

This applicaton is for:	J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award
Project Title	Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center
County or Counties	Edgefield
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Project Written Submission

Project Summary

The Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center, located at 264 Star Road, Edgefield, South Carolina, is a \$42 million, 74,000-square-foot facility that opened in March 2025. It represents the county's most ambitious infrastructure project, unifying the sheriff's office, a state-of-the-art detention center, magistrate offices, a courtroom, and a law enforcement training hub. Funded by \$18 million from South Carolina's Plutonium Settlement and a voter-approved 2020 Capital Project Sales Tax, the project was completed under budget. Replacing an outdated 1978 facility, it introduces advanced systems like digital inmate communication and centralized monitoring to enhance safety and efficiency. The site also includes the county's first Animal Care and Control Facility, operational since 2023, and plans for a 2025 recreation park with sports fields, a splash pad, and trails. Serving Edgefield's 26,000 residents, the center strengthens public safety, streamlines judicial processes, and enriches community resources, setting a model for rural counties.

Project Effort/Difficulty

Building the Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center, a \$42 million, 74,000-square-foot facility, was a monumental undertaking for a rural county of 26,000 residents. Launched to replace an obsolete 1978 sheriff's office and detention center and provide a dedicated magistrate courtroom, the project required nearly two years of construction and meticulous planning to unify diverse functions under one roof. Sheriff Jody Rowland and his team spearheaded the effort, conducting extensive research by visiting facilities in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia to identify best practices. This informed the integration of advanced features, such as a central monitoring tower for inmate oversight and digital inmate communication systems, ensuring the facility met modern safety and operational standards. County Administrator David Caddell provided critical oversight, managing logistics, coordinating contractors, and ensuring the project stayed under budget, a significant achievement for a project of this scale. The primary challenges centered on the complexity of designing a multi-functional facility in a rural setting. Coordinating architectural, technological, and operational requirements for sheriff's offices, a detention center, magistrate spaces, and a training hub demanded precision. Ensuring compatibility of advanced systems, like automated monitoring, with the county's existing infrastructure posed technical hurdles. Additionally, the project required balancing immediate needs with long-term scalability, as the facility is designed to serve for 30–40 years. Despite these challenges, the county maintained fiscal discipline, leveraging \$18 million from the Plutonium Settlement, secured through the Edgefield County Legislative Delegation, and a 2020 Capital Project Sales Tax approved by voters. This dual funding

approach mitigated financial strain, allowing the county to focus resources on quality and innovation without impacting other services.

Collaboration was key to the project's success. The legislative delegation's advocacy for state funding was pivotal, demonstrating effective partnership with state government. While no other local governments or organizations were directly involved in execution, the sheriff's team drew on regional expertise through their research, indirectly benefiting from broader industry knowledge. The South Carolina Association of Counties, through its County Focus publication, amplified the project's visibility, fostering professional support. Community engagement was robust, with no significant concerns reported. The 2020 tax approval reflected strong public support, and public tours in January 2025 during the ribbon-cutting ceremony reinforced community pride and transparency. This aligns with findings from the Urban Institute, which highlights community-driven projects as key to successful rural infrastructure development.

Financing posed no major obstacles due to strategic planning. The Plutonium Settlement provided a unique funding source, reducing reliance on local revenue, while the dedicated sales tax ensured community investment without diverting funds from other priorities. The project's completion under budget underscores effective cost management. Looking ahead, the planned 2025 recreation park on the same site, with sports fields and community amenities, represents a future goal requiring additional planning and funding. However, the law enforcement center's successful execution demonstrates Edgefield County's capacity to tackle such initiatives, building on established momentum and community trust to further enhance local infrastructure.

Benefit/Importance of Project

The Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center was constructed to address the critical inadequacies of the county's 1978 sheriff's office and detention center, which lacked the capacity and infrastructure to meet modern public safety demands. Additionally, the absence of a dedicated magistrate courtroom forced judicial proceedings into makeshift spaces, hindering efficiency. This \$42 million project, opened in March 2025, represents a transformative investment in Edgefield County's safety and security, a foundational priority that supersedes other local challenges such as road repairs or economic development. Public safety is the bedrock of a thriving community, enabling residents to live, work, and engage without fear, and this facility ensures that foundation is robust for Edgefield's 26,000 residents.

The center's comprehensive design benefits multiple groups within the county. For the general population, enhanced sheriff's office capabilities mean faster, more effective responses to emergencies and routine patrols, fostering a safer environment. The regional training facility equips deputies with advanced skills to handle diverse scenarios, from domestic disputes to complex criminal investigations, directly improving community trust in law enforcement. Detention staff benefit from safer working conditions through innovations like a central monitoring tower, which reduces direct inmate interactions, minimizing risks. This automation aligns with national trends in correctional facility design, as noted by the National Institute of Corrections, which emphasizes technology-driven safety enhancements. Magistrates, staff, and court users now operate in a dedicated courtroom and jury deliberation room, replacing cramped or borrowed spaces like the County Council Chambers, thus streamlining judicial processes and improving access to justice.

