



# CONSTRUCTIVE NEWS YOU CAN USE



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# A Message from Carina



The health and safety of our employees and their families is the highest priority of the Public Building Commission (PBC). As officials embark on the latest initiatives to safely and fully reopen the city, the PBC continues to follow the lead of the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) when it comes to providing information to our staff and adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. These actions have allowed the PBC to continue moving forward to deliver quality public works projects on-time and on-budget.

Thus far in 2021, the PBC has delivered a new state-of-the-art fire house on Chicago's southside and completed the critical renovations, important technological upgrades and infrastructure enhancements to transform the Legler Regional Library into a welcoming, flexible spaces that responses to the need of patrons. These projects reflect the PBC's commitment to constructing facilities that are held to the highest standard.

For both projects, emphasis was placed on bringing Black, Latino and women journeymen, apprentices and laborers into the development process. The new fire house contracted more than 55 percent minority and women owned businesses while the library employed 20 community residents.

These projects embodied PBC's commitment to our clients and the communities we serve, along with supporting job creation and business growth.

As we remain committed to the safety and well-being of all of our staff members, our contractors, building tenants and their families. I am grateful for the wonderful team members at the PBC who have stepped up to support our agency and each other as we face this unprecedented challenge together.

As you read 2021 Q2 newsletter, I hope the news that we share illustrates our excellent stewardship of public funds and demonstrates how we are creating quality spaces that every Chicagoan has an opportunity to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Carina E. Sánchez  
PBC Executive Director



## Corporate Career Lays Foundation to Successfully Lead Family Construction Firm



### Stephanie Hickman

President and Chief Executive Officer of Trice Construction

In less than 10 years, Stephanie Hickman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Trice Construction, transformed the family’s small, residential construction company into an award winning, utility infrastructure and self-performing commercial concrete construction firm.

“I was born into the industry,” Hickman said. “My father and uncles started the company in 1967 constructing garage concrete slabs.”

Hickman continues, “A little more than 14 years ago, my family was transitioning out of construction and I saw that the experience and operation skills I acquired in the private industry were a match to help grow and expand the business, so I took a chance. I just couldn’t imagine the family company not being there anymore. I told myself that if it works out - great, if not I could always go back to private industry.”

This thought was further reinforced when a mentor told her, “Well you will be even stronger if this venture is not successful because you will have operation experience that you can bring back to corporate America.”

Hickman, who previously served as a labor attorney, utility executive and lobbyist, took little time to decide that she would transition to Trice Construction.

“Even though a lot of people might have thought that I was crazy to leave a good corporate job, I decided that I would take the leap. The next thing I knew, I gave up my office to be out in the field,” Hickman said. “So, after about a year, I saw some of my former colleagues who said that I had a great tan and asked if I had been to the islands. I responded with a laugh. Yes, I have – Stony Island, Blue Island – in alleys, in jeans and work boots installing concrete pads.”

That “island” work has paid off, Trice Construction, has grown from four to more than 100 employees with operations in Chicago and St. Louis. The company continues to experience growth year over year and has been able to leverage that expertise into their first joint venture to help construct the largest firehouse ever built in Chicago. When asked how did she turn a family business into an award-winning construction company with corporate clients, Hickman says with a laugh, “I don’t sleep!”

She continues, “It was just a matter of rolling my sleeve up, tenacity and surrounding myself with some really good people because I can’t be everywhere nor know everything. I have fired myself from some roles in the company because I’m not the strongest person for that position and I don’t want to limit the company’s growth to only what I know. Trice is the result of a lot of great people on the team who have brought their expertise and know-how to deliver for us everyday ... And I don’t sleep.”

When reflecting on the challenges and/or advantages of being a smaller firm Hickman said, “Being a small firm works both ways, it can be a challenge and an advantage. You hear people always talk about access to capital, which is very real, but I find that one of the bigger challenges is the competition for quality talent.”

Hickman explains that, “If a major construction firm and I are both looking for a project manager at the same time, it takes a special kind of person with an entrepreneurial spirit to want to come to Trice as opposed to the larger firm.”

Hickman goes on to say, “In addition, getting a seat at the table is a challenge because you are very niched when you’re a small business. Many large companies just want you to come in, do what you do and get out. Trying to work your way into opportunities, you have to constantly prove yourself. I tell my team that we work in a fishbowl because when we are doing something bigger than what most people think we’re capable of doing, everyone wants to watch to see if we can do it.”

