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Community celebrates opening of Madison Municipal Building after historical yet modern renovation

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Ethan Cayko plays the snare drum Saturday while making his way down a stairway with the Forward! Marching Band at the grand opening of the Madison Municipal Building. Community members were welcomed into the building to celebrate the completion of the \$30.2 million restoration and renovation of the 90-year-old city building.

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Many visitors touring the Madison Municipal Building at its public opening Saturday had never been to the building prior to its extensive renovation, but said it was now a sight worth seeing.

The city held an open house with live music and exhibits by local artists to showcase the recent completion of the government building's massive update and restoration. The renovation of the Municipal Building, 215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., cost \$30.2 million and combined many of the the 90-year-old building's historic features with modern and efficient architecture.

Linda McKamey, of Monona, said she's never had a reason to go to the Municipal Building before, but she might come back after walking around, seeing the works by local artists displayed throughout and hearing about the renovation process.

"It's certainly beautiful," McKamey said, while sitting in the restored courtroom. "It's almost worth it to come back just to see the architecture."

The first floor and basement level of the Municipal Building resemble a modern office, with a neutral gray color palette, floor-to-ceiling glass walls and large, sleek signs to help guide visitors to departments they seek. On its upper levels, the building transitions to an older feel.



Phoebe Frenette, right, and Angela McJunkin perform in a central space on the first floor of the Madison Municipal Building for visitors touring the updated city government building. Other musicians

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Much of the neutral color palette remains, but wainscoting lines walls with wooden doorways leading into various meeting rooms.

performed throughout the building, where works by local artists were displayed.

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By preserving many historic elements of the building — such as the windows and woodworking — the city’s culture was preserved as well, said Beverly Armstrong, of Madison.

“It shows respect for what was done before,” Armstrong said.

Mosaic artist Lillian Sizemore, of Madison, said she had been concerned that some of the masonry would be torn out. While walking around the building, Sizemore said she was relieved to see much of the marble and tile flooring remained, particularly the marble in one of the women’s bathrooms.



Nick Aikens, with Madison Circus Space, juggles near the main entrance of the Madison Municipal Building. The first floor and basement level of the building look much more modern than the building's 90 years, but upper levels retained

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“They left those architectural aspects that I’m really a fan of,” Sizemore said.

Since the renovation’s completion, city employees have been moving into the updated spaces, where Madison residents can go to file documents or meet with department administrators.

many of their original
elements in the
restoration process.

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City Council committees also
have started holding meetings
in the conference rooms,
which are more comfortable
for both council members and
public attendees and are equipped with audio and
video recording equipment to broadcast meetings on
the City Channel.