

THE TRIBUNE

Ames Tribune > Business

Sauer-Danfoss: Addition brings kitchen, dining, office space to Ames building

By Bob Zientara, Staff Writer

Published: Wednesday, April 1, 2009 4:26 PM CDT

A place to eat, expanded office space and a way to encourage impromptu staff meetings are among the reasons behind a 34,000 square-foot addition to the Ames Sauer-Danfoss building.

Opened during fall 2008, the addition includes a 6,981-square-foot, full-service kitchen, a nearly 10,000-square-foot, first floor commons, and a nearly 17,000-square-foot second floor office area, according to Gary Erickson, the company's facilities manager.

The upper levels are tied together with curved walls that start in the existing space and end in the new space, giving a feeling of unity, he said.

Upper floor offices include engineering, marketing, finance, accounts payable and taxes.

"Before this was done, we never had a full-service kitchen before," he said.

"The addition doubled the capacity of the old lunch room, which was absorbed by our manufacturing area.

"We wanted the commons to be a destination not just for meals but for impromptu meetings among the staff.

"We can seat 168 people comfortably, and, if necessary, we can go up to 190."

The design selected by Sauer-Danfoss and built by Story Construction called for no dropped ceilings and bolder colors. Windows were a big theme. Floor-to-ceiling glass on the north side of the building floods both levels with ambient light.

Employees who moved into the new offices were mostly housed in the existing building and another office complex on the shop floor, which was eventually absorbed to create more manufacturing space, Erickson said.

Employees formed seven committees that worked on different aspects of the project. Committees focused on design, food service, facilities and safety, locker room, seating and moving, communications and conference rooms.

Matt Bendler, human resources for the Americas region at the Ames Sauer-Danfoss operation, said the company has enjoyed "our 35-plus year partnership with the Ames community."

A view toward future business success "is what led us to invest millions of dollars in our Ames operations," he added.

The new addition became operational at about the time that the U.S. economy began to undergo stress, and Sauer-Danfoss experienced the same issues, according to Bendler.

"We are experiencing downturns and layoffs that are truly historic," he said. "However, we remain optimistic and hopeful about our long-term future, and remain committed to our employees and our community."

Bob Zientara can be reached

at (515) 663-6961, or rzientara@amestrib.com.

Copyright © 2009 - Ames Tribune

[\[x\] Close Window](#)