All eyes were on Hickman as she was a partner in the African-American led design-build team - UJAMAA/Trice Joint Venture and Brook Architecture to construct the new state-of-the-art firehouse designated as Engine Company 115.

“This project sparked my interest because it’s the firehouse that will serve my mother, it was in the

community and I have worked with UJAMAA and Brooks Architecture since my second or third year in business so this made sense,” Hickman said. “This has been a great learning opportunity even if we never do another joint venture. The experience that our everyday project manager brings back to the company allows us to see projects through the general contracting perspective and strengthens the company.”

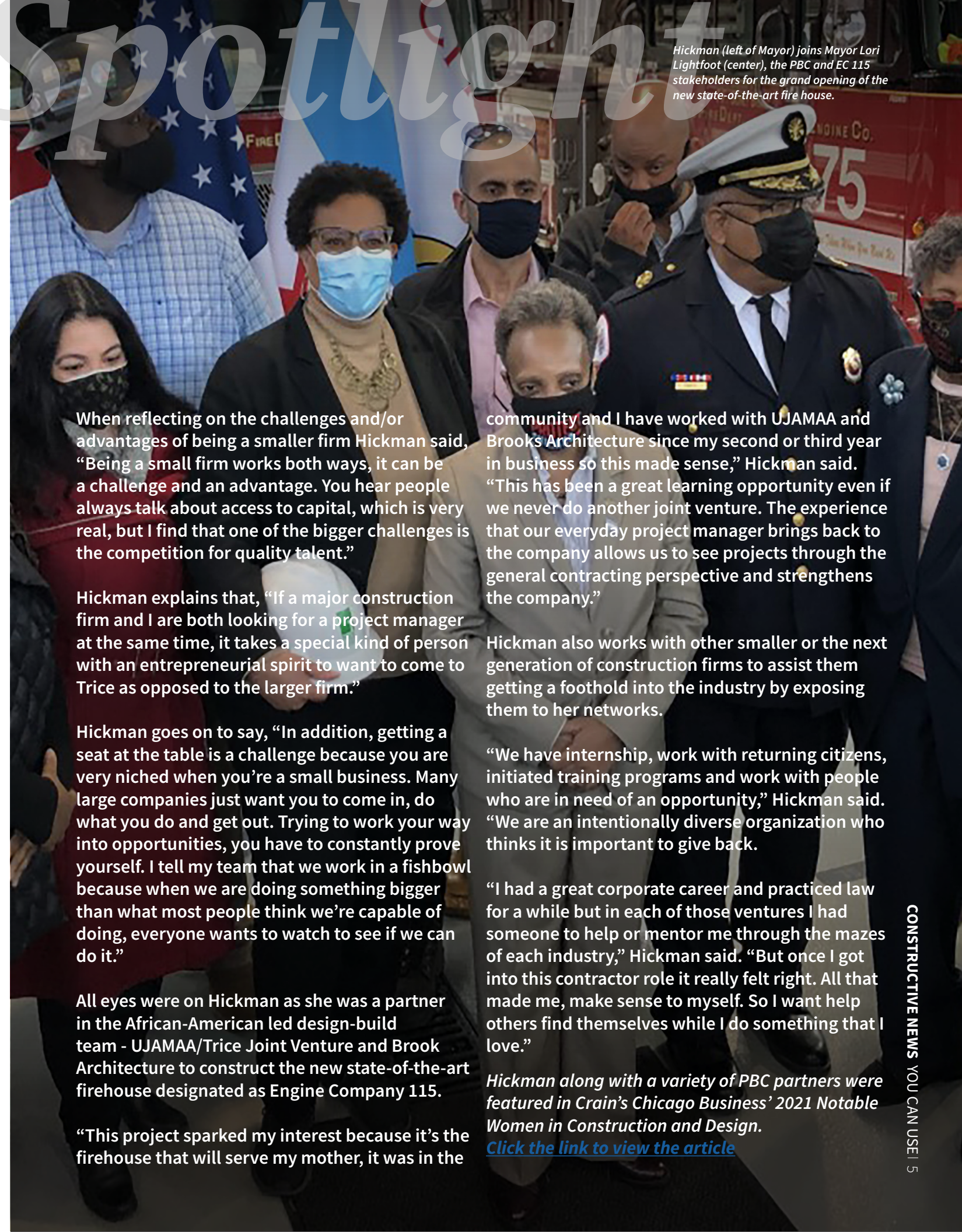
Hickman also works with other smaller or the next generation of construction firms to assist them getting a foothold into the industry by exposing them to her networks.