Inmates also benefit from the facility's forward-thinking approach. Digital platforms, such as iPads for remote communication with family and lawyers, educational courses, and reading, support rehabilitation efforts, potentially reducing recidivism rates, which is a growing focus in modern corrections according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. These tools create a more humane and constructive detention environment, indirectly benefiting the community by preparing inmates for reintegration. Beyond law enforcement, the site's Animal Care and Control Facility, operational since 2023, addresses a long-standing gap in pet welfare, serving pet owners, stray animals, and the broader community by promoting responsible animal care. The planned 2025 recreation park, featuring sports fields, pickleball courts, a walking trail, splash pad, and playground, will further enhance community health and engagement, particularly for families, youth, and seniors, fostering social cohesion.

The project's success is evident in its completion under the \$42 million budget, funded by \$18 million from the Plutonium Settlement and a voter-approved 2020 Capital Project Sales Tax. It achieved all primary objectives: unifying sheriff's, detention, and judicial functions; enhancing safety through technology; and ensuring scalability for 30–40 years. The regional training hub extends benefits to neighboring counties, positioning Edgefield as a leader in rural law enforcement education. Community support, demonstrated by the tax approval, underscores the project's alignment with local priorities. By addressing safety comprehensively while integrating additional community resources, the center not only resolves immediate needs but also sets a precedent for holistic infrastructure development, ensuring Edgefield County remains a safe and vibrant place to live for generations.

Project Originality/Innovation

The Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center is a standout project in South Carolina, particularly for its comprehensive scope in a rural community. Unlike single-purpose upgrades, such as Aiken County's detention center expansions, Edgefield's 74,000-square-foot facility integrates sheriff's operations, a detention center, magistrate offices, a courtroom, and a regional training hub. Its innovations include a centralized control tower for safer inmate management, digital platforms for inmate education and communication, and a design scalable for decades. The training facility, rare for a county of 26,000, serves regional law enforcement, enhancing professional development. The site's Animal Care and Control Facility and planned recreation park add unique community value. Research across three states shaped its cutting-edge design, aligning with trends noted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Innovative financing via state settlement funds and a voter-approved tax further distinguishes it as a model for rural infrastructure.

Concluding Remarks

The Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center, opened in March 2025, transforms public safety for Edgefield's 26,000 residents. This \$42 million facility unifies sheriff's services, detention, and judicial functions, replacing an obsolete 1978 structure with advanced technology and a future-ready design. Funded by a state settlement and a 2020 Capital Project Sales Tax vote, it was delivered under budget, reflecting community trust and prudent management. The center's training hub and digital systems

enhance safety and rehabilitation, while the Animal Care and Control Facility and planned recreation park broaden its impact. This project exemplifies how rural counties can achieve lasting safety and community vitality through innovation and collaboration.

Ensuring Safe and Secure Communities: New \$42 Million Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center Open for Business

By Dean Campbell
Edgefield County Council Chairman

The new Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center opened for business in March.

The facility is the single largest project undertaken by Edgefield County officials.

Located at 264 Star Road near Edgefield, the facility cost approximately \$42 million to build and outfit, which came in under the original project budget.

The state contributed \$18 million to the project from the Plutonium Settlement money, which was added at the request of the Edgefield County Legislative Delegation. The rest of the funding came from the Capital Project Sales Tax approved by county voters in 2020. Local officials gathered in January to cut the ribbon on the facility and provide public tours.

The law enforcement center has a state-of-the-art detention center, along with offices, storage, training area and other areas for all Edgefield County Sheriff's Office employees. It also includes magistrate and staff offices and a magistrate's courtroom and jury deliberation room. It is the first time all of these offices have been under the same roof.

The Animal Care and Control Facility, the first ever built in the county, is also on the property. It was built and opened for business in 2023. A new recreation park, with a football field, soccer field, basketball courts, pickleball courts, walking trail, splash pad, playground and other amenities will also begin being built on the property in 2025.

The former Edgefield County Detention Center and Sheriff's Office opened in 1978, has not aged well and grew inadequate for the county's needs. The Magistrate's Office had also outgrown its facility, which never had a courtroom. Court previously was held in the Magistrate's Office or in County Council Chambers.

Edgefield County Sheriff Jody Rowland and his staff spearheaded the design and oversaw construction of the 74,000-square-foot facility, which took almost two years to build.

"Edgefield County now has a law enforcement center that citizens are proud of," Rowland said. "It will serve this county for 30, maybe 40 years or more since it was built to be expanded as necessary."

Rowland pointed out that the center's new training facility will give his deputies, local police and regional law enforcement groups a chance to get training they might not otherwise receive. Training is a key component of law enforcement work, he said.

