

The Daily Transcript[®]

Established 1882

www.sdtranscript.com

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

El Centro Library honored with project of year award



Photo by Stephen Whalen Photography

The El Centro Library was designed by Ferguson Pape Baldwin Architects with work from Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering.

Daily Transcript Staff Report

The local chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) recently recognized the El Centro Library with its project of the year award.

The library earned the top honor in the "structures" category for projects in the \$6 million-\$25 million range. The APWA awards program recognizes the design and construction of public works projects and staff that improve the San Diego County and Imperial County communities.

"The new El Centro Library has been a wonderful addition to our city, and we are already seeing the positive impact it has had on the quality of life in our community," El Centro Mayor Martha Cardenas-Singh said in a statement. "It is one of our most valued assets for community members to learn, grow, and discover."

The library project was engineered by Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering and designed by Ferguson Pape Baldwin Architects.

The previous El Centro library was damaged by the 7.2 Easter Earthquake that struck Baja California on April 4, 2010, and the building was demolished in 2016.

The new \$17 million library was funded by Measure P that voters passed in November 2016.

The 19,811-square-foot facility, which opened Nov. 10, 2022, features an expansive lobby, light-filled community room, computer area, study rooms, Friends of the Library bookstore, outdoor patios, and reading areas for children, teens, and adults.

"This project was a collaborative effort with the city of El Centro, Ferguson Pape Baldwin Architects, Spurlock Landscape Architects, and numerous other partners," said Matt Semic, president and principal of Latitude 33. "Our team was highly enthusiastic about the El Centro Library from its inception. Now upon completion, it's very rewarding to see the project embraced by the El Centro community and recognized by the APWA."

Another Latitude 33 project, the Youth Transition Campus (YTC) for the County of San Diego, earned an APWA honor award in the "structures" category for projects in the \$26 million-\$75 million range. The 140,000-square-foot YTC replaces the 1950s-era Juvenile Detention Facility.

The design emulates a residential campus with a secure environment, including recreational spaces, educational and vocational facilities, and new housing accommodations for up to 96 youth residents.

The YTC's programming focuses on providing supportive, trauma-informed services to help rehabilitate youth and prepare them to reintegrate back into the community.

With two of its projects recognized by the APWA, Latitude 33 has exhibited excellence in engineering public works developments.

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