

POLICE

Case Study

MAKING PUBLIC SAFETY A CENTRAL FOCUS

Mishawaka Police Department | Mishawaka, Indiana



THE CHALLENGE

Establishing A New Ceiling for Growth

Located in northern Indiana, the city of Mishawaka found itself experiencing consistent growth in population year-over-year. With most communities seeing marked growth in population, city officials were also facing a demand for increased public services and space in which to offer them. Upon reviewing their options, they encountered a 92,000-SF building that had come available in the heart of the city – an opportunity that, for the city's mayor, turned out to be too good to pass up.

Knowing they would have to put in several million dollars to update the police department's aging building, Mayor Wood and city officials realized they could include the police into the available building's space (in addition to its city hall and utility business office) and it all started to make perfect sense. After being marketed nationally in hopes of attracting a large commercial presence to the city without any interest, a proposal was drafted to convert the centrally located building into a more user-friendly and welcoming resource for residents to utilize the city's services.



“ We (first) marketed it to see if anyone had interest nationally, we didn't get any interest. Then we started thinking, 'It's too big for us, but (then again) maybe it's not.' ”

– Mayor Dave Wood, Mishawaka

“ All officers are assigned a locker in the main locker rooms. These typically are used to store additional uniforms (in case one gets soiled during shift, or simply for storage), exercise/workout clothes for use of the in-station exercise facility, and storage of other gear that may not fit or be practical in a patrol vehicle. ”

– Chief Arendt, Mishawaka PD

Where They Came From

The Mishawaka Police Department employs individuals for uniformed roles ranging from road patrol to street crimes, neighborhood enforcement, K-9 patrol, and S.W.A.T., in addition to civilian positions including dispatch, records, crossing guard, grant specialist, chaplain, and more – each requiring a specific set of tools to perform at their best.

Prior to their move, the police department was housed in a concrete block building featuring an inefficient mix of stationary file cabinets with decades of records and an evidence bay that was overflowing with plastic tubs on static shelves. Additionally, the department’s locker rooms were far outdated, and their storage systems could not accommodate the varying sizes of staff members, nor safely store the equipment required to keep them prepared and protected at a moment’s notice. An environment that could leave even the most well-trained officer at a disadvantage.



