

MN NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER- NEW ULM

New Ulm, Minnesota



The Minnesota National Guard Readiness Center in New Ulm represents a purpose-built facility designed to support the training, readiness, and daily operations of military personnel. Situated on a 30-acre site and encompassing approximately 54,000 square feet overall, the project includes a 1,778-square-foot foodservice component tailored to efficiently serve up to 300 soldiers during drill weekends. Engaged by Leo A Daly, Rippe Associates joined the project team to provide specialized foodservice design expertise, building on a history of successful collaboration on National Guard facilities.

The primary objective of the foodservice program was to deliver a highly functional, flexible kitchen capable of supporting breakfast, lunch, and dinner service within a condensed operational timeframe. Guided by the DG-415-5 Design Guidelines, the design integrates a hot production kitchen equipped to accommodate a varied and adaptable menu, along with strategically planned storage including walk-in refrigeration and freezer capacity to support bulk purchasing ahead of drill weekends. A stationary entrée line and a mobile salad bar located within the adjacent assembly hall provide efficient and scalable service options aligned with fluctuating demand.

Details

Opening Date: May 2025

Equipment Cost: \$434,255

Project Size: 1,778 SF

Scope

Design of a compact, high-efficiency foodservice operation within the new Readiness Center, supporting meal service for up to 300 soldiers. Rippe Associates provided a flexible kitchen layout, integrated storage, and scalable serving solutions aligned with military design guidelines and operational needs.

A key driver of the design was operational efficiency within a compact footprint. The layout carefully organizes production, storage, and service zones to minimize staff movement while maintaining clear and logical workflow. Refrigeration and dry storage are positioned to support both prep and cooking areas, while warewashing is integrated to streamline back-of-house operations. These decisions ensure the kitchen can perform reliably during peak service periods while remaining easy to operate with limited staff. The inclusion of mobile serving elements further enhances flexibility, allowing the space to adapt to varying service formats and event needs.

Sustainability and long-term performance were also integral to the project. Energy Star-rated equipment was specified wherever possible, complemented by a UL-listed exhaust hood with demand control ventilation to optimize energy use. Low-flow plumbing fixtures and LED lighting contribute to reduced resource consumption, supporting the Minnesota National Guard's broader operational efficiency goals. The result is a durable, high-performing foodservice operation that meets the immediate needs of its users while aligning with responsible design practices.

Through thoughtful planning and close collaboration with the project team, Rippe Associates delivered a foodservice solution that balances efficiency, flexibility, and reliability. The New Ulm Readiness Center stands as a strong example of how targeted, performance-driven design can support mission-critical environments while providing a high level of service to those it serves.

