

PONCA

City



City Hall Self Guided Tour



A Word From Our Mayor

Welcome to Ponca City, a city that is unique. We are a community of approximately 26,000 people established in north central Oklahoma during the famous Oklahoma land run called the Cherokee Strip. The town has an unusual history. We have been home to wealthy philanthropic oilmen and the birthplace of a successful oil company, the first in the U.S. to offer employee benefits.



Ponca City is often referred to as the “Jewel on the Prairie.” It is a place where visitors can view period buildings, homes, and mansions listed on the National Historic Registry; participate in annual events and festivals such as Oktoberfest, Herb Festival, Draggin’ Grand, Festival of Angels, and 101 Ranch Rodeo; experience everything from Broadway dance performers to legendary country music artists at the Poncan Theatre; and visit the highly acclaimed museums of the Marland Mansion & Estate, the Marland’s Grand Home, the Pioneer Woman Museum, the Conoco History Museum, and the Standing Bear Native American Museum. Six Native American tribal cultures are represented in the region, including the Kaw, Osage, Pawnee, Ponca, Tonkawa and Otoe-Missouria tribes. Old West enthusiasts can even visit nearby monuments and venues, such as the former home base of the world famous 101 Ranch Wild West Show.

While close to the amenities of several major metropolitan areas, Ponca City offers the relaxed, less stressful and friendly lifestyle of a smaller community. Safe and well kept neighborhoods, high quality affordable housing, outstanding public education and recreational facilities all characterize the community. There are over 18 miles of shoreline and beaches off the adjacent Arkansas River and two lakes. The Ponca City RecPlex adds to the City’s already impressive array of recreation facilities, which include two 18-hole golf courses and 28 beautiful city parks.

Ponca City offers an abundance of great retail shops and restaurants, with many dining cuisines listed among the best places to eat in Oklahoma. The City of Ponca City has an “open for business” attitude when working with business and industry and is committed to working with you to create a business climate that makes sense when investing in our community. The community reflects its rich historic past, but is focused on the future. Major downtown redevelopment and area-wide economic development efforts are based on public-private partnerships and a spirit of mutual cooperation. The rich cultural programs, genuine friendliness of residents and the progressive outlook of local government make Ponca City a unique and surprisingly delightful place in which to live and work.

The community is synonymous with agriculture, oil, and water resources. Ponca City continues to grow, offering a life style which reflects our rich history. Our residents enjoy a quality of life that is second to none!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to our beautiful City Hall, and we hope you enjoy yourself. Your stay in Ponca City, whether on vacation or making it your home – will be the experience of a lifetime.

Homer Nicholson, Mayor

Before you start your indoor tour, take a look around our plaza . . .

CENTENNIAL PLAZA

City Hall serves as the backdrop for Ponca City's Centennial Plaza. In keeping with the spirit of the Cherokee Strip Land Run, citizens purchased 6,527 personalized bricks to stake their claim in the new Centennial Plaza and make their families a permanent part of Ponca City's history.



Ponca City Memorial Fountain

The Ponca City Memorial Fountain, a beloved community focal point, was constructed by the Ponca City Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in memory of the men and women who served during World War I. H.A. "Jack" Mertz and the DAR restored it in 1981; the Ponca City and Pioneer Rotary Clubs funded another renovation in 1993.

Today this historic fountain makes use of advanced LED technology and intelligent control to generate light shows that sync with the water sprays to produce choreographed, color-changing effects. This latest restoration in 2003 was a work of love by Forrest Mertz of Mertz, Inc. and the Mertz family in memory of his parents, H.A. "Jack" and Hattie Mertz, the Ponca City chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and all veterans.