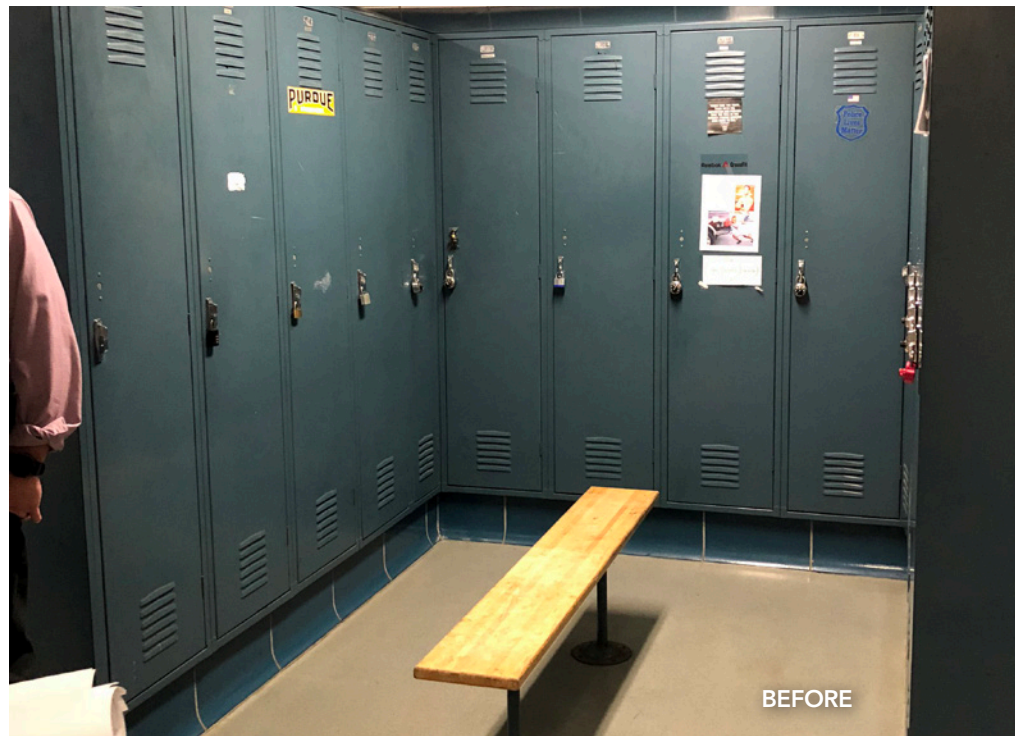


Located in the heart of Mishawaka and on a main thoroughfare of the city, work began to move three of its valuable services – City Hall, Utilities Business Office, and the Police Department – from their outdated buildings into a newly redesigned and central location for employees and residents to thrive.

While the members of the Police Department are experts in utilizing the skills and tools provided in their training, they acknowledge that choosing the solutions necessary to properly store and preserve them is out of their specialty. As such, they looked to those with more experience in the matter, namely their local Spacesaver representatives and the expert consultants with whom they partner.



“Everybody has their talents. During the design and planning phase, police department members were having an issue with conceptualizing the plans for the new, more modern space. Being able to read about, and in some instances experience firsthand, similar installations proved invaluable for helping city officials and police department heads to better understand the layout and its intrinsic value and functionality. – Richard W. Podrasky, Alliance Architects”



Building Confidence, Support, and Longevity

A challenging environment can shake the strongest of confidence. In situations like those that public safety personnel encounter, this can be the difference in maintaining physical and mental health. However, confidence breeds confidence, and whether it's from a guardian, coach, or another influential figure, providing an individual with the assurance they are supported can help them perform at the highest level. The same can be said about the tools offered to facilitate this next-level performance.

Such was the case for the Mishawaka Police Force, whose headquarters was doing the job of housing their personnel but was not helping to retain existing officers, nor attract new ones. From crowded evidence storage to mismatched locker offerings, inefficient weapons, gear, and records storage, they were in need of an upgrade in order to more confidently carry out their mission and best serve their community.

To gain a better idea of what solutions would be best for their new home, administrators within the city and Police Department began assessing the efficiency of their current systems and the impact of their future needs. Knowing that co-locating with two other services would make conserving space a major consideration, PD members searched for inspiration from completed projects that addressed needs similar to their own. Let's take a look at their findings, and which solutions were chosen to optimize their operations.

LOCKER ROOM STORAGE



BEFORE

THE CHALLENGE

Locker Room Condition: Thrown together, banged up lockers mirroring your typical high school book lockers.

THE SOLUTION

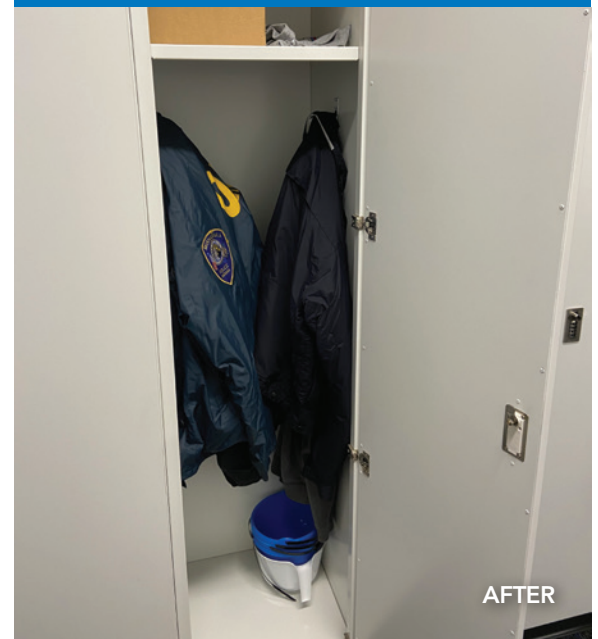
Customized personal storage lockers with various accessories designed to accommodate each officer's personal and professional storage needs, as well as boost department morale, preparedness, and functionality.

