

NORTHSTAR CENTER

Minneapolis, Minnesota



Rippe Associates partnered with RSP Architect and Polaris Development Group to revitalize the foodservice operations at North Star Center, a mixed-use hub in downtown Minneapolis. This landmark project transformed the historic building's culinary spaces, reaffirming its status as a vibrant centerpiece for working, dining, and socializing. The scope of work encompassed modernizing multiple food concepts, addressing operational challenges, and ensuring seamless integration across the facility's diverse offerings.

On the ground floor, the Northstar Cafeteria and Krona Cafe take center stage, offering fresh dining options to visitors and tenants alike. The cafeteria features Midwest-inspired staples like chicken pot pie and beef stroganoff along with grab-and-go meals and integrates mid-century modern aesthetics, including terrazzo floors, geometric details, and molded plastic seating. Krona Cafe adds charm with its bakery-focused offerings, highlighted by freshly prepared doughnuts, and its La Marzocco espresso machine enhances the coffee experience. Adjacent to this is Walkin' Dog, a nostalgic hot dog stand at the heart of North Star's connection to the Minneapolis Skyway system. The General Store rounds out the street-level options with groceries, and convenient services for the downtown community.

The eighth floor elevates the dining and event experience. A spacious conference room accommodates up to 260 guests, while a connected terrace welcomes an additional 350, offering a versatile outdoor venue. The Rosewood Room, a deluxe bar and lounge, reflects the building's heritage and provides a seamless indoor-outdoor option with retractable doors. Support for these spaces comes from a seventh-floor production kitchen, equipped for bulk food preparation and event catering. A smaller warming kitchen on the eighth floor ensures efficient delivery during meetings and events.

This renovation was not without its challenges. Health department permitting delays, rooftop cooking regulations, and adjustments to ventless cooking equipment all required creative problem-solving. For instance, a rooftop grill station was reconfigured to use natural gas instead of propane, and ventless fryers prompted structural adaptations to provide adequate fresh air. Despite these hurdles, Rippe Associates delivered innovative solutions that maintained the project's timeline and operational goals.

With a total of 8,015 square feet dedicated to foodservice, the North Star Center exemplifies how thoughtfully designed dining spaces can anchor mixed-use facilities. Rippe Associates' expertise ensured that these spaces serve as a key driver of tenant engagement, creating a dynamic environment for work, socialization, and culinary exploration.

