

# DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Journal of the Architectural Woodwork Institute

Medical Center  
Resort  
Dentist Office  
Office Lobby  
Science Center



**AWI** ARCHITECTURAL  
WOODWORK  
INSTITUTE





THE STATELY LOBBY features wood columns, soothing sconce lighting, vaulted ceilings and life-size windows.

# CREATING A HEALING ENVIRONMENT.



**M**idwest Medical Center, Galena, Illinois, is the replacement hospital for a facility that once had only linoleum floors and cement block walls. In early 2004, the Center became the first Planetree Affiliate Hospital in the state of Illinois. The new organization's sole focus is to put the needs of patients first.





▲ **THE ELEGANCE OF THE RECEPTION DESK** is illustrated by the unique design, contrast of wood colors, and use of a variety of materials.

Midwest's CEO, Jeffrey Hill, explains that the organization firmly believes that "the physical environment is vital to the healing process of the patient. That means facility design should

include efficient layouts that support patient dignity and personhood."

Domestic aesthetics, art and warm, home-like, non-institutional designs that value humans, not just technol-

ogy, are emphasized, he continues. Architectural barriers that inhibit patient control and privacy, as well as interfere with family participation, are removed. "Awareness of the symbolic

messages communicated by design is essential," Hill says. "From the onset, we knew that woodwork would be an essential element to helping create our patient-centered environment."

Goals and objectives were achieved

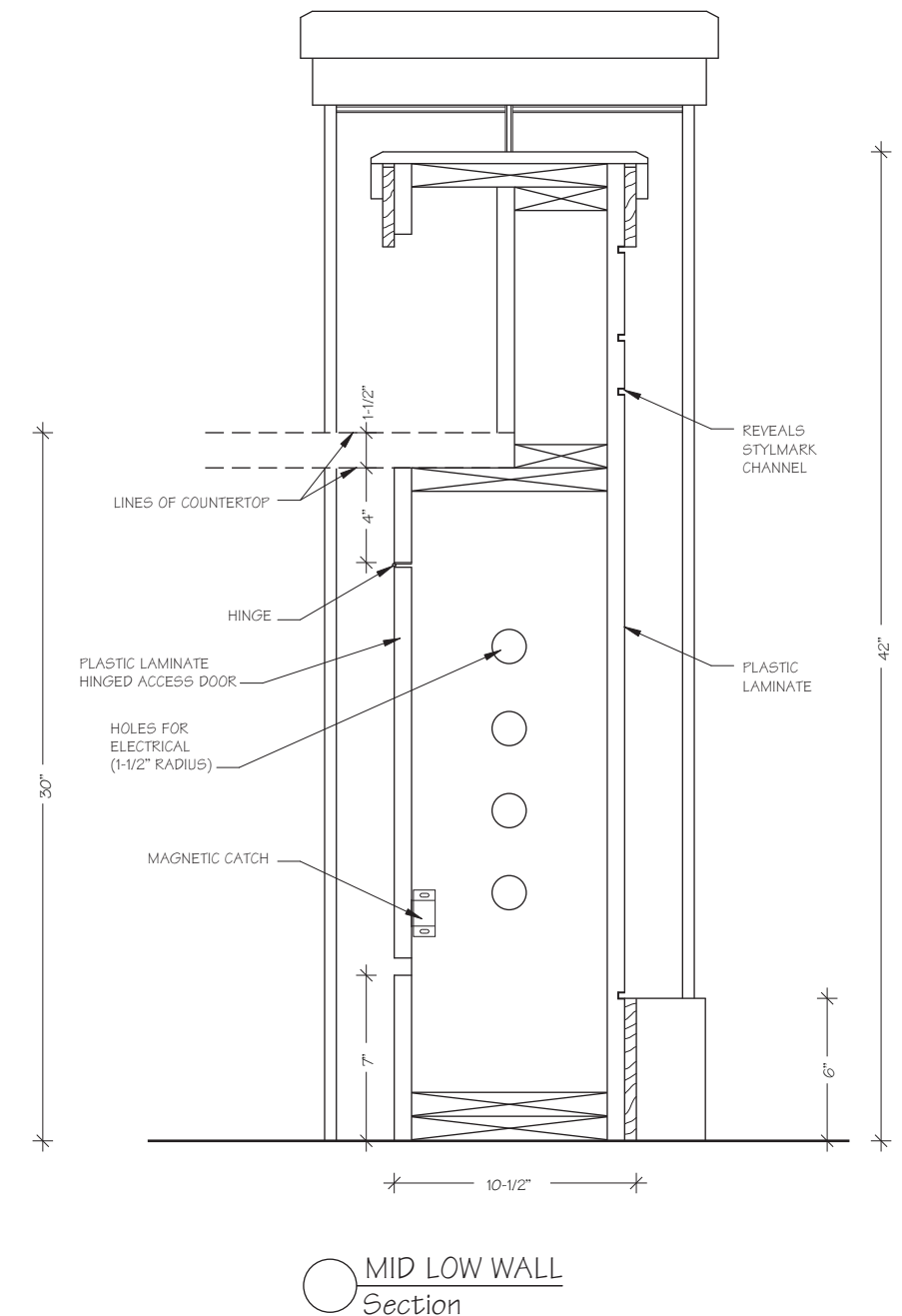
by the design and woodworking teams – Earl Swensson Associates, Inc., a design firm located in Nashville, Tennessee, and Calmar Manufacturing Company, Inc., an AWI member firm from Calmar, Iowa.

