



## **VBC's Propst Arena Backstage Renovation Project Receives Award of Merit**

*The General Contractor for the project, The Highland Group, was recently recognized for the VBC project at the Associated Builders and Contractors North Alabama Chapter's 2022 Excellence in Construction General Contractor Awards.*

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[\[Link to Pictures\]](#)

**Huntsville, Ala. (January 12, 2023)** – The recent Von Braun Center (VBC) Propst Arena backstage renovation project received accolades at the Associated Builders and Contractors of North Alabama's 19th Annual Excellence in Construction Awards Celebration. During the awards celebration The Highland Group, the leading commercial construction firm tasked with renovating the backstage area, received an Award of Merit for their part in completing the extensive renovations. The awarded project fell under the "Renovations Less Than 10 Million" category of the ceremony and was one of two awards The Highland Group was recognized for that night.

The VBC Propst Arena's approximately \$4 million renovation and expansion began in December 2020. The renovations were finalized ahead of schedule and under budget in October 2021, with Matheny Goldman Architects + Interiors and The Highland Group leading the project. This is the first major renovation to the arena's backstage since it was originally built in 1975.

"The intent of the project was to not only bring our backstage spaces up to current sports and entertainment standards, but to surpass the expectations that touring teams and stars come to expect," remarked VBC Executive Director Steve Maples. "We wanted to give them a 'wow' moment when they enter our facility, a reason not to stay on their bus, and ultimately leave a lasting impression they'll share with industry peers."

This renovation and expansion project included the addition of six dressing rooms, two private star lounges, four locker rooms, a catering and media room, office space, commercial-grade laundry room, and more. The final scope of the project came out to nearly 13,000 square feet including 4,800 square feet of new construction, and 8,200 square feet of renovations to the existing backstage area.



Left to right: The Highland Group's (HG) Senior VP of North Alabama, Michael Barnes; VBC Director of Facilities, Byron Clanton; HG Project Accountant, Avey Gooch; HG Assistant Project Manager, Howard Damen; and HG Senior Project Manager, Michael Gebler.

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“Growing up as a Huntsville native, a majority of my childhood was centered around the Von Braun Center with the arena hosting hockey tournaments, arena football, as well as my high school graduation,” said The Highland Group Senior Vice President of North Alabama Michael Barnes. “This facility had a huge impact on me as a child, so it was very personal for me to be able to continue the legacy for future generations with our addition and renovation. This fast-paced project was really put to the test from a supply chain standpoint as it was during the peak of Covid. However, with an exceptional team from the architecture firm, City of Huntsville, and the Board of Directors at the VBC we were able to finish the project in time for their concert season.”

Renovations to the VBC Propst Arena backstage area also included the installation of new lighting elements, paint, replacing ceiling tiles, refurbishing entrance doors, updating flooring and the creation of new directional signage.

To learn more about The Highland Group or the VBC Propst Arena backstage renovation project, visit their website at [www.HighlandGroup.org](http://www.HighlandGroup.org) or read their press release on the project [here](#).

For more information about the Von Braun Center and to see upcoming events, visit [www.vonbrauncenter.com](http://www.vonbrauncenter.com).

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### **About Von Braun Center**

The Von Braun Center is a multi-purpose facility located in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. The VBC offers multiple venues for presenting cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting and social events. Venue spaces include the Propst Arena, Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, Mars Music Hall, North Hall, South Hall, and East Hall. Additionally, the VBC has an on-site full-service restaurant and rooftop bar – Rhythm on Monroe. With over 170,000 square feet of flexible meeting space the VBC is able to accommodate events of all types and sizes.

### **About The Highland Group**

The Highland Group is a real estate development and commercial construction firm that specializes in real estate development, preconstruction services, general contracting, construction management, and design-build delivery. Its mission is to develop leaders committed to higher standards who have an impact on their firm and the communities in which they work and live by developing trusting relationships and building quality projects. The Highland Group has offices located in the Gulf Coast Region (501 South McKenzie Street, Suite 2, Foley, Alabama, 36535), the Tennessee Valley Region (415-H Church Street NW, Suite 201, Huntsville, Alabama, 35801), and the Florida Panhandle Region (130 Richard Jackson Blvd., Suite 104A, Panama City Beach, Florida, 32407). They have been proudly serving clients throughout the Southeastern United States since 2005.