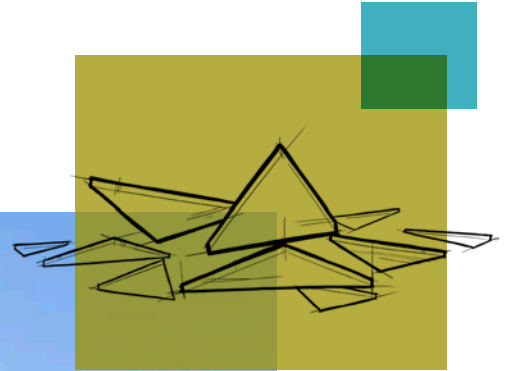


Designing an interactive museum for all ages

The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum recently opened its new 100,000-square-foot outdoor educational expansion and Annie Oakley Society Event Center. The outdoor exhibit area is called Liichokoshkomo', pronounced Lee-cho-kosh-ko-MO and named for a Chickasaw phrase for "Let's play."

Products in use

- Rockfon® Planar® Macroplus®

Liichokoshkomo´ and the event center culminate more than a decade of dedication by the Annie Oakley Society. Named for the 19th century sharpshooter and entertainer, Annie Oakley, the society’s members include women leaders and philanthropists. Its mission is to build and sustain world-class educational experiences for children and families to teach the rich history of the American West for generations to come.

The Liichokoshkomo´ addition includes an intertribal village representing seven tribes (Caddo, Chickasaw, Hopi, Kiowa, Navajo, Pawnee and Ancient Puebloan), a rail car and train depot, a trading post, pioneer wagon, playground, waterfall, sod house and more. Walking through the sod house doors, visitors enter the new Annie Oakley Society Event Center. As the museum’s newest indoor addition, the event center hosts activities and education, as well as corporate and private events for up to 250 people.

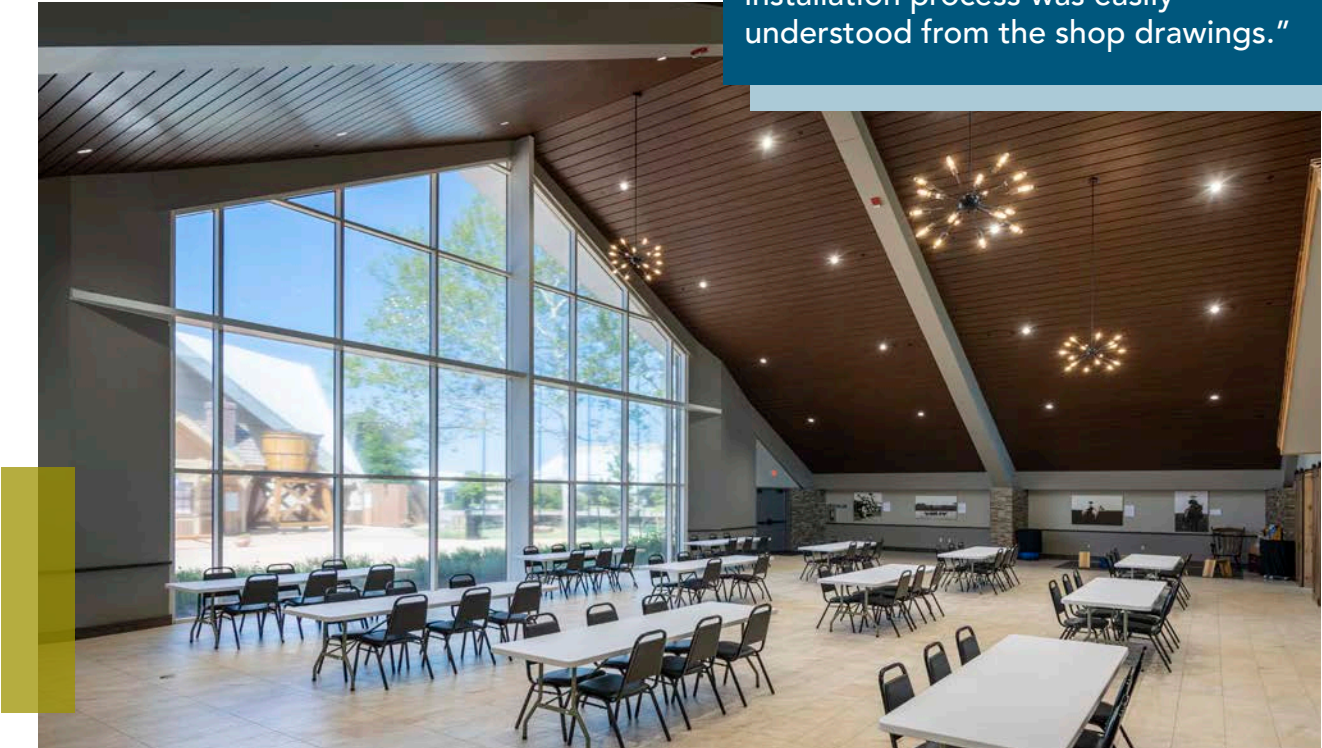
Designed by Benham, the event center needed to accommodate a wide range of functions and people. Multi-purpose facilities face multiple challenges to optimize acoustics. For receptions and banquets, guests want to converse with others at their table without shouting. For presentations, speakers want to be heard without straining their voices. For educational activities, students want to clearly understand their instructions and lessons. All of these acoustic goals required that high-performance sound absorption be implemented inside the center.