#### MAKING IT HAPPEN

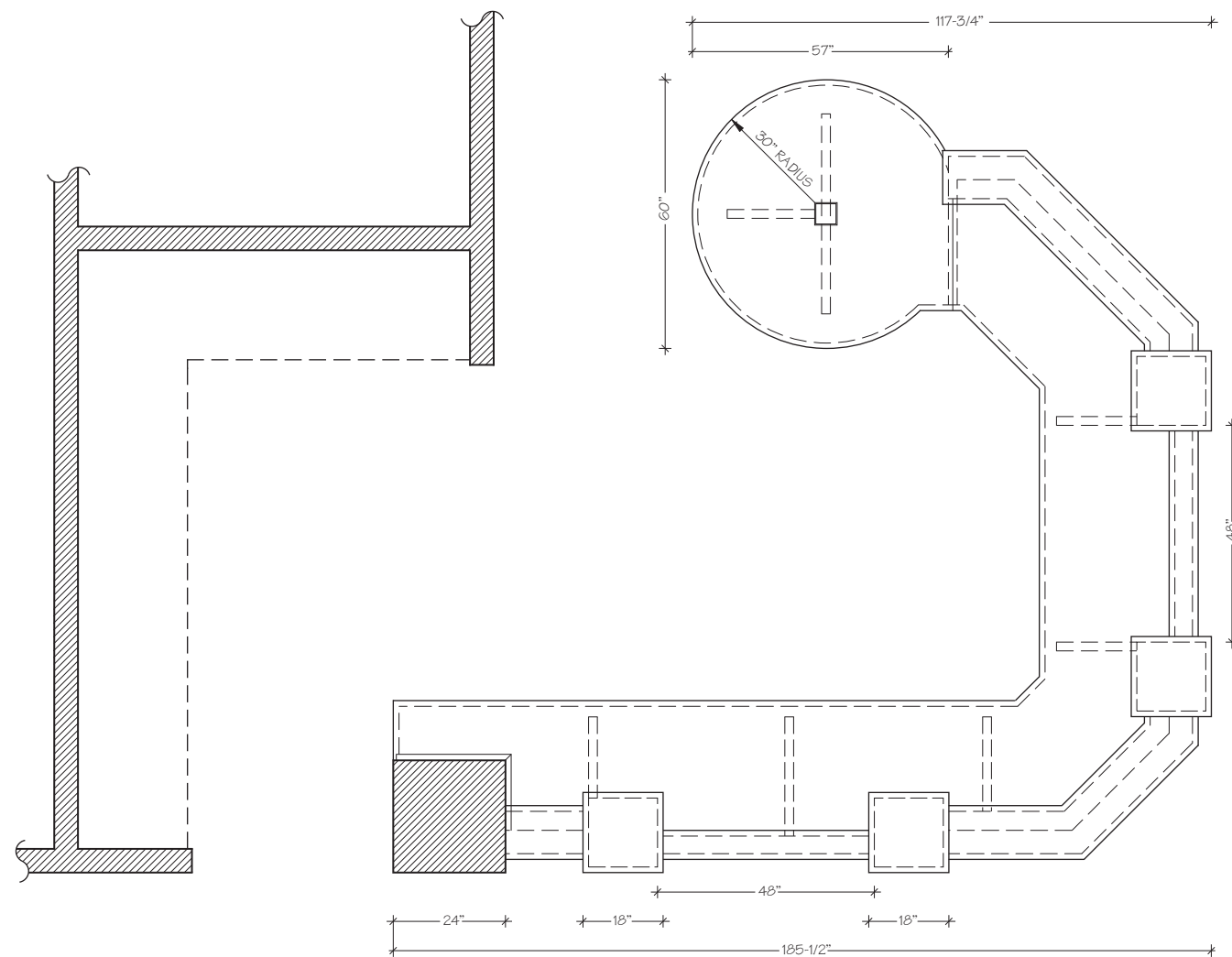
A soothing calmness is established within through a combination of the

