

KANSAS CITY REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY 2010



A June 2001 study called the “Interact Report” estimated the cost of a new police academy facility at \$18,443,712. With some additional features added, an estimated cost for a new Regional Police Academy of \$19,365,898 was shared with the general public prior to the 2002 Public Safety Sales Tax election. In 2005, construction began on the new Kansas City Regional Police Academy, with a final cost of \$40,454,116. This document will describe the capabilities and direction of our Kansas City Regional Police Academy, as well as explain the disparity between the Interact Report’s estimated cost in 2001 and the final cost of the facility in 2007.

The Regional Police Academy of the Past

For years the Regional Police Academy used local Community Colleges to house its training programs. These facilities were not designed for police academy training, and were lacking in space, privacy, and equipment necessary to properly train police officers.

In May of 1994 the Regional Police Academy was moved to 1328 Agnes, an industrial building the police department had occupied since 1983. Portions of the building had been built in the 1940’s with other portions added in the 1960’s. It had belonged to Wilcox Electric before being used as a police department facility. The 1994 Police Academy was designed with two large classrooms, a physical training area, an in-service training room, locker facilities, shower, weight room, firearms training simulator and administrative offices. This facility was much more conducive to the proper training of police officers. But, with the ever changing dynamics of modern policing, the Regional Police Academy quickly outgrew the 17,200 square foot facility at 1328 Agnes and with the approval of voters of the Public Safety Sales Tax in in April of 2002 the planning for a new “ground-up” facility began.



Our New Regional Police Academy

The first ever constructed specific training academy for the Kansas City Missouri Police Department broke ground in August of 2005 in the Northland at 6885 N.E. Pleasant Valley Road. This state of the art 123,000 square foot facility provides more training opportunities with a 500 seat auditorium, six classrooms, physical training facilities, a 30 lane indoor pistol range, a driving track and situational building. With additional amenities such as an outdoor rifle range along with an indoor and outdoor running track, this campus atmosphere facility is premier in meeting the demands of today's police officer basic and continuing educational training. With the opening of the facility in July of 2007, many of the departments training facilities were incorporated into an atmosphere where law enforcement officers and agencies from throughout the region can obtain the highest quality training experience.



CAPABILITIES AND DIRECTION

Our police academy is truly a Regional Police Academy. Most of police agencies on the Missouri side of our Metropolitan area send their police officer through our academy, and some of the agencies on the Kansas side as well. Our academy offers 1100 hours of police training for new recruits...nearly double the state requirement of 600 hours. Training is also offered to the public at our academy, and it is the location of our graduation, promotion, retirement, and ring ceremonies. Outside seminars and training is brought in to provide more training opportunities for our employees and law enforcement employees from around our region. Our new academy is an appropriate facility to house a state-of-the-art Regional Police Academy, unlike the 17, 200 square feet of converted industrial space our academy occupied from 1994 to 2007.

Recruit Training

At our old academy at 1328 Agnes, our recruit training capability was limited. In order to run two academy classes, they often had to run a daytime academy and an evening academy. With the new Regional Police Academy they can run two daytime academy classes at one time. While the optimal recruit class size is from 30 to 40 recruits, they have the capability to train two classes of 60 recruits each without seriously impacting the other training programs, activities, and uses of the facility.



Prior to the construction of the new Regional Police Academy, police officers only received one day of driving training in the academy, and then no further training for the rest of their career. This one day of training was conducted in a large off-site commercial parking lot, using orange cones to establish the course. The new academy features an on-site modern driver's training range, better replicating the actual driving conditions an officer will encounter on the street. Continuing driver's training for existing officers is now being conducted on a regular basis. This is a capability we've never had before.

Before the new Regional Police Academy, our shooting range was an off-site outdoor range, with its training schedule dictated by the time of day and weather. Training at the outdoor range was conducted in a double-wide trailer. The new academy now features an on-site indoor range, with training schedules completely unaffected by time of day and weather conditions. And it features a much needed modern classroom large enough to facilitate both recruit classes and inservice training.

Across the board, our new facilities meet the needs of modern police training in a way impossible to imagine at the old 1328 Agnes facility.



Police Events

The new Regional Police Academy has an auditorium where Police Academy graduations, promotion and ring ceremonies, large presentations, and seminars are held. This is a capability we have not had before, forcing us to rent auditoriums at schools and civic buildings. This routinely cost the police department \$1400 for each event. In addition, having our own auditorium for these events, outfitted with the exact equipment we need, is a more appropriate and effective venue.

