

## New EGR Public Works building ready months ahead of schedule

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By **Jan Holst | Advance Newspapers**

East Grand Rapids officials and the 16 employees that will work from the facility are so excited about their new digs, it has been renamed the Public Works Complex.

The \$1.22 million in renovations at the municipal garage are a bit below budget and way ahead of schedule. Original plans called for a completion date of June 2011, but city maintenance workers are getting ready to move into the complex just after the first of the year.

Moving the staff into temporary quarters (a trailer) on site and vehicles outside allowed the construction phase to move much more quickly than originally planned, said project manager Brandon Hartel, of Wolverine Building Group. "They wanted us to do one side and then they would move into it and then we would do the next portion," he said. "It was set up as a year-long project, but this way, we were able to get it done in four months."

The garage portion of the complex remains much the same as the original garage, which houses approximately 29 city maintenance vehicles, such as snowplows, sweepers, and dump trucks.

"It is the same footprint, but we took it all the way back to the steel," said Hartel, who has been involved in the project since designing began nearly a year ago. "It was old, greasy, and dark; now it is bright white and clean."

Contractors put on a new roof, fire protection, lighting, and heating and cooling. The garage portion will continue to house the vehicles, and the former office space was converted to a wood shop and parts department for vehicle maintenance.

The new 6,000-square-foot addition includes a service area, complete with vehicle lifts. City staff maintains all EGR vehicles, including those used by public safety. An upper level was added in the service area for additional storage. "The Parks and Recreation Department will share the facility, and they need storage space for things such as cones, barricades, and barrels," said Hartel.



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City vehicles are moving back inside. Pictured is the recently renovated garage now known as the Public Works Complex.

kitchen.

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Project manager Brandon Hartel shows off one of the new office spaces in the renovated Public Works Complex.

Hartel said the city and Wolverine were very successful in "merging the old and the new."

Although the city had been putting away money for the project for at least the last five years, they opted for renovating the streets and utilities building instead of constructing a completely new facility, said City Manager Brian Donovan.

In addition to the new service area, the new portion of the complex has offices, a conference room that will double as a sleeping room for third-shift employees, two restroom facilities with lockers and showers, and an employee break room with full