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# San Marcos Public Library features Rockfon ceiling systems,

# creates a modernized community setting

Chicago (Oct. 2022) – The expanded and remodeled San Marcos Public Library more than doubled its original size to serve more people with a wider range of resources in a welcoming, modernized setting on a single level. From the library’s main entry through to the enclosed children’s area, PGAL’s design team selected five different Rockfon ceiling products to optimize performance and aesthetics for each area. These include best-level acoustic stone wool ceiling panels and a linear metal ceiling with a wood-look finish, creating a comfortable and healthy interior for patrons of the library.

Rockfon offers a complete selection of acoustic stone wool ceiling panels, metal ceilings and suspension systems in a wide range of finishes. Meeting the specific goals for each area of the library, PGAL’s design team selected five different Rockfon ceiling products to optimize performance and aesthetics.

Ensuring the material arrived as specified, ISC Building Materials provided more than 45,500 square feet of Rockfon ceiling products to Performance Contracting Inc. (PCI) for installation. J.E. Dunn Construction Company coordinated with PCI to ensure the library’s ceiling installation was completed as scheduled for its May 2021 opening.

***Inspired, Respectful Design***

“The design is meant to inspire pride and identity as a central hearth for the city,” described PGAL. “The entrance is iconic, inviting and understated, respecting the original building form.”

All who arrive at the library’s new main entrance are greeted and sheltered by a canopy composed with Rockfon Planar Macroplus linear metal ceiling. These durable panels were finished in Satin Silver, complementing the building exterior’s other metallic finishes and materials that create its contemporary appearance.

The versatile Rockfon Planar Macroplus ceiling systems present a visual continuity that transcends from outside to inside the library. Bringing the outdoor, natural environment to the interior, the linear metal ceiling features a Metalwood® Woodgrain Bamboo finish. This biophilic design element captures the look of wood with the low maintenance and high performance of metal.

The distinctive wood-look material draws the eye upward along the high ceiling of the library’s lobby, above the information desk and draping down the wall opposite the main entrance. Circular LED light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling to illuminate the communal space, purposefully contrasting with the geometry of the linear planks above.

The ceiling conceals the light fixtures’ suspension points, the fire suppression systems and other functional services. Its warm woodgrain finish also camouflages the metal ceiling panels’ small perforations that enhance the lobby’s acoustic performance.

***Best-Level Acoustics***

“Acoustics were a huge concern,” noted Chris King, Rockfon’s district manager. “It’s a library, so it was important to provide quiet spaces where people could read, study and concentrate. It’s also a place with designated areas and programming for children, teens and community meetings. A good acoustic experience needs to be finetuned to the address the activities and expectations of those in the room.”

Installing ceiling panels with a high Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) for the reading rooms was among the recommendations noted in the San Marcos Public Library’s facility master plan and building program developed in 2014 by Dewberry Architects. An NRC rating uses a scale of 0.0 to 1.0 to indicate how much the ceiling material can reduce noise by absorbing sound. Ceiling panels with an NRC of 0.70 provide good sound absorption; those with an NRC of 0.80 are better; and those with an NRC of 0.90 provide the best absorption.

With consideration to the library’s master plan recommendations, PGAL selected Rockfon Alaska acoustic stone wool ceiling panels which have a best-level NRC of 0.90. These high sound-absorbing panels were used in the library’s newly constructed reading rooms, children’s library and other areas where quiet was expected.

***Neat, Clean Appearance***

Approximately 40,000 square feet of Rockfon Alaska 2-by-2 and 2-by-4 panels were installed in Rockfon Chicago Metallic 4000 Tempra 9/16-inch exposed ceiling suspension system. A bright white finish was applied to the grid and matching Rockfon Infinity perimeter trim to accentuate the smooth, white panels’ neat, clean appearance.

Stained ceiling panels due to residual roof leaks were among the other architectural issues identified by Dewberry’s 2014 report. Along with remedying the previous roof leak, the library’s new Rockfon stone wool ceiling panels are hydrophobic, meaning that they resist water, including humidity and other moisture. Without adding antimicrobial chemicals, stone wool naturally resists mold, mildew and other microorganism that may cause visible stains and invisible air quality concerns.

***Healthy Interiors***

Supporting healthy indoor air quality, Rockfon Alaska and all of its stone wool ceiling products have earned UL® Environment’s GREENGUARD Gold Certification for low-emitting products. This stringent certification process considers safety factors that may impact people who are more vulnerable, such as children.

Demonstrating Rockfon’s commitment to helping design professionals create healthy, safe and sustainable spaces that contribute to occupant wellness, Rockfon Alaska acoustic stone wool ceiling panels are fully supported with UL-verified environmental product declarations (EPDs), Health Product Declarations (HPDs) and Declare Label 2.0 as Living Building ChallengeSM Red List Approved documentation.