richness of the Maple woodwork, natural colors in the ceramic-tiled lobby floor, natural light, a copper waterfall feature and extensive molding details, notes Todd Robinson, senior designer and principal at Swensson.

"As the first Planetree affiliate in Illinois, Midwest Medical Center incorporates as many Planetree tenets as possible and takes design cues from







○ NURSE'S STATION  
Plan View

the existing architecture of the historic resort town of Galena,” Robinson says. “The interior spaces are designed to provide a calm soothing environment for patients, family and visitors as well as nurturing spaces for staff.”

Maple was the wood of choice for the project. A Cherry stain was used throughout the space. A wood-look high pressure decorative laminate was also used with the natural wood in areas where durability was required.

Calmar Manufacturing provided the reception desks, nurses’ stations, trim, planters, divider walls, casework,

solid surface countertops and transaction tops for the project. “The reception desks and nurses’ stations have a high level of detail and are made of several different materials, requiring careful coordination,” reports Markus Burggraf, president of the woodworking firm.

#### NOTEWORTHY AREAS

The main lobby area is particularly favored by both the owner and the designer. “The decorative column wraps in the main lobby as well as the finishes of the reception desks are

noteworthy for aesthetics and durability,” notes Robinson.

Upon entering the front doors, you are immediately taken in by the warm colors, rich woods, soothing sconce lighting, vaulted ceilings and life-size windows that point to the blue Midwestern sky. Every place your eyes land, there is a healing element. From the water feature that keeps children entertained, and gives parents a needed diversion, to the bubbling copper fountain in the healing garden, you immediately feel that you are in a place where caring counts.



#### AT A GLANCE:

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER: **Calmar Mfg. Company, Inc.**

LOCATION: **Calmar, Iowa**

FOUNDED: **115 years ago**

SPECIALTY: **Architectural woodwork, institutional casework and solid surface fabrication**

*“Calmar Manufacturing Co. is a subsidiary of Imperial Woodworking Company, Palatine, Illinois, and is the longest standing AWI member at this time. Our motto is craftsmanship without compromise.”*

**– Markus Burggraf, President**





A CLOSEUP OF THE UNIQUE COUNTER/DIVIDER WALL featured in the therapy and fitness room.



▲ THE NURSES' STATIONS feature wood and laminates for durability and cleanliness.


environment within a clinical setting," she adds.

**TEAM SPIRIT**

Calmar Manufacturing was wonderful to work with, says the design team, and was responsible for many solutions regarding design and installation issues related to the architectural woodwork.

Burggraf echoes the sentiment, noting that Swensson Associates contributed to an extremely cooperative relationship.

On December 5, 2007, the 94,000 square foot Midwest Medical Center opened its doors. While the new facility took 12 months to build, the journey has proven most rewarding. Features such as the state-of-the-art Fitness Center, Resource Library,

Meditation Suite, Whispering Willow Gifts and Vista Café attract community members to visit the facility for reasons other than illness. From a hospital that required patients to walk a long dark corridor to use the bathing facilities, Midwest Medical has become a truly beautiful compassionate and patient focused medically advanced facility. 

Project:	Midwest Medical Center	Galena, IL
Project Owner:	Midwest Medical Center	Galena, IL
Woodworker:	Calmar Manufacturing Co., Inc.	Calmar, IA
Designer:	Earl Swensson Associates, Inc.	Nashville, TN
General Contractor:	Robins & Morton Group	Brentwood, TN
Photographer:	Jeff Millies/Hedrich Blessing	Chicago, IL