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A BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY: AVON HIGH SCHOOL'S \$34 MILLION RE-VAMP CELEBRATED AS MODEL FOR SUCCESS WITH SEPTEMBER DEDICATION

Avon Officials and Design Team Say Unique School and Community Support System Made Design Vision a Reality

Avon, CT – August 27, 2008 – After almost two years of construction, students and staff will begin the new school year in an expanded and renovated building. Dedication ceremonies for the \$34 million dollar project have been set for 2:00 pm Sunday, September, 14, 2008. A new gymnasium, cafeteria, and orchestra room was completed early this year. The new media center and classroom wing is ready to receive students and staff on the first day of school.

Charles Boos, Principal Architect-in-Charge, Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. said, "The project was completed about \$1 million dollars below the appropriation and this achievement is credited to the Building Committee's superb project oversight and management as well as the professionalism of the project's Construction Manager, FIP Corporation of Cheshire, CT." He further acknowledged the Town's role in the process, saying "The entire Town Government has to be on board for a project of this magnitude to be a success."

It wasn't only the Town Council that was behind it. Peggy Roell, Board of Education Chair added, "There was outstanding support from the school community and once the entire community recognized the need, we had a groundswell of support." Dr. Richard Kisiel, Ed.D., Superintendent of Avon Public Schools, said "I've been actively involved in eight building projects during the course of my 22 years as Superintendent. Avon High School was the smoothest, most well-managed project from architectural design to construction that I've ever been involved with. The level of cooperation was truly remarkable and without any of the minefields that can sometimes accompany a project of this scope."

Avon High School's \$34 million dollar budget spanned both major additions and renovations. It was part of an all-schools initiative; a town-wide program to improve all of the schools in Avon. That initiative began in 1988 with renovations and additions to the Avon Middle School. Avon High School was initially renovated in 1998 to accommodate student expansion from 750 to 900 students. In 2004, Avon High School was bursting at the seams again; the student population had swelled to 900, a 56 percent increase in just two years and something had to be done. In May of that year, it was determined the school needed to once again expand to meet projected enrollments of up to 1,300 students through 2012. Avon High's current student body is 1,050. Construction on the project started in November 2006 with completion this month (August) and September's dedication on the horizon.

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A Back-to-School Success Story: Avon High School's \$34 Million Re-Vamp Celebrated as Model for Success With September Dedication, pg. 2 of 3

The Avon High School addition and renovation project brings a new classroom wing with eleven general classrooms, one computer lab, two science labs, a new gymnasium with team lockers, an expanded cafeteria, fitness room and student activity work area as well as new special education classrooms. A new 120-car parking lot for the senior class was also built. The media center underwent a dramatic transformation. "We think it's one of the best KBA has done," says Boos.

With a traditional band room, choral room, and auditorium currently available at Avon High School, a new instrumental music room was created from the former cafeteria to accommodate increased student interest in the music program. Architects worked with an acoustic consultant to not only allow students to hear their fellow musicians but also shut out sounds from the exterior. One of the music teachers remarked on a building tour that the new orchestra room is the 'best space for hearing instruments' that he's ever been in.

Board of Education Chair Peggy Roell said that Avon's senior class took the inconveniences of construction with a sense of humor. "They intentionally posed for their senior class photo with a bulldozer in the background and wore t-shirts with the word 'done' accompanied by an exclamation point for their senior picnic. I was sure to tell them 'job well *done*' in my speech at their graduation ceremony."

New Avon High Principal Jason Beaudin saw real school spirit about the project despite the challenges of going to school during construction. "Our faculty, support staff and students were flexible, accommodating and patient throughout the renovation process. I am extremely proud of them. I was equally impressed with how seamless the project went. The collective team effort from the architects, building committee, town officials, and the school administration made each stage of the process seamless. Its impact on the educational environment of the school was minimal. All of us here at AHS are impressed with the long-term result. We've always been proud of our school but now it really shines with more opportunities for the kids to excel in an enhanced learning environment."

The new and improved school is also a plus for the community, serving as a meeting or function space by community or social groups. Major spaces at Avon High, including the auditorium, cafeteria and gymnasium, can also function as retreats during power outages, due to their extensive emergency power generation system.

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A Back-to-School Success Story: Avon High School's \$34 Million Re-Vamp Celebrated as Model for Success With September Dedication, pg. 3 of 3

For Charles Boos, the Avon High School project strikes a personal chord as a resident of the town and the grandfather to five grandchildren in Avon's school system. "We know that a good school system is the heart of any community's success," he said. "Probably one of the biggest thrills that an architect can have is to drive around a building site and visualize how you would do the job. And now four years later, to see that visualization realized in concrete, steel and brick . . . seeing it completed is absolutely what this business is all about."

PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

About Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc.

Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. is one of New England's most experienced architectural design firms with offices in New Britain, Connecticut, Foxborough, Massachusetts, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The firm specializes in educational, public safety, theater arts, parks and recreation and other public architecture. Founded in 1963, the firm's ultimate goal is to create structures that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sound, and economically justifiable. For more information visit www.kba-architects.com or call (860) 229-0361.

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