



# Trades and Technology Centre (TTC) – Parkland College

by ROBIN BRUNET

Creating a new trades and technology centre in Saskatchewan seems easy, considering the numerous examples of prairies-style facilities dominating the landscape. Simply use metal cladding, make red and green the predominant colour scheme, and Bob's your uncle.

But easy and predictable is exactly what Parkland College, the owners of the College's new \$18.5-million Trades and Technology Centre (TTC), were determined to avoid. "It wouldn't have made sense," says Kurt Dietrich, partner of Regina-based A+K Architects (the joint venture organization of Alton Tangedal Architect Ltd. and Kreate Architecture and Design Ltd.) "For one thing, Parkland is home to many foreign exchange students, and there's a thriving multicultural feel to the campus. So we worked closely with Parkland administration and other stakeholders to determine what the new facility should look like," Dietrich explains.

In terms of function, the TTC contains multi-purpose shops, students'

area, classrooms and other teaching areas in 29,000 square feet of space; the facility will train students in a variety of fields, such as mechanics, power engineering and welding.

The motivation for developing the Centre was simple, and pressing. Saskatchewan is experiencing remarkable growth that is translating into an abundance of employment opportunities, many of which are in the skilled trades; the Parkland project represents a significant expansion of services and program delivery options that previously weren't available in the region due to a lack of suitable trades training space. "Throughout our fundraising campaign, we underscored that colleges build communities and communities build colleges," says Parkland president Dwayne Reeve. "This building is a key part of our vision for a stronger Saskatchewan and more opportunities for the people of the Parkland region."

From the outset, the project received strong regional support. In September of 2012, the City of Yorkton donated

20 acres of land for the TTC valued at \$3.48 million. Then, in October of 2013, Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall announced \$10 million in funding to support the Centre's construction; by this time, \$5 million had been raised from local and international businesses/community groups, the planning phase was complete, the design was well underway and tendering proceeded the following month.

Dietrich says the project was very much a case of design following function, seeing as how the two main components of the Centre were a 10,000-square-foot multi-trades shop (for heavy equipment repair and welding) and a power engineering lab. "Early on it was decided to have these two components on either end of the overall facility, acting as anchors on a north-south longitudinal plane," he says. "However, Parkland was very open minded about how the facility would look and what its detailing would be, so collaborating with the institution turned out to be a productive and pleasant experience."

Dietrich adds that by locating classrooms and administrative functions in the middle, "we created a learning facility in which students of the shop and the engineering lab would easily mingle, compared to other such facilities where they're pretty much segregated. Our goal to integrate them was helped along by the design of our classrooms, which have folding walls."

Instead of a prairies' ambience, which usually imparts a feeling of impermanence due to the undisguised and extensive use of metal sheeting, "we wanted the exact opposite; a facility that looked solid and permanent," says Dietrich. "We also didn't want the 10,000-square-foot shop to dominate the rest of the structure, so we considered a wide variety of forms and finishes."

One solution was to use cast bush hammered concrete to provide a stone-like appearance along the lower level of the facility; this gave the metal cladding of the upper levels a distinctly urban appeal normally found in upscale business park structures. A grand entrance



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY A+K ARCHITECTS

**LOCATION**  
273 Dracup Avenue, Yorkton, Saskatchewan

**OWNER/DEVELOPER**  
Parkland College

**PROJECT MANAGER**  
MHPM Project Managers Inc.

**ARCHITECT**  
A+K Architects

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**  
Logan Stevens Construction

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**  
BBK Structural Engineers

**MECHANICAL ENGINEER**  
MacPherson Engineering Inc.

**ELECTRICAL ENGINEER**  
Alfa Engineering Ltd.

**TOTAL SIZE**  
29,000 square feet

**TOTAL COST**  
\$18.5 million



with a dropoff turnaround was created at the centre of the facility, and an extended canopy not only offset the large scale of the shop but augmented a naturally lit rotunda and atrium. "These elements went a long way in giving the facility a human scale," says Dietrich.

The design also provided for in-floor heating and cooling throughout the facility. "Normally, air conditioning drives costs through the roof for a building of this size," says Dietrich, adding that value engineering was undertaken at every opportunity to make the TTC

a cost-effective proposal for Parkland. "Also, we designed the south wing with its main corridor to accommodate an entirely new wing, if and when the need arises in the future."

Because the site most recently had been used as a snow and construction dump and at one time had accommodated a tannery, extensive cleanup was undertaken in April of 2014. "We bulldozed up to 60 yards of concrete chunks," says Ryan McMorris, project manager for Logan Stevens Construction. "After that, we had to

construct a 100-ton bridge in order to access the area over a storm drainage channel. And after that, in July, came four inches of rain and flooding, which required us to spend a week pumping out our excavated site."

Despite these setbacks and chronic labour shortages throughout Saskatchewan, construction of TTC proceeded smoothly, including the installation of the huge airplane hanger door and a sectional overhead door in the shop. "At peak we had about 50 people on the site," says McMorris.

As the completed TTC is being prepped for its first wave of students in September, Dietrich says of the project: "The final result is beautiful and functional, and we benefitted enormously from Parkland's clear vision of what it requires for its students."

To which McMorris adds: "The building comes along just at the right time: it's somewhat ironic that it will help eliminate skilled labour shortages, which was one of the challenges we had to overcome when we got the contract to build the facility." **A**