



New Police/Fire Station is the First Minnesota building Constructed Under the IgCC

By Nick Reiher

Officials in Maplewood, Minn., believe building with sustainability is just the right thing to do.

But you have to watch out for poor imitations, said Maplewood Building Official Nick Carver, or you'll wind up with something that will have you spending more green instead of planning for it.

“There are a lot of so-called ‘green’ designs out there,” Carver said. “But they don’t really save you any energy or reduce the carbon footprint. And



sometimes, they make it worse.”

In fact, Carver said, you can’t really tell Maplewood’s newest fire station is the first structure in the Land of 10,000 Lakes to be built under the *International Green Construction Code*® (IgCC). Maybe you would notice the timed LED lights that eliminated the need for most manual light switches. But you probably wouldn’t see the solar reflective roof with 30 percent more insulation. Nor might you care about the water-saving double-flush toilets.

But Carver and the other officials in the St. Paul suburb do. He said Maplewood adopted an energy efficiency and conservation plan in 2009. And when he heard the ICC was developing a green code, Carver joined a committee to help devise the revolutionary model code adopted in 2012.

In turn, Maplewood officials worked with the ICC to design the Maplewood Green Building Code adopted in 2013. About that time, they knew they needed to relocate one of their fire stations to help response time. Part of the building would be used for a police substation as well for the same reason.

Although the city adopted the IgCC, Carver said, the state of Minnesota hasn't. So the city can use it only on city-funded buildings and other sites like trails. Carver said the city set up a design team, "and even before pen hit paper, we had a fair amount of strategy sessions with the IgCC manual to let contractors know how we wanted it done."

The station they were replacing was built in the mid-1940s, Carver said, and it was losing a lot of energy, even with upgraded insulation over the years. And to their credit, the Maplewood City Council didn't care whether the new station looked like a green building, Carver added, they just wanted to make sure it acted like one, saving as much energy and money as possible. Carver said Fire Chief Steve Lukin was a little wary at first. But now the chief extolls the wonders of the IgCC in the new station. They are especially pleased with the in-floor heat, set at 62 degrees, that not only keeps their feet warm, he said, but helps dry off the trucks faster after a run. That will help the trucks last longer and prevent slippage from any puddles.

Carver and Lukin said the city still is finishing the paperwork for official accreditation. But there are plans for more green construction in Maplewood. For one, the city's energy ordinance states that all of its facilities need to be brought up to IgCC within 10 years. Energy-saving features such as the solar-reflective roof, increased roof insulation, updated appliances and the timed LED lighting system cost a few more bucks in the short run, Carver said. But as time goes on, he said, they know they'll be saving energy, money and the effect on Mother Earth.

"We also hope that what we do in Maplewood will set the example for businesses and others who want to build to do it the right way," Carver said. "It's all about raising the profile."