“We have internship, work with returning citizens, initiated training programs and work with people who are in need of an opportunity,” Hickman said. “We are an intentionally diverse organization who thinks it is important to give back.

“I had a great corporate career and practiced law for a while but in each of those ventures I had someone to help or mentor me through the mazes of each industry,” Hickman said. “But once I got into this contractor role it really felt right. All that made me, make sense to myself. So I want help others find themselves while I do something that I love.”

Hickman along with a variety of PBC partners were featured in Crain’s Chicago Business’ 2021 Notable Women in Construction and Design. [Click the link to view the article](#)

Hickman (left of Mayor) joins Mayor Lori Lightfoot (center), the PBC and EC 115 stakeholders for the grand opening of the new state-of-the-art fire house.





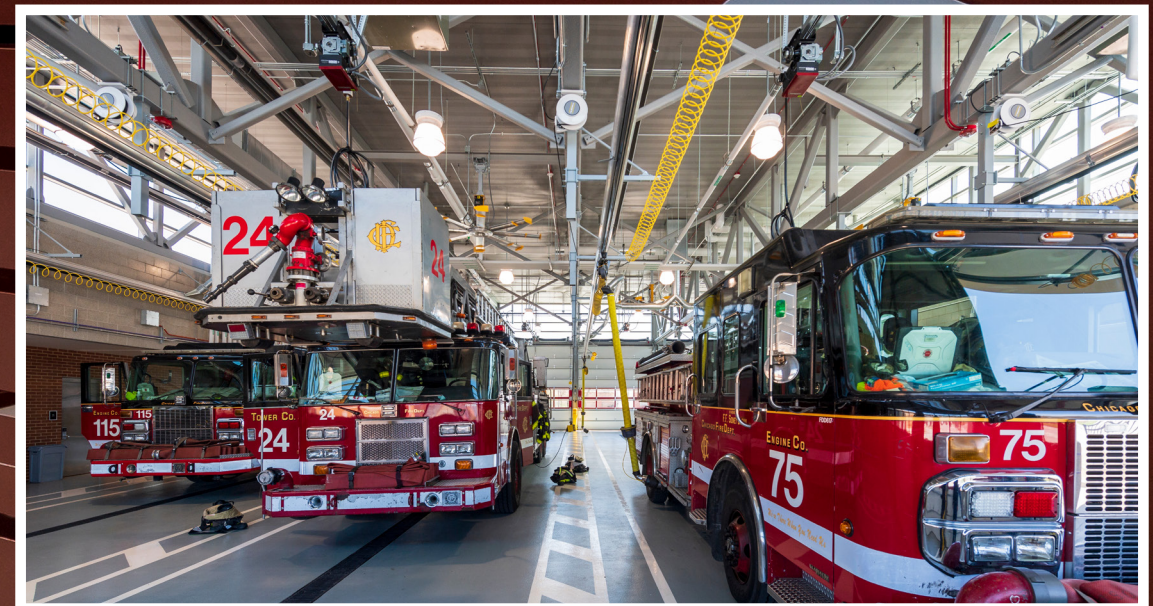
# Largest firehouse ever built in Chicago is open for operations on the Far South Side

Located at 1024 West 119th Street, the new state-of-the-art firehouse designated as Engine Company 115 is open for immediate operations. This structure is the largest firehouse ever constructed in the city proper at 27,000 square feet. Engine Company 115 will house 2 Engines, 1 Tower Ladder, 2 Advanced Life Support Ambulances, an OEMC communications monopole, an EMS Field Chief and a Deputy District Chief. This project represents a \$30 million investment in the West Pullman community, and is a prime example of how municipal projects can accomplish a two-fold goal of providing much needed jobs and economic vitality to a community, while simultaneously improving its safety and security with the end results.

“This project, which leverages an investment of \$30 million, has been an incredible economic driver during its construction and will significantly enhance CFD’s ability to protect our residents in West Pullman and the surrounding area,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “In addition to increasing the safety and security of far South Side residents and our entire city, this state-of-the-art facility will also give our first responders the resources they need to respond rapidly to an emergency and recharge afterward.”

The firehouse was designed by the Public Building Commission in consultation with the Chicago Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications. The equity focused construction process placed a special emphasis on employing minorities and women throughout the development process, and altogether created 72 construction jobs, with 30% of the contractors who assisted in the project being from minority owned businesses.

