

# The Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center

Location: Hyde Park, New York

Architect: R.M. Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects

Size: 40,000 square feet

Scope of Work: Multimedia, IT, acoustics

Completion: November 2003

## Description:

Situated on the Hudson River just north of New York City, the Wallace Visitor and Education Center is an addition to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and serves as an entry gateway to the library and the Roosevelt family home. Work also included the restoration of the original library and the creation of a new 3,000-square-foot special exhibit gallery. The Wallace Center includes an auditorium, education center, café, offices, and conference center. It hosts 125,000 visitors annually--from scholars to school children.

The project required a sensitive approach; the Roosevelt Library was conceived and built under President Roosevelt's personal direction during 1939 to 1940. Shen Milsom & Wilke's multimedia design, carefully developed with R.M. Kliment & Frances Halsband Architects, is intended to scale upward as the number of visitors grows and program plans increase.

Visitor orientation begins with a state-of-the-art high definition orientation video in the 140-seat auditorium. This flexible space offers a wide range of presentation capabilities, including audio and video conferencing, a stage for small group performances, and video and computer large-screen projection.

The library features a divisible multipurpose room with a flexible presentation system—the space seats up to 240 people at a seated dinner, or three smaller groups of 60 in classroom settings. Three displays and multiple projectors accommodate any configuration. There is also a 35-person conference room used for trustee meetings, scholarly conferences, and presentations. It features a presentation system (projectors, displays, microphones, and speakers) and a videoconferencing system. The space doubles as a broadcast room for interviews, newscasts, or other impromptu events. The library is equipped with portable satellite uplink capability to expedite and improve broadcast capabilities. A carefully designed telecommunications infrastructure supports all of these functions.



The acoustical design for the orientation auditorium, multipurpose room, and the large conference room was challenging. Each of these spaces is large with high ceilings. Materials include large expanses of glass and stone. Acoustics in the auditorium had to be suitable for music, guest speakers, and film presentations.

The Wallace Center won a Merit Award from the American Institute of Architects New York State Chapter in 2004.