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News Release

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University of Michigan's Michigan Memorial Phoenix Laboratory Phase 2 Renovation and Addition Completed

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Jan. 9, 2014 – Phase 2 of the renovation of the Michigan Memorial Phoenix Laboratory (MMPL) – originally built in 1955 as a living memorial to honor the men and women of the University of Michigan community who lost their lives in World War II service – is now complete. In addition to a renovation of the existing building's second level as research laboratories, Phase 2 also included the design and construction of a new building addition that houses the University of Michigan Energy Institute (UMEI).

Architecture and planning firm Lord Aeck Sargent (LAS) designed the $11.1 million renovation and addition to the MMPL, which is located on the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor north campus. The firm earlier served as architect for Phase 1, which included the renovation of MMPL's third level, an upgrade of the entire building's mechanical and electrical infrastructure, restoration of the masonry exterior and replacement of the exterior windows.

The university's decision to renovate the three-level MMPL came about after the adjacent Ford Nuclear Reactor, the world's first nuclear reactor used for research into the beneficial potential for atomic

energy, ceased operation a decade ago. The university decommissioned it in order to renovate MMPL for a broader range of energy research.

To renovate MMPL, which is on a sloping site with the first level below grade on the west side fronting the drive and above grade on the east side, the entire existing 9,900-square-foot second level was gutted, and the existing entry at the south was eliminated. The new program includes office space and two large chemistry labs – one 2,108 square feet and the other 1,082 square feet. Both labs are equipped with overhead service carriers and mobile benches. About 80 percent of the cabinetry and work surfaces also are mobile. The labs' flexibility allows them to be reconfigured to accommodate changes in the nature of research being conducted.

"Programmatically, these chemistry labs complement the third level renovation we designed a few years ago," said Robert Hewer, LAS project manager. He noted that the larger of the two second level labs is fume hood-intensive, with 12 fume hoods. The other lab has two.

Because MMPL's exterior is almost 100 percent glazed, the labs are infused with an abundance of natural light.

"One of our biggest challenges during the renovation was the installation of rare gases and other delivery systems to the labs," said Terry Sargent, LAS principal designer for Phase 2. "As a result, there was a great deal of careful coordination between architect and contractor during design and installation."

In addition to the labs, the second level renovation also includes offices for principal research investigators and postdoctoral research scholars.

An east-west corridor at the south end of the second level joins it to the ground level of the new addition, which at that connecting point includes the new main entryway, a monumental stair, two offices and two restrooms. The corridor and area around the stair are lined with exhibits describing the history of the now decommissioned Ford Nuclear Reactor and the UMEI (formerly called the Michigan Memorial Phoenix Energy Institute).

LEED Gold Certified Addition houses University of Michigan Energy Institute

The MMPL's 10,161-square-foot addition is the new home of the UMEI, which develops, coordinates and promotes multidisciplinary energy research and education at the university. Previously, the Energy Institute was housed in temporary administrative offices located elsewhere on the North Campus Research Complex. The addition has been LEED gold certified by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The addition, which is rounded in front and faces the street, draws attention to the original building. It is a two-story exposed steel structure clad with matching red brick and glass on the ground floor and a glass curtain wall wrapped around the upper floor's east, south and west façades. The ground floor is shaded by the overhang of the upper floor where the upper floor is shaded by a horizontal fritted glass sunscreen.

In addition to the exhibit space, the addition's ground level comprises three conference rooms, support spaces and a collaborative gathering space used by the university's College of Engineering. The lobby features a sundial that tells the solar time of day in Ann Arbor. One can delineate the time difference to other important cities throughout the globe.

Underneath the addition's ground floor level, LAS designed an accessible level that houses the chilled beam mechanical system as well as the electrical, data and plumbing systems.

The addition's second level joins with the original building's third level. Its program includes 14 offices for principal investigators of the UMEI, an executive conference room and a smaller meeting space.

"The executive conference room, with panoramic views, overlooks the street to the south, and to the east is one of the last great European plane trees on the University's North Campus," Sargent said. Added Rick Reichman, associate university architect, who managed the project's design phase, "It was very important that LAS site the MMPL addition correctly so as not to disturb the roots of the tree. They also had to be just as careful in designing the addition's foundation system in order to avoid all of the underground water, sewer, sanitary and high voltage utility lines."

Phase 2 funding came from a variety of sources including the University of Michigan's College of Engineering, university investment proceeds and the Office of the Vice President for Research.

The project team
The Michigan Memorial Phoenix Laboratory Building project team included:

- Lord Aeck Sargent (Ann Arbor, Mich.) – architect
- Robert Darvas Associates (Ann Arbor, Mich.) – structural engineer
- Peter Basso Associates (Ann Arbor, Mich. office) – MEP/FP engineers
- Midwestern Consulting (Ann Arbor, Mich.) – civil engineer
- Van Sickle & Rolleri (Medford, NJ) – exhibit consultant
- De Maria Building Co. (Novi, Mich.), general contractor

About Lord Aeck Sargent
Lord, Aeck & Sargent Inc. – dba Lord Aeck Sargent – is an award-winning architectural and planning firm serving clients in academic, historic preservation, scientific, arts and cultural, multi-family housing and mixed-use, and urban design and planning markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. In 2007, Lord Aeck Sargent was one of the first architecture firms to adopt The 2030 Challenge, an initiative whose ultimate goal is the design of carbon-neutral buildings, or buildings that use no fossil-fuel greenhouse gas-emitting energy to operate, by the year 2030. Lord Aeck Sargent is also calling for increased transparency in the building products industry by urging manufacturers to disclose the chemical components of their products utilizing the Health Product Declaration,™ an industry standard format for conveying details about product content and associated health information, or Declare, the "nutrition label" for building products launched by the International Living Future Institute.

Lord Aeck Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Lexington, Kentucky. For more information, visit the firm at www.lordaecksargent.com.

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