The Ponca City Firehouse Bell

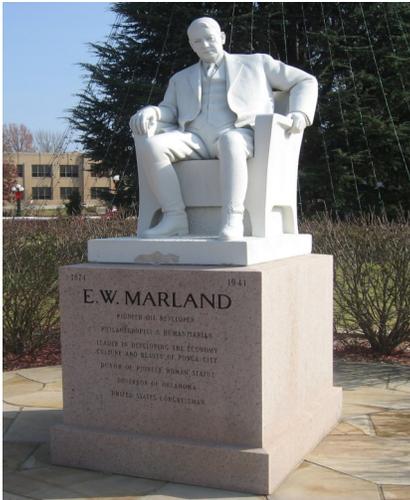
Located in front of Fire Station No. 1, the firehouse bell, originally purchased in 1900 from the C.S. Bell Co. of Hillsboro, Ohio was placed in the belfry of the first Firehouse/City Hall at Grand Avenue and 6th Street. In 1927, during the modernization of Ponca City, the building was torn down and the bell was donated to the Braden Community School, east of Ponca City. In 1999, through the efforts of volunteers, the Braden Community returned the bell to the City of Ponca City and its firefighters. On January 1, 2000, the bell was temporarily placed in front of City Hall and the No.1 Fire Station, near its original home, for a ceremonial ringing, signaling the beginning of the Millennium in Ponca City. Today the bell sits in a place of honor, remembering and celebrating our Firefighters and gathering of community spirit.



ART ON THE PLAZA

Centennial Plaza is the home of 3 of Ponca City's favorite sculptures.

The Lew Wentz statue on the southeast corner honors Louis Haines Wentz, one of Ponca City's most generous benefactors. Sculpted by Jo Saylor, the sculpture was a gift from a group of citizens who wanted to honor the memory of Mr. Wentz.



E.W. Marland's statue, on the southwest corner, originally sat on the grounds of the Marland estate/ Mr. Marland loved art, particularly sculpture, and commissioned this work from Jo Davidson. The statue was donated to Ponca City by his widow, Lydie Marland, in 1951.

Centennial Statue anchors the plaza and commemorates the historic land run into Oklahoma Territory on September 16, 1893. Jo Saylor created this masterpiece which was a gift to Ponca City through donations from citizens.



Take a look up at the west tower . . .



Tower Clock and Singing Tower Carillon

The original architectural plans for the tower included a clock; however, lack of funds prevented the plans from becoming a reality. The clock and carillon were installed in 1998 with funds donated in the name of Larry T. Hughes, a beloved and respected community leader. The carillon music, romantic, nostalgic and comforting to hear every day all over downtown, is a fitting memorial to a man born on West Grand Avenue who was devoted to his home town, loved the pride people took in it and believed in giving to his community. When the music plays, citizens remember Larry Hughes.

CITY HALL FACILITY – A LITTLE HISTORY

The original building was a Civic Auditorium, designed by Layton and Smith, the same architects of the Oklahoma State Capital. Built in the Spanish Colonial style in 1917, City Hall sets the architectural tone for the rest of the city.

Following the completion of the building, the citizens voted approval for a bond to pay for the east and west wings to connect to the Civic Auditorium. Layton, Smith and Forsythe were the architects for these wings, and the project was completed in 1924. The finished wings, plus the auditorium, housed the Civic Center Complex with the civic auditorium in the center building and fire, police and city administration in the wing buildings. The auditorium was the center of community theater activities with many famous performers of the day gracing its stage.

In 1992 the Ponca City Fire Marshall declared the Civic Auditorium a fire hazard, and the facility was closed. City departments continued to operate in the east wing, and Fire Station No. 1 was housed in the west wing.

Voters approved a 2-year sales tax to renovate Fire Station No. 1 in 1997. Once completed, voters approved a 3-year sales tax to renovate the remainder of the Complex. The new City Hall complex was completed in 2003 and was designed by Richard Winterrowd and Troy Lewis of Lewis Associates Architects of Ponca City.

The first floor contains all of the most commonly used functions of city government. This allows great access for the citizens of Ponca City to pay their bills, visit the city clerk, apply for a job, or work with community development services.

ENTRY VESTIBULE

Everything in the building is new except for the brick structural walls, the roof structure and the original vault door. The interior of the building was designed to match the historic exterior. Many materials, colors and arched openings were designed as a complement to the Spanish Mission Style from the 1920's.

The entry vestibule is a new addition to the building and is the dramatic front door to city government. The design was based on the awning that was originally designed for the building but was never installed. The copper barrel vaults blend perfectly with the façade of the building in scale, proportion and materials. Copper was selected as the cladding material because of its timeless quality and its natural finish. Copper is easily molded to the curved shapes of the entry and can be allowed to gracefully age to a natural patina. The copper on the interior was protected to maintain the new shiny copper penny look as a contrast to the natural patina of the exterior. Also the pebbled copper ceiling is contrasted with the smooth copper battens and is highlighted by indirect cove lighting.



