

The Grand Trunk Media and Cultural Center

March 6th, 2013 – Mik Muller – Updated June 2019

The Grand Trunk Media and Cultural Center will be a place for media, business, and culture to intersect in the town of Montague.

Owned, operated and occupied by the Town of Montague's public access station, Montague Community Television (MCTV), they will provide meeting space and a mailing address for the Montague Business Association (MBA); desk space for the Turners Falls RiverCulture coordinator (TFRC), and a physical location to launch cultural events; as well as meeting space for any organization in town to use, and potentially cable-cast their meetings and promotions on channel 17.

The center will have two main spaces:

A 30' x 30' working area accessible by both egress doors:

- Four desks for MCTV staff use
- Several public editing stations for video editing and production, as well as Internet access
- A conference table, which will be made available to the public on a reservation basis for meetings, and will be the main meeting space for the Montague Business Assoc.
- Wall space for paintings by local artists, coordinated by TFRC
- A kitchen area and two bathrooms
- Welcome Area with a table and display space for brochures and other information about Montague, which will be coordinated in conjunction with the BA.
- The mural that is currently on the outside of the building will be installed on the south inside wall where the Welcome Area resides. Information available in the Welcome Area will also be made available within mounted display boxes on the exterior of the building.

A 33' x 25' television studio, complete with TV cameras, lighting, and backdrop curtains.

This area will be where all the in-studio production will occur. This studio space would also be made available for meetings of local committees and organizations, such as the School Committee, Finance Committee, etc., and could be recorded for later broadcast.

In addition, the Center will have a private editing room; a rack room for the broadcast equipment and storage; and the control room for the television studio. The two bathrooms (one of which is ADA compliant) will be available to the public if they enter the building, but will not be advertised as public bathrooms as MCCI does not have janitorial staff.

The exterior of the building will get an upgrade, though the bulk of MCCI's funds and attention will be dedicated to the inside, specifically the TV Studio, and the working area.

Operation Schedule

The working / welcome area will be staffed by MCTV at their current operation schedule for the purposes of MCTV business. MCCI does not have the budget to pay for Welcome Center staff, and so the welcome area will be un-manned, and informational in nature. MCTV may create an interactive screen in the future to further augment the welcome area's effectiveness.

Physical Attributes of the Interior

The existing floor tiles will not be removed, but instead sealed under a raised floor, comprised of 2x4 and insulating foam under plywood and industrial carpeting. This will make the building warmer and minimize noise and vibrations caused by passing traffic.

Ceiling tiles will hold two feet of insulation against the roof, and the walls will have six inches of insulation between the exterior brick and dry-wall. The result of the six sides of insulation (four walls, floor and ceiling) is a tight, super-insulated space.

HVAC will be provided by an electric-powered double split system, with units in each main area, providing flexibility in zoned temperature control and quieter operation.

Motivation for this Project

MCTV has been operating out of a very small space in terms of their needs. The studio was originally built by GCTV as a satellite office, and didn't think that full productions would ever be shot there. It was essentially just a point of camera pick up and content submission. Their main form of engagement with the community was a weekly Movie Night, using a small portable projection screen, and free popcorn.

With MCTV's growth between 2005 and 2013, the space was simply not sufficient. The main studio has an enormous jet engine-sized compressor mounted to the ceiling, and it periodically turns on, making TV production near impossible. There is room for only one edit station, and the storage closet is so small that some equipment is actually stored in the main studio itself.

In early 2013, there was a "Brain Trust" meeting called by Lisa Davol, who was the Turners Falls River Culture coordinator at the time. She needed office space. At this meeting, Mik Muller asked Frank Abbondanzio whether the old Cumberland Farms building was still occupied by the arts organization or the Native American organization that once occupied it. He said no.

With the sudden availability of the old Cumberland Farms building, in late winter of 2013, MCCI board members decided that they could approach the town with a coalition concept: to occupy the building and build a media center that had RiverCulture and the MBA embedded, providing them free desk and wall space to further their mission, while also furthering ours. Oh the projects we could spawn!

The new building would be called the **Grand Trunk Media Center**, named for the famed hotel that once stood there. (The Farren House, later known as the Grand Trunk Hotel, in Turner's Falls, MA, opened in 1872, it was the town's premier place to stay. It was torn down in 1968, and a gas station – Cumberland Farms – was built on the site in 1975.)