

## COLLABORATING TO SAVE SPACE

### THE FIELD MUSEUM AND SPACESAVER WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE SPACE AND PRESERVE A ENTOMOLOGY COLLECTION

Positioned on iconic Lake Shore Drive, The Field Museum is part of Chicago's Museum Campus, drawing more than 1.2 million visitors annually and serving as home to more than 25 million specimens. More than 12.5 million of these specimens are part of the Division of Insects, which is of worldwide importance to researchers.

The sheer size of the Division of Insects' collection calls for a comprehensive – and vast – storage system to contain the specimens, many of which are extremely rare and fragile. When the division decided to relocate and consolidate the collection into a new space, the storage solution needed to protect the specimens while allowing easy access for

staff and researchers. Spacesaver was selected to serve as the project's general contractor, coordinating the manufacture and installation of specified products.

#### A TIGHT FIT

Space was tight in the collections storage area. The footprint had no room to spare, and the area had a relatively low ceiling height, particularly after allowing for fire code requirements and sprinkler compliance.

The challenge was to create a system that would store specimens securely while still allowing enough space for researchers to comfortably access the collection. Spacesaver also needed to match new drawers to drawers that the museum already owned, some of which were decades old, with the goal of fitting all drawers in new cabinets.

#### CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SPACE CONSTRAINTS

Partway through the design process, a significant system redesign was required due to new height restrictions. Spacesaver revamped the entire bid to maximize the collection capacity as much as possible within the overall project budget. Working creatively to address the site's severe height constraints and the client's need to accommodate drawers of slightly varying sizes, Spacesaver submitted the most responsive bid and was awarded the project.

Due to the nature of the cabinets' use, the planning team wanted the following options:



Sturdy museum cabinets were custom designed to accommodate new drawers that matched the extensive collection's existing drawers.

- Because of ceiling height issues, the cabinets were re-engineered to fall within the 18.5" fire code regulation.
- A molded, fumigant-resistant, closed-cell elastomeric gasket with an adhesive back was mounted within a recessed steel channel around the door perimeter
- The gasket provided a secure door seal protecting against air, water, dust and light, which is critical to the collection.
- Lift-off door hinges with a 180-degree swing allow for easy and complete access to the wooden drawers by researchers and collection managers.
- A three-point latching mechanism offers positive engagement at the top, bottom and center of the door, keeping it completely airtight against the elastomeric seal.

Spacesaver delivered two prototypes to check manufacturing details and match the fit of existing drawers.

Ultimately, 1,120 cabinets were manufactured and delivered over a period of four months. Throughout the project, Spacesaver worked closely with key contacts at The Field Museum on its collection area renovation project, and Spacesaver install the cabinets on compactor systems.



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