Rockfon’s metal ceiling systems also contain no organic compounds, and do not support mold or microbial growth. PGAL specified Rockfon Cubegrid open plenum metal ceilings to freshen up the existing, enclosed multi-purpose room, where conversation was prioritized over concentration. The room’s new ceiling grid system was installed in staggered, floating layers. Finished in black, the metal ceiling components match the intersecting suspended HVAC ductwork and can light fixtures.

***Lighter, Brighter, More Sustainable***

Rockfon Cubegrid’s color and rectangular open cell configuration are similar to the dark finish and grid pattern of metal-framed windows, interior glass partitions and door systems. Indirect, diffused, natural lighting is incorporated throughout the library’s renovated and newly constructed rooms.

Rockfon’s reflective ceiling panels maximize the daylight entering at the building’s exterior window walls and extend this renewable resource more deeply into the interior core. The smooth, white surface of Rockfon Alaska reflects 86 percent of light. When electric lighting is needed, the library’s modernized facility relies on energy-efficient sensor-activated LED lighting.

Other sustainability features at the renovated and expanded San Marcos Public Library included: building and material re-use, rainwater harvesting, EV charging stations, energy-efficient HVAC with high-quality filters, water-efficient bathroom fixtures, low-emitting flooring and recycled products. Stone wool is made with abundant, natural basalt rock plus recycled material sources. The metal used to manufacture Rockfon’s ceiling panels also contains up to 100 percent recycled content. At the end of their long useful life in the library, Rockfon’s metal ceiling systems can be 100 percent locally recycled.

***Fulfilling the Mission***

The City of San Marcos established its first library in 1913. The 2021 project renovated and expanded the City’s most recent library, built in 1994. Since the former facility opened nearly 30 years ago, the community’s population increased from 30,000 to 67,500 people; the library’s collection grew from 80,000 to 158,000 items; and the library reports an average of 1,500 daily visitors.

Serving the City’s current needs and anticipating future growth, the library’s mission “is to help make San Marcos a great place to live by providing our citizens with access to an outstanding collection of library materials; entertaining and educational programs for all ages; fast, free computer, Internet, and information services; and comfortable facilities in which to read, relax, and connect with others. We strive to provide truly outstanding customer service and to promote reading and learning as vital, enjoyable, lifelong activities.”

Creating a 21st century library, the new San Marcos Public Library now offers a teen room, a makerspace, a technology hub, an enclosed children’s area, study and conference rooms, and a 240-seat meeting room.

A dedication ceremony held in June 2021 was attended by community leaders and media. According to the *San Marcos Corridor News*, Mayor Jane Hughson said, “I’m so proud of the City of San Marcos, in the expansion and remodel and the reimaging of the public library. This facility is innovative and progressive and its design and purpose and will serve this …community for many years to come.”

“A new library really affirms our conviction that young people having access to books and reading material at an early age will help them to do better in school and in later life,” added Mark Smith, director of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (retired Sept. 2021). “A new library represents our shared aspiration for the growth of our communities, support for entrepreneurship, economic success, and the potential for personal growth when people have access to information and opportunity.”

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**San Marcos Public Library, 625 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos, TX 78666;** <https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/586/Library>

* Owner: City of San Marcos, Texas; http://sanmarcostx.gov
* Architect: PGAL; Austin, Texas; https://www.pgal.com
* General contractor: J.E. Dunn Construction Company; Austin, Texas; https://www.jedunn.com
* Ceiling systems – installing contractor: Performance Contracting Inc. (PCI) Austin Interior; Austin, Texas; https://www.performancecontracting.com
* Ceiling systems – distributor: ISC Building Materials; Austin, Texas; https://iscbm.com
* Ceiling systems – manufacturer: Rockfon; Chicago; https://www.rockfon.com
* Photos by: Brian Mihealsick Photography

***About Rockfon***

*Rockfon is part of the ROCKWOOL Group and is offering advanced acoustic ceilings and wall solutions to create beautiful, comfortable spaces.*

*At the ROCKWOOL Group, we are committed to enriching the lives of everyone who experiences our product solutions. Our expertise is perfectly suited to tackle many of today’s biggest sustainability and development challenges, from energy consumption and noise pollution to fire resilience, water scarcity and flooding. Our range of products reflects the diversity of the world’s needs, while supporting our stakeholders in reducing their own carbon footprint.*

*Stone wool is a versatile material and forms the basis of all our businesses. With approximately 11,500 passionate colleagues in 39 countries, we are the world leader in stone wool solutions, from building insulation to acoustic ceilings, external cladding systems to horticultural solutions, engineered fibers for industrial use to insulation for the process industry, and marine and offshore.*

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