The PBC’s design and construction of Engine Company 115 was led by an African American design-build team - UJAMAA/Trice Joint Venture and Brooks Architecture. The team demonstrated the requisite experience and allowed many subcontractors or consultants to serve as “Prime” trade contractors or consultants.





To date, **17 African American owned design and construction firms** (which represent almost \$12M), **7 Latino owned construction firms** (\$1.7M) and **5 women-owned businesses** (\$560K) worked on bringing this project to completion.

In addition, **15 community residents**, in a variety of trades, added their expertise to the project. This diverse assembly of professionals highlight the true role of public development in making our city great.



“This much needed firehouse will increase the safety and security our neighborhoods on the far Southside with its location, apparatus compliment, and ability to enhance public safety communications while providing members with a local training center to enhance their life saving skills and education,” said recently retired Fire Commissioner Richard C Ford II

“Throughout its construction, this project served as an important economic booster to the 34th Ward and West Pullman community.” said 34th Ward Alderman Carrie Austin. “Now that Engine Company 115 is completed, this firehouse will serve as an important resource for keeping our vibrant community safe.”



The firehouse has many unique systems designed to enhance safety as well as improve operational efficiency including:

- Exhaust removal for each apparatus on the floor.
- Door position sensors to operate internal signals to let drivers know when safe to enter or exit to prevent door involved accidents and not allow a door to close while a vehicle is on the threshold.
- Strobe lights will actuate outside the firehouse to warn traffic on 119th as apparatus leave the firehouse on emergency runs and thereby improve response times.
- Motion sensors to turn off lights in areas not occupied.
- Use of windows placement to allow natural lighting with issues of direct sunlight.
- Two retention ponds to control water runoff and control loading of the city sewer system.
- ADA Compliant Privacy Room acoustically isolated from the rest of the house.
- A self-contained back-up power generation.



*“As the public developer who was responsible for the planning, design and construction of this facility, the Public Building Commission of Chicago took great pride in constructing this modernly designed space that embodies the ‘spirit of service’ of each man and woman who serves as a firefighter or first responder,”*

*“Everything from the four-bay apparatus room with hose drying tower and OEMC communication monopole, to the four station watch tower and communication hub, we wanted to provide these modern-day heroes with the necessary facility to fulfill their mission.”*

*Carina E. Sanchez,  
PBC’s Executive Director*



# Garfield Park Community Welcomes the Reopening of Legler Regional Library

Legler began as the first regional branch of the Chicago Public Library. The location was named for Henry E. Legler (1861-1917), chief librarian of Chicago Public Library from 1909 until his death in 1917.

Designated as a historic landmark building in 1987, the Public Building Commission of Chicago, along with our partners at Ratio Architects and F.H. Paschen, S.N Nielsen & Assoc, recently completed the critical renovations, important technological upgrades and infrastructure enhancements to transform the Legler Regional Library into a welcoming, flexible spaces that provide access to library services for residents of all ages while responding to the current and evolving needs of patrons.

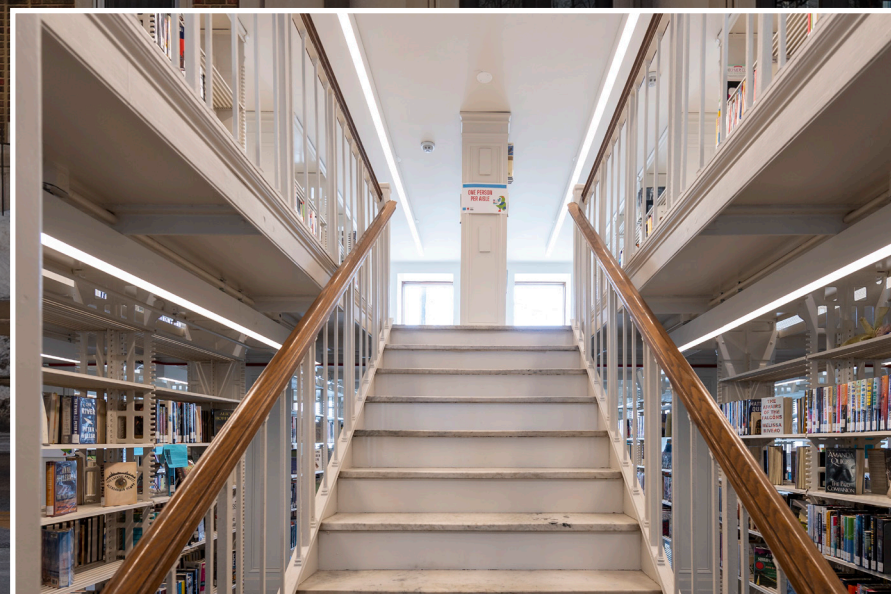
The new and improved 36,000-square-foot library now accommodates larger collections and features state-of-the-art technology, new community and study rooms, and accessibility improvements.

