

Valley-Wide Cañon City Clinic Project Submission

The Governor's Awards for Downtown Excellence: Best Project

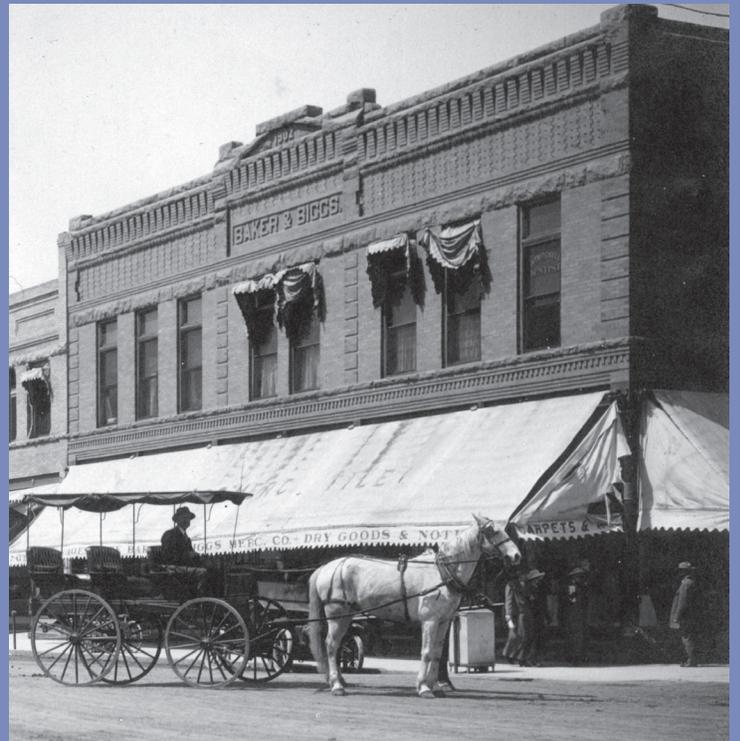
The City of Cañon City wishes to nominate the Valley-Wide Cañon City Clinic for Best Project. Valley-Wide Health Systems (VWHS) has a mission to provide access to high quality, patient-centered healthcare for all patients. This mission leads VWHS to bring new clinics into communities with little or no access to healthcare services. Although Valley-Wide had been operating clinics in Cañon City for 20 years, company leadership felt it was time to move to a larger space, in a more visible and convenient location to better serve the community. Valley-Wide began "house hunting" for a new and improved clinic location in 2012.

History of the Building

The Baker and Biggs building was constructed in 1902; originally, the first floor of the building was a store that sold clothing, furnishings, and dry goods. Above the storefront were apartments and workspaces, including a medical doctor, Dr. Little, and a dentist, Dr. Twitchell.

In 1917 the First National Bank, a Cañon City fixture since 1888, acquired the Baker and Biggs building and re-purposed it into their new location. In 1969, the bank embarked on a \$350,000 renovation by Marvin Knedler of Denver. The new design featured a Modern (Formalist) style exterior façade consisting of metal panels, dark windows, and stucco, which completely covered the original brick and quarried stone exterior. At the time, the renovation appeared to be progressive and modern. Unfortunately, during this renovation, the brick and stone on the 6th Street façade sustained extensive damage, and an accident caused the Main Street façade to collapse entirely.

The Baker and Biggs building remained in use as a bank, although under different ownership, until 2007 when it was closed and shuttered.



The original Baker and Biggs building, completed in 1902.



The 1917 renovation for First National Bank.



The 1969 renovation completely changed the historical building.

Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc. acquired the building in 2015 and quickly launched plans for a complete renovation.

Valley-Wide Health Systems Renovation

The renovation, which began in 2018, was funded through a USDA Community Facilities Loan with the largest local bank, Sunflower Bank, as the interim construction lender. VWHS also received capital funding from the following Colorado foundations: \$500,000 from The Colorado Health

Foundation, \$225,000 from the Colorado Health Access Fund, and \$75,000 from the Caring for Colorado Foundation. Further, The Colorado Health Access Fund contributed an additional \$250,000 to help fund the startup of behavioral health services in the new facility.

Designed by Keys+Lauer Architects and constructed by Copestone General Contractors, the new building planned to house six primary care providers, two dentists, one dental hygienist, two behavioral health clinicians, and the myriad of nursing, support, and enabling staff that helps Valley-Wide provide comprehensive whole-person health.



In these photos, you can see that the entire Main Street facing wall had to be rebuilt.

The plan for the new renovation integrated elements of the original 1902 Baker and Biggs building, including the refurbishment of existing pressed tin ceiling tiles, as well as restoring the brick and rhyolite façade to its original condition. As the work progressed, however, the project team soon learned that most of the existing exterior of the building would have to be covered due to extensive damage, and the Main Street wall would have to be completely new. Not long after this setback,

additional asbestos was discovered in the soil of the crawlspace, probably a result of the 1969 renovation. Progress slowed considerably as abatement crews worked to clean the contaminated soil, and temporary structural reinforcement was added to compensate for the loss of the south wall.