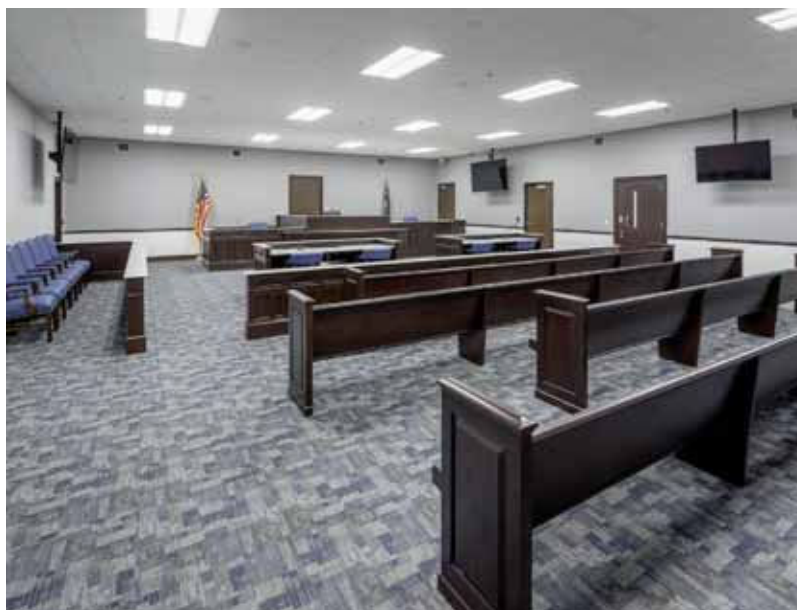
"When a sheriff's deputy arrives at someone's door, they are full service and can handle any situation,"

Rowland said. "This training facility makes that possible."

Edgefield County Administrator David Caddell worked with the sheriff and others to ensure the project received the support and management needed to become what it is today.

"The sheriff and his staff should be commended for the work they put into making this facility an outstanding addition to our county," Caddell said. "Projects of this magnitude take teamwork and determination to make them come to life. County staff did an excellent job keeping this project moving forward. And our taxpayers are pleased with the result."





Rowland and his staff traveled across South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia to study law enforcement centers, detention centers, training areas and other parts of those facilities to find the best ideas for the law enforcement center in Edgefield County.

For example, inmates use iPads to remotely communicate with family members and lawyers, eliminating the need for face-to-face visits, taking educational classes or even reading books. Additionally, a central tower within the facility can monitor all inmate pods and living areas and controls multiple functions from that location. This advanced automation allows continuous observed supervision of all inmate areas and reduces direct staff interaction inside the inmate pods, making the operation of such a large facility safer for the detention staff.

“This is a historic moment in Edgefield County’s history. We have a significant, world-class facility that citizens can point to and say that a critical part of our future has been successfully completed. It will make us safer and more secure, an underpinning of what government should do.”
-Edgefield County Council Chairman
Dean Campbell



County Council exercised great care to set the law enforcement center on a path to success. While the sheriff and his staff and the administrator and county staff deserve the praise for bringing this dream to reality, it started with residents who overwhelmingly agreed to a ballot initiative, approved by Edgefield County Council, that the Capital Project Sales Tax apply only to the law enforcement center.

This is a historic moment in Edgefield County’s history. We have a significant, world-class facility that residents can point to and say that a critical part of our future has been successfully completed. It will make us safer and more secure, an underpinning of what government should do.

Dean Campbell serves as chairman of Edgefield County Council and represents District 3.

Photos courtesy of Edgefield County.

COUNTY OF EDGEFIELD

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County Council Members
Dean Campbell, Chair
Albert Talbert, Vice Chair
Jerry Moody
Tiffani Ireland
Jacqueline Kennion

South Carolina Association of Counties
J. Mitchell Graham Award Committee
1919 Thurmond Mall
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear J. Mitchell Graham Award Committee,

It is with great pride that I write to nominate the Edgefield County Law Enforcement Center for the J. Mitchell Graham Award. As Edgefield County Administrator, I've had the privilege of watching this project come to life, and it's been a journey that's touched the core of our small, tight-knit community. This new facility at 264 Star Road, opened in March 2025, isn't just a building, it's a promise kept to our residents, a testament to what we can achieve when we come together.

For years, our outdated sheriff's office and detention center struggled to serve our growing needs, leaving our deputies and staff working in spaces that felt more like relics than resources. This project changed that. It's brought our sheriff's team, detention operations, magistrate offices, and a new courtroom under one roof, creating a space that feels like the future. Walking through the doors during our ribbon-cutting, seeing our residents marvel at the training hub and modern systems, I felt the weight of what we'd accomplished—a place that makes our community safer and stronger.

Sheriff Jody Rowland and his staff poured their heart into this, traveling across three states to dream up a facility that's as innovative as it is practical, with features like a monitoring tower that keeps our staff safe and digital tools that give inmates a chance to learn and grow. My team worked tirelessly to support his vision, stretching every dollar of our budget—funded by a state grant and a tax our residents proudly supported in 2020—to make it happen without cutting corners. The Animal Care and Control Facility on-site and the recreation park we're planning for 2025 show this isn't just about law enforcement: it's about building a better Edgefield for everyone.

This project reflects who we are as a community—determined, forward-thinking, and united. It's a beacon of hope and safety, designed to stand for decades, and I believe it embodies the spirit of the J. Mitchell Graham Award. I humbly ask you to consider the Edgefield County Law

COUNTY OF EDGEFIELD

Enforcement Center for this honor, as it represents the best of what rural counties can do when we dream big together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Caddell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

David Caddell
Edgefield County Administrator