

# Texas Wal-Mart Made into Public Library Nets Award

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The [McAllen Public Library](#) in Texas used to be a Wal-Mart. Recently [selected as the winner](#) of the International Interior Design Association's 2012 Library Interior Design Competition, the 124,500-square-foot building is believed to be the largest single-story library in the U.S.

The second-largest, according to the city of McAllen, is in Overland Park, Kan. It's a cramped 90,000 square feet.

After the retailer abandoned the building last year, McAllen hired Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle Ltd. to renovate it. More than 2,000 people gathered for the new library's grand opening in December 2011. Within the first month of opening, new user registration for the library had increased 23 percent.

"This is an investment in the future," McAllen Mayor Richard Cortez said, reported [The Monitor](#). "Everyone knows that a society is empowered through knowledge and education. We're hoping that the community, especially the children will take advantage and further their education."

McAllen's old main library opened in 1950 and only had a third of the floor space of the new location even though it had three floors. The extra room at the Wal-Mart location has allowed the city to more than double the number of computers available to the public. Other new amenities include: a teen area, cafe, auditorium, quiet reading room, self-checkout units, art gallery, electronic classrooms, meeting rooms with audiovisual services, an expanded children's area, used bookstore and an automated materials handling system.

Photos of the new library are [here](#) and [here](#).

**Video:** Take a tour of the library as it was under construction last year.

<http://www.govtech.com/health/Texas-Wal-Mart-Public-Library-Nets-Award.html>