Undaunted, although worried about the mounting costs, the project pushed forward through each successive hurdle. Over the summer of 2018, the elevator shaft began to take shape, structural steel was erected, the exterior walls were built, and mechanical and electrical equipment was craned into place. During the fall and winter, the interior partitions were completed, the flooring was installed, and exterior finishes began to take shape. Finally, in May of 2019, the building was completed, and Valley-Wide Cañon City moved in!



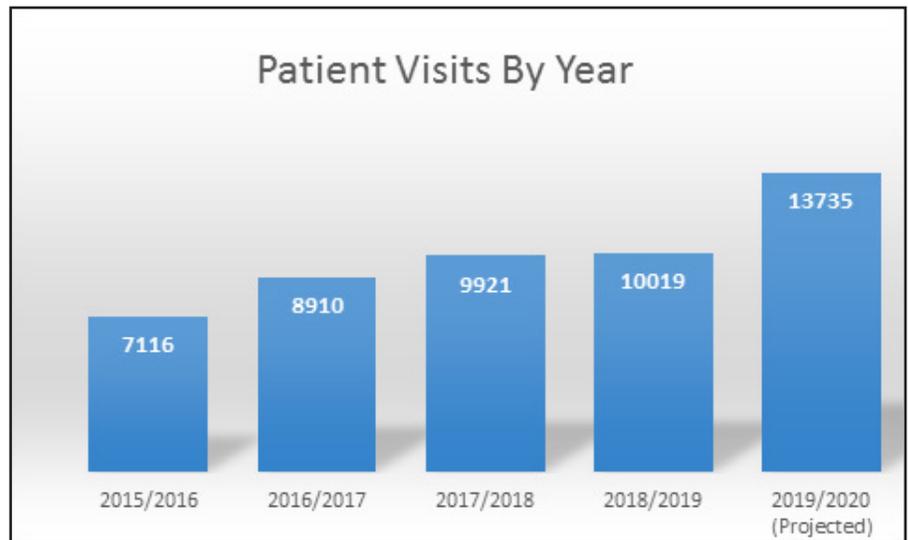
Our renovation, completed in 2018, attempted to restore the original beauty of the building, while also updating it into the 21st century.

Local Impact

Valley-Wide has provided medical care in Fremont County for 20 years prior to purchasing the downtown building. The new clinic is three times the size of our previous Fremont County locations, allowing Valley-Wide to serve more of the 46,692 total resident population of Fremont County.

Our population is increasingly geriatric, with 20.9% of residents over the age of 65, as compared to the state average of 13.0% [U.S. Census Bureau (USCB), 2015]. This population tends to have more chronic conditions and complex healthcare needs.

A new building in the heart of downtown Cañon City makes providing healthcare services to our community more convenient. With the increased space and visibility at our downtown location, we can accommodate not only more patients and providers, but we are a resource to our neighboring businesses and their employees as well.



Over the years, Valley-Wide has continued to provide cost-effective healthcare services to all patients, supporting not only the health of our Fremont County residents but also playing a significant role in supporting the local Cañon City economy. In the last five years, Valley-Wide has seen the number of patient visits continue to increase; with the visibility of this new downtown location, our healthcare services will be accessible for many more people, while at the same time, drawing more people to downtown Cañon City.

Economic Impact

While Valley-Wide has always helped drive a positive economic impact in Fremont County, after having moved downtown, our economic impact has become even more significant. For example, the Palace Drug Store, a local, family-owned business, is directly across the street. After an appointment, Valley-Wide patients can easily visit Palace Drug Store for prescriptions, health care supplies, and other personal items. Pizza Madness, a local pizza and catering business, often supplies food for our staff meetings, events, and has become an everyday eatery for both staff and patients.

Valley-Wide is excited to contribute to the economic growth of Fremont County. In 2016, Valley-Wide Cañon City employed 15 people - totaling more than \$900,000 in salaries. Today, our Cañon City location employs 34 people, totaling nearly \$2 million in salaries. Additionally, Valley-Wide has helped generate more than \$62 million in healthcare cost savings across Southern Colorado (Economic Impact Report, Capital Link, 2020). Valley-Wide Cañon City was a significant contributor to these savings.

Moreover, from the very beginning of the Valley-Wide downtown clinic project, we had a steadfast commitment to utilizing local companies in many aspects of our build, supplies, and our design and marketing phases. We are proud to have partnered with the following local companies:

- Sunflower Bank
- Fremont Center for the Arts
- Castle Craft Window Service
- Pizza Madness
- Canon City Rentals
- Elk Creek Masonry

Valley-Wide Health Systems feels honored to be part of a downtown initiative that is revitalizing and bringing new commerce into the beautiful town of Cañon City. Businesses from all over Fremont and Pueblo counties are reinvesting in downtown Cañon City. Valley-Wide Health Systems looks forward to continuing to grow, partner, and support our neighbors to ensure we have a thriving, sustainable Cañon City.



The original pressed tin ceiling was able to be restored, and it looks as beautiful as it must have in 1902.



Before, (above) the workspaces were dim, dark and unfriendly. Today, (below) the space is well lit and comfortable for staff and patients.