Seminars and Partnerships

The Regional Police Academy is currently working with Benedictine College on a plan for them to use our facilities there to offer several programs that would have been inconceivable at our previous academy building. While the plan has not been finalized yet, here are some of its potential features:



- Benedictine College would offer weekend classes at the academy towards a Master's Degree in Public Safety Leadership.
- Benedictine College would award college credits to recruits that are attending our police academy. These credits would be on their official college transcript, and would allow them to easily continue their education at Benedictine College or another reputable school.
- Benedictine College would award college credits to those police department employees attending Leadership Academy courses at the Academy.
- Benedictine College would make scholarship opportunities available to police department employees.

This potential partnership with Benedictine College was made possible by amount of space and the quality of the facilities at the new Regional Police Academy.

Our Regional Police Academy also partners with not-for-profits, and allow them to use our facilities for free. For instance, the Special Olympics is held on the academy's track and field.

Public Programs

The Regional Police Academy regularly holds a Citizens Police Academy. This 10-week course takes place every Spring and Fall. Participants also take field trips to places like the Helicopter and Canine Units, Bomb and Arson Unit and the Kansas City Regional Crime Laboratory. Experienced police officers and instructors offer briefings, demonstrations, and engage in frank discussions about police operations with class participants. The impression given to



citizens when they attend the Citizens Police Academy in our new facility, is completely different than the impression given at the 1328 Agnes Building.



The Regional Police Academy is offering to the general public Women's Self Defense and Safety Seminars. The focus of this training is on the importance of awareness, prevention, street-wise precaution and most importantly, self defense. This training involves both lecture and hands-on activities, for which our academy facilities are a perfect fit. Our old academy, a converted industrial building, was not appropriate in both size and quality for bringing the general public in for such training.

Responsible Management of the Facility

For years the Kansas City Missouri Police Department allowed other agencies to train at the Regional Police Academy for little or no cost. In effect we were subsidizing the training of many of the area police departments. With the construction of the new Regional Police Academy, we are moving toward an Enterprise Services System, where area police departments are asked to help support the maintenance and operation of our academy by paying for their use of the facilities for training. Our Police Academy has an elite status in the region, and finally our facilities match that elite status.

Asking area departments to pay for their use of the shooting range, the driving track, our classrooms and facilities is a cost effective and responsible way of supporting its operations. In addition, the size and quality of the facility allows the academy staff to draw in bigger and better training and seminar opportunities, that other police agencies can register and pay to attend.

REASONS FOR COST DISPARITY

As stated at the beginning of this document, the 2001 Interact Report estimated the cost of a new police academy facility at \$18,443,712. An estimated cost for a new Regional Police Academy of \$19,365,898 was shared with the general public prior to the 2002 Public Safety Sales Tax election. The new Regional Police Academy, built from 2005 to 2007 had a final cost of \$40,454,116. There are clear and unavoidable reasons for the disparity between the Interact Report's cost estimates and the final cost of the facility. The following explains some of those reasons.

Inflation and Steel Costs

The Interact Report's estimate of \$18,443,712 was based on land, design, and construction prices from 2001. The estimate of \$19,365,898 shared with the public prior to the Public Safety Sales Tax election was based on 2002 prices. The fact the Academy was built between 2005 and 2007, means that there will be a natural increase in the final cost of the project based on inflation. In addition, in the post-9/11 world steel prices rose dramatically, having a dramatic effect on construction costs.



According to City Architect Eric Bosch, from 2002 to 2006, inflation rose 30.7%, and from 2002 to 2008, construction inflation rose 46.7%. Just based on 30.7% inflation, the Regional Police Academy's cost would have risen to \$25,311,229.

Changing Needs

Over time, the training needs of the police department change. The Interact Report was written in 2001, and was based on our training activities at that time. These activities were severely limited by the size and quality of our facilities at that time. Construction began on the Regional Police Academy in 2005. In the intervening four years, our training needs had evolved and advanced, and an attempt was made to build a modern facility that would serve our needs in the future...and not just our 2005 needs. This goal of preparing for the future is now paying off in 2010, as the uses of the Regional Police Academy campus has extended well beyond our needs just a few years ago.

These changing needs resulted in a much larger building, out-buildings, and additional parking. One strong illustration of the insufficiency of the 2001 Interact Report's needs assessment, is the fact it lists a need for 100 parking spaces. Our Regional Police Academy was built with 230 parking spaces, and there are times the Academy is so busy, that this parking lot overflows into the streets.