LOBBY

The lobby area was enlarged from the original ticket lobby into a grand civic gathering space. The original brick was intentionally exposed to contrast with the new highly finished materials of wrought iron, cast stone, copper coves, terrazzo floors, granite countertops, glass blocks and painted gypsum board walls. New openings were created in the existing brick walls to visually expand the space to two stories and connect with the upper and lower promenades. The stone wainscoting serves two functions. It provides human scale to the tall brick walls while also covering the portion of the wall that used to be below the old floor line. The awning over the reception counter is a replica of the awning that was originally designed for the front entry.



The two grand staircases were added on either side. The wrought iron railings tie visually with the cast iron structural columns. The floral panels in the stair railing match the floral pattern of the pressed metal wall panels located high above the stairs. The pressed metal wall panels and light coves and crown molds reflect materials common to many downtown retail buildings of the era and were a perfect fit for the new building.

The color schemes of various shades of gold and cream on the walls and ceilings tie the building to the past history of bold civic

architectural spaces. The lighting throughout the building is coordinated in style and function and sets a dramatic ambience for the space.

An information desk is located at the main entrance to provide assistance to citizens and visitors. The City Clerk's office is on the east side of the lobby, and the Utility Billing/Accounting window is on the west side. Customer Service is located beyond the Utility Billing window on the west side. There are public restrooms and an elevator to enhance accessibility for public use of the building and Centennial Plaza

1st FLOOR WEST LOBBY DISPLAY

Ponca City will surprise and delight you with the variety of events and activities. You can get a tantalizing glimpse of each one by checking out this display.

1st FLOOR EAST LOBBY DISPLAY

Display cases on the east side of the lobby contain the City's honors and awards.

1st FLOOR OFFICES

The City departments most used by the public, Community Development (Planning and Code Enforcement), City Engineering, City Clerk, Utility Billing, and Human Resources are conveniently located in this area. The No. 1 (main) Fire Station is located in the west wing as well.

2nd FLOOR-EAST SIDE DISPLAY

The City of Ponca City has a sister city in Baiyin City, Gansu Province, People's Republic of China. The agreements and gifts as a result of that relationship are housed in this display cabinet.

2nd FLOOR-EAST WING

Environmental Services, Information Services, and Ponca City Main Street offices are located in this wing.

2nd FLOOR-Wall of Honor

First dedicated in 2009, the Wall of Honor recognizes a few of those individuals as leaders who have given tirelessly over a lifetime in special, significant ways to the betterment of Ponca City and to the quality of life to be enjoyed here; to memorialize for posterity's inspiration that there were always leaders who distinguished themselves by being the first, by enduring the longest, by contesting the seemingly impossible and in the doing led Ponca City into the future.

To be considered for the Wall of Honor a person must be a citizen and resident of Ponca City who has served as our ambassador at large, who has engaged in enduring leadership within the community, made possible long-term community enhancements, supported major projects and events, provided financial & in-kind contributions and invested personal time & skills to the betterment of Ponca City. Nominations for honorees are submitted to the mayor every 5 years.



The inaugural inductees to the Wall of Honor include Fred & Sue Boettcher, Lloyd I. "Jerry" & Pat Evans, Gary Martin, and Carl & Carolyn Renfro.

2nd FLOOR-Ponca Playhouse Wall

The photos on the east side of the hallway wall divider pay homage to Ponca Playhouse productions staged in what is now the Commission Chamber from 1959 to 1994. The actors were community residents.



The drape section at the end of the hallway is from the original curtain and was donated by the Playhouse.



2ND FLOOR WEST SIDE DISPLAY

As you head toward the staircase to return to the 1st floor lobby, notice the souvenirs of City Hall's theatre background in this display case.

2nd FLOOR-WEST WING

The West Wing holds the City Administration offices, including the Mayor, the City Manager and City Attorney.