The PBC was able to do this without completely tearing down and rebuilding the facility. Due to a high-quality original design, we were able to make repairs to the building's interior by reconfiguring the existing floor plan and repurposing underutilized spaces. The PBC also upgraded the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and installed new furniture and equipment.

In addition, the PBC worked with a series of preservationist to reinstall Kerry James Marshall's monumental painting "Knowledge and Wonder."

The project employed Chicago residents that include 20 community residents. Additionally, the project employed minority and female journeyworkers, apprentices, and laborers.

The Legler Regional Library modernization and renovation project presented the PBC, along with our partners, the opportunity to develop a striking architectural, community specific design to serve as a hub for the Garfield Park community.





# Community Hire

# Testimonials



The PBC establishes city residency and community area hiring requirements with each of its construction projects. That means 50% of the total hours worked on a project must come from City of Chicago residents. Furthermore, at the outset of a project, the PBC defines the community area, usually the neighborhood and immediate surrounding areas. 7.5% of the total hours worked on a project must be worked by residents of that community area. These efforts ensure the PBC's commitment to economic sustainability is furthered with a workforce as diverse as the communities within Chicago.

For both the Legler Regional Library and Engine Company 115 (EC 115) projects, emphasis was placed on community hiring. EC 115 boasted 15 community hires while Legler employed 20 community residents in a variety of trades.

## Legler Regional Library Community Hires



**Name:** Cordera Tate  
**Profession:** Security  
**Time in Trade:** Four Years

*"The library is only a five-to-ten minute walk from my house. I can't wait until they are finished. I'm not the only one who is anxious to see the final product. People passing by keep asking me when are we going to be open. I keep telling them real soon. I have been to the library before, but I will definitely be back after completion. This library will serve the community well."*



**Name:** Reginald Blakney  
**Profession:** Laborer  
**Time in Trade:** Fifteen Years

*"I've been a union laborer since 2004 and its good to be a part of fixing a building in my own community. The library is only a five minute drive from my house but I never had a reason to come inside until I got this job. The first time I came in, I was very surprised. It's a clean, nice and beautiful building even during construction. Now that they are completely rehabbing the building, I guess that I will have to use my library card here more often."*

## Engine Company 115 Community Hires



**Name:** Eric Dowdy  
**Profession:** Brick Mason  
**Time in Trade:** Twenty-Nine Years

*"I live in the Roseland community and very happy that this building is being constructed here. I hope that they build something across the street on the vacant land and the firehouse is the start of putting more needed resources in this community."*



**Name:** Reggie Mosley  
**Profession:** Electrician Apprentice  
**Time in Trade:** Four Years

*"I originally thought that this project would upset a few people but now that I've been here for a while, I think that the firehouse will be good for the area. It was definitely needed. A new police station in this community should be next."*



**Name:** Shelton Moore  
**Profession:** Laborer  
**Time in Trade:** Fifteen Years

*"I live in the West Pullman community and was happy to hear from my union steward about this position in my own neighborhood. The firehouse is very convenient and needed. I hope this is the start of not just the city but the people in the community upgrading the area."*



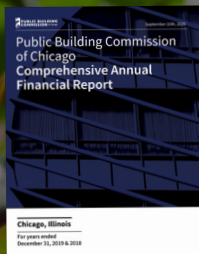
**Name:** Jacqueline House  
**Profession:** Brick Mason  
**Time in Trade:** Twenty-One Years

*"I was once in a fire and I know that the close proximity of the firehouse helped to save my life. That experience affected me in a great way. My grandmother lives on west 119th street and this firehouse being so close makes me feel better about her safety and well-being."*





# PBC Received Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting



Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Public Building Commission of Chicago for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2019. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

# PBC’s Englewood STEM High School Project receives New Buildings Award



Delivered in time for the start of the 2019 academic year, PBC’s Englewood STEM High School project was featured in the Spring 2021 Learning By Design Magazine Architectural Awards Showcase. The Englewood STEM High School was published in the print version of the magazine and distributed to 50,000 educators and design professionals across the country. The Englewood STEM High School was also featured in the publication’s e-magazine and online project gallery.

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