Another illustration of the insufficiency of the 2001 Interact Report's needs assessment, is the number of classrooms and their size. It estimates a need for one 15-student classroom, four 40-student classrooms, and one 60-student "dirty classroom" for instruction in hands-on skills such as crime-scene processing. **This 2001 estimate would provide 175 traditional classroom seats and 60 "dirty" classroom seats.** Quite often our academy classes have more than 40 officers and we provide training at



the academy that more than 40 students attend. The 2001 needs assessment has no traditional classroom that can hold more than 40 students, falling well short of our needs. The Regional Police Academy was actually built with one 37-student classroom, two 40-student classrooms, two 60-student classrooms, and one 80-student classroom. **The Regional Police Academy has 317 traditional classroom seats, which more accurately meets our actual needs.**

The 2001 Interact Report estimated a need for a computer lab for 16 students. With the increasing role of technology, especially computer technology, in police training, the new Regional Police Academy required a computer lab for 32 students. This was a large but necessary increase in costs.



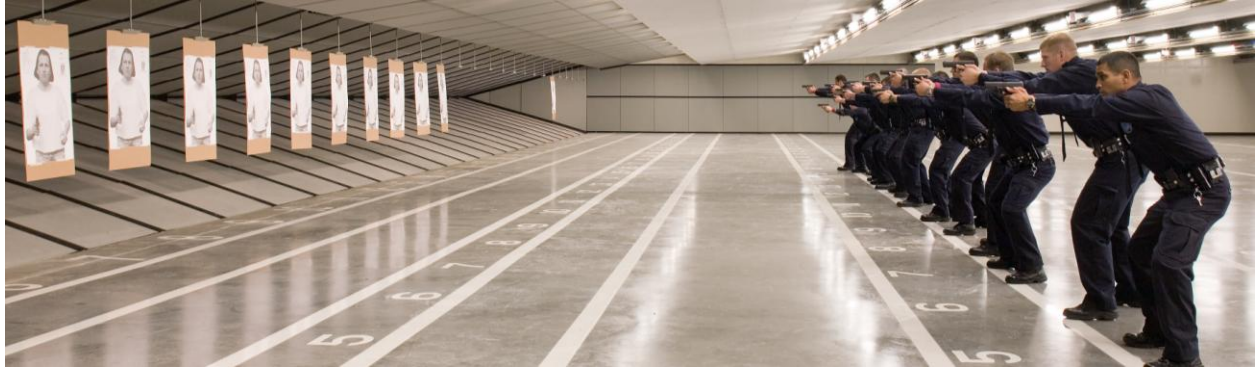
The academy staff area, for offices, work areas, etc. was also increased in size. The 2001 Interact Report's estimation of how much space our academy staff would need was insufficient to meet our actual needs.

The 2001 Estimate Did Not Include All of the Costs

The 2001 Interact Report listed several items in its needs assessment to which it did not assign any cost. The central mechanical system, a running track and field, an obstacle course, and trash and recycling functions were all listed, but not included in their 2001 cost estimate. The central mechanical system is an especially expensive item to simply not include in the estimated costs of building a new Regional Police Academy, but all of the items further contributed to the disparity between the estimated and final costs for the facility.

The Indoor Firing Range in a Separate Building

The Interact Report had an indoor firing range as part of the academy building. Once planning and design began on the Regional Police Academy, the indoor firing range was moved to a separate building for several reasons. One reason was the potential for lead contamination. The indoor firing range has a series of safeguards in place to prevent an environmental hazard, including a specialized ventilation system, a floor-based lead mitigation system, and other necessities of operating an indoor firing range.



The size of the firing range was nearly doubled from the 2001 Interact Report's needs assessment, based on the actual size we needed for academy classes, inservice training classes, etc. With a potential for lead contamination and the increased size of the firing range, it made sense to build the indoor firing range and classrooms as a separate building. Anytime you build a separate building, it increases costs.

The indoor firing range is another area where increased steel costs had a large impact on our final costs to build the Regional Police Academy. The firing range target equipment doubled in price by the time the academy was built.

Road Improvement Costs

The 2001 Interact Report did not account for the cost of road improvements. The land on which the new Regional Police Academy was built was in an undeveloped area, with two lane roads and a 4-way stop at the nearest intersection. In order to support the traffic needs of the site, the city worked with the Police Department to widen the roads, improve the intersection, and build an additional road. The Police Department paid for these road improvements, and this was a site-driven cost not accounted for in the 2001 estimates.



While the final cost of the 2005-2007 construction of the Regional Police Academy was higher than the 2001 Interact Report cost estimates, there are clear and necessary reasons for this disparity. The Regional Police Academy is a state-of-the-art facility that meets the training needs of our police department and police departments in our region.