2nd FLOOR-COMMISSION CHAMBER



The design of the Commission Chamber pays homage to the history of the auditorium. The proscenium arch was recreated on the face of the original fly-loft, complete with velvet waterfall curtains as a backdrop for the commission dais. The grand volume of the original space was maintained. The dramatic coffer ceiling is in the same location as the original ceiling. The interior walls are stair stepped up to a service level to reveal the original window walls above.

The commission dais is clad in the same cast stone found in the lobby. The walls are covered with sound dampening silk fabric panels, and the ceiling has a sound absorption plaster finish. Dramatic lighting sets the mood for this multifunctional room.

The room is designed as a full production television studio for broadcasts of commission meetings on public television and boasts state of the art audio/visual capabilities. It seats 154 people.

The grand piano is an 1885 Steinway. It is a gift to the City of Ponca City from the heirs of the late Sam and Dorothy Leonard, who were long-time residents of Ponca City.



Located directly behind the Commission Chamber in what was the stage/fly-loft area are public meeting rooms and support areas. New window openings in the rear wall of the fly-loft area provide daylight and views for the meeting rooms and offices.

2nd FLOOR-BARNES ROOM

This is one of 2 community meeting rooms available to the public free-of-charge. Named after the founder and first mayor of Ponca City, the room holds photographs of Grand Avenue in the early days. It seats up to 16 people.

2nd FLOOR-MCFADDEN ROOM

The larger of the 2 community meeting rooms is named for Mayor W.H. McFadden, who called for the first bond election to construct this building in 1916. Photographs in this room provide a visual history of the building façade. It seats up to 24 people.

2nd FLOOR-Roll of Honor

Ponca City's mayors, councilmen and commissioners from 1893 to present are listed on the Roll of Honor located on the west side of the hallway wall divider.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When was the current City Hall building first constructed?

A: In February of 1916, Mayor W.H. McFadden called for a \$20,000 bond election for the purpose of building a convention hall in Ponca City. An additional \$25,000 bond issue passed in December of 1916. Layton and Smith were the architects for the project. O.F. Keck of Ponca City was the contractor. The contract was let for \$38,000. Layton and Smith were the architects for the State Capitol Building. The "Civic Center Auditorium" (the center building of City Hall) opened on November 14, 1917 with the touring Broadway musical play "Experience."



Q: What was the first name of City Hall?

A: City Hall was originally referred to as the Civic Center or Civic Center Complex. The first order of business for Mayor P.B. Lowrance and Commissioners Wiker and Hall in 1922 was to plan the east and west wings of the auditorium. Layton, Smith and Forsythe prepared the plans for the additional wings in October of 1922. A bond issue of \$75,000 was passed in November of 1922 for the construction of the east and west wings of the Civic Center Complex. The Holmboc Company of Oklahoma City was awarded the contract for \$135,000. This project was completed in 1924. The first meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held in the Civic Center Complex on March 20, 1924, now referred to as "City Hall."

Q: When was the City Hall renovation completed?

A: The citizens of Ponca City celebrated the newly restored City Hall on Thursday, September 18, 2003. The grand event included Forrest Mertz turning on the beautiful lighted water fountain he restored, and ended with a rooftop fireworks display.



What Did All This Cost

And

How Was It Paid For?

1916	Civic Center Auditorium	\$20,000	Bond Election
1916	Civic Center Auditorium	\$25,000	Bond Election
1922	East and West Wings	<u>\$75,000</u>	Bond Issue
	Total Original Cost:	\$120,000	
1997	No. 1 Fire Station (West Wing)	\$3,200,000	2-Year ½¢ Sales Tax
1999	Remainder of the Building	<u>\$4,800,000</u>	3-Year ½¢ Sales Tax
	Total Renovation Cost:	\$8,000,000	

City Hall is Gonna Party Like it's

1892!



1917!



1975!



1993!



2003!



We hope you enjoyed your tour of City Hall!

For more information contact:

580.767.0339

To arrange guided or group tours contact:

580.787.0336



Check out these links for more information about City Hall, its history, and the City of Ponca City:

<http://www.poncacityok.gov>

http://www.poncacitychamber.com/about_ponca.htm

<http://www.poncacitymainstreet.com/pchistory.htm>

http://www.poncacitytourism.com/about_us.htm