Supporting the Event Center’s acoustic and design goals, Rockfon® Planar® Macroplus® linear metal ceiling system are acoustically improved with perforations and an Acoutex™ backer. The ceiling’s high acoustic performance provides exceptional sound absorption as demonstrated by its 0.90 Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC).

Visually connecting the Event Center’s comfortable interior with the Museum’s outdoor exhibits and landscape, the ceiling panels feature a Metalwood® Walnut woodgrain finish. Unlike actual lumber, the metal ceiling adds a biophilic note without the maintenance. The aluminum panels resist rot, pests, moisture, mold, mildew and other microbial growth. Manufactured with 75-100% recycled content, the ceiling panels also are 100% locally recyclable at the end of their lifecycle on the Event Center.

In total, 4,650 square feet of Rockfon Planar Macroplus ceiling systems was installed on the Event Center by Lasco Acoustics & Drywall. “Rockfon had a great turn-around time on shop-drawings,” said Joe King, project manager at Lasco. “The delivery of the material was quick and the installation process was easily understood from the shop drawings.”

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Lasco worked closely with general contractor J.E. Dunn to meet the project's schedule and budget. J.E. Dunn broke ground on Liichokoshkomo' in November 2018. Construction on the Event Center underway through 2019. The museum had hoped to open in spring of 2020, but remained closed to minimize the spread of COVID-19. In spite of the shut-down, awareness grew exponentially thanks in large part to a clever social media campaign featuring Tim "#HashtagTheCowboy" Tiller, the museum's director of security.

On Sept. 17, 2020, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and Annie Oakley Society hosted a virtual grand opening for Liichokoshkomo' and event center. "It is the Museum's first expansion in many years. It is designed to be hands-on, minds-on experience for children and those of us who never really ever grew up," Natalie Shirley, the museum's president/CEO, told *The Oklahoman*.

Shirley continued, "So many times in old-school museums, you'll see parents shh'ing their children and guards keeping people at bay from the art and the artifacts. What the Annie Oakley Society's leaders wanted to do was embrace the concept of childlike wonder and excitement and use that to foster educational purposes."

Cathy Keating, co-founder and co-chair of the society, and a board member of the museum agreed. She said the new space reflects the society's mission "to build and sustain imaginative, creative, extraordinary educational experiences for families and children here at the museum."

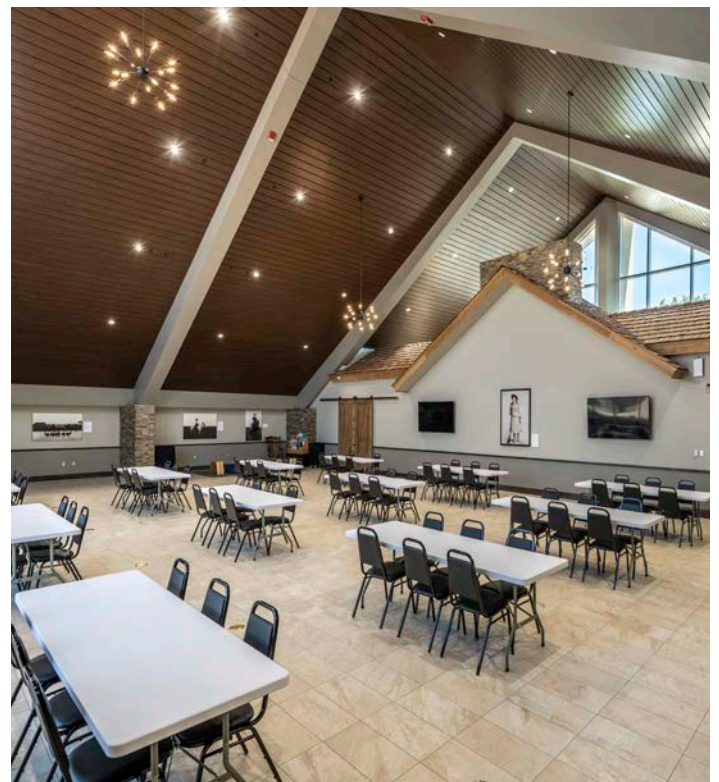
Lynn Friess, also a co-founder and co-chair of the society, added, "Education of the code of the West is immensely important these days: Honor, integrity, truth; your word is your bond... All the wonderful codes of the West need to be shown and told to the generations. This is the perfect place to not only teach, but to live out these codes."

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Echoing her colleagues, the Annie Oakley Society's chair Judy Hatfield called the project "unlike anything available anywhere else in the world. We can combine character building through code of the West with fun and relevant STEM, culture and historical experiences in a very fun and imaginative play."

"Liichokoshkomo' reflects the real West – old and new. This space will continue to grow, sparking a lifelong interest in our Western heritage," concluded the museum's associate curator of cowboy culture, Nathan Jones.

In addition to the permanent exhibits within Liichokoshkomo', the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum hosts several temporary and traveling exhibitions throughout the year. Founded in 1955, the museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts, while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. More than 10 million people from around the world have visited the museum to gain a better understanding of the West: a region and a history that permeates U.S. culture.



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