LOCKER ROOM STORAGE

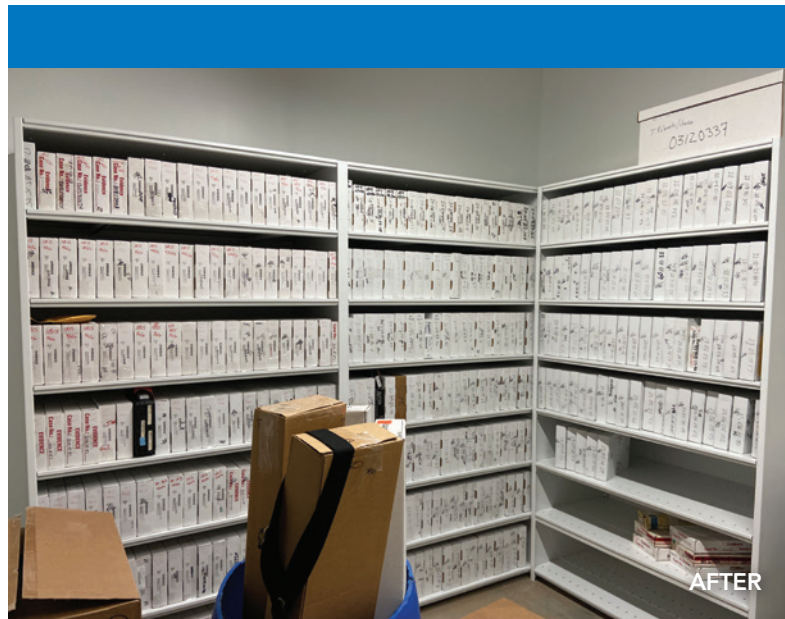


“ The locker room lockers and the detective bureau lockers have benefited all employees, allowing them to store personal items and work equipment. Detectives use the space for uniform changes to adapt to the type of work they may be doing a particular day. For example, a detective typically may wear a suit for giving testimony, but if that testimony does not last all day, they can change into more practical clothing for daily assignments. ”

– Chief Arendt



EVIDENCE STORAGE



THE CHALLENGE

No crime is the same and neither is the evidence used to solve and prosecute it. This meant that special storage requirements for items like drugs, guns, and valuables needed to be taken into consideration to ensure the chain of custody is secured.

THE SOLUTION

Incorporating lockable weapons racks and customizable shelving, evidence is housed in a secure and accessible location that allows for increased control and accountability.

EVIDENCE STORAGE



THE CHALLENGE

With the added space provided by its new headquarters, the department established a new crime lab requiring solutions geared toward not only processing incoming evidence, but also uncovering leads on cold cases that had yet to be solved.

THE SOLUTION

Incorporating Pass-Thru, Non-Pass-Thru, Pass-Back, and refrigerated evidence lockers, the department's technicians, officers, and detectives have the space and capacity to properly handle and address these now higher-priority cases.

RECORDS STORAGE



THE CHALLENGE

While other departments could digitally scan their records with little to no need for the originals, the Police Department has to keep their records for an indeterminate amount of time due to the nature of their cases and the fact that the number of pieces requiring secure physical storage solutions will never decrease.

THE SOLUTION

High-Density Mobile Shelving (HDMS) Systems allow records storage specialists to secure more materials in less space by eliminating wasted aisles.



THE CHALLENGE

Ammunition and arms were stacked loosely on shelving that was detrimental to accessing and accounting for weapons, leading to a possible delay in response when time is of the essence.

THE SOLUTION

By incorporating secure and accessible solutions like weapons racks and 4-Post shelving for guns, ammunition, and accessories, officers are able to more easily obtain the tools they need to address the situation at hand.

“ The armory storage solutions are a huge step up from our previous armory, which was self-made shelving and storage bins (for long guns). The current armory allows for long guns to be stored upright and easily searchable/accessible. The room is equipped with adequate shelving for ammunition cases to be stored. – **Chief Arendt** ”

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