



NEW EOC PROJECT EVOLVES

With nearly \$4.5 million in state and federal grants earmarked for construction of a new Lake County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ideas of how large a facility is needed



and what may be included in the building are beginning to take shape.

An EOC is the physical location where Lake County comes together during an emergency to coordinate response & recovery actions and resources. The EOC is not an incident command post; rather, it is the operations center where coordination and management decisions are facilitated.

The Lake County EOC is currently located in the Lake County Administration Building, and during times of need, it brings together key agencies in one room to facilitate sheltering of evacuees, search & rescue, law enforcement, debris removal and other emergency activities. During the Groundhog Day Tornadoes in February 2007, more than five dozen staffers jammed into a makeshift training room working around the clock for several weeks.

Combined with the activations for the 2004 hurricanes and several other incidents in the past several years, such as tropical storms and wildfires, it has become apparent to officials that a

larger, more secure and permanent facility is required.

“We’re probably the only emergency operations center in the country with skylights,” said Jerry Smith, Director of the Lake County Emergency Management Division. “In 2004, these did leak. They have made some renovations to them since then, but it is still a concern. If those were to break, it would cause a disruption in service.”

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners approved at a meeting in March to move forward with the programming phase of the EOC project at the current site of the Judicial Center parking lot.

“The idea is to have the EOC being built at the same time as the Judicial Center expansion, so there will be two buildings being built on the same site,”

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ROLL CALL

There are several different projects underway for the Lake County Department of Facilities Development & Management. Here are a few developments:

- ▶ **Judicial Center expansion;** Groundbreaking scheduled for end of June
- ▶ **Lake County Sheriff’s Office South District Substation;** Currently under construction
- ▶ **Fire Station in Paisley;** Construction is 60 percent complete



- ▶ **Judicial Center envelope project;** Construction began in March



The Department of Facilities Development & Management recently moved from its offices from 416 W. Main St. in Tavares to 1300 S. Duncan Drive, Building B, in Tavares. The move was necessary, as the Department's Main Street offices are scheduled to be razed for the expansion of the Judicial Center.

COMMISSION APPROVES ADDITION TO WAREHOUSE

At its last meeting in February, the Lake County Board of County Commissioners approved an addition to the County warehouse, located on County Road 473 in Leesburg.

The current 24,000-square-foot facility is storage for a variety of County operations, including facilities maintenance, Sheriff's Office, Clerk of Courts and surplus items from other County functions. The drawback to the existing facility is it is not environmentally controlled.

"When it comes to records, it has to be climate controlled and that's the purpose of the addition," said Kristian

Swenson, Interim Director of the Lake County Department of Facilities Development & Management.

The new 13,000-square-foot, climate-controlled warehouse addition will primarily be utilized for Clerk of Courts record storage, which will supplement its current records storage facility on Bloxam Avenue in Tavares. The addition will also handle records storage for the Lake County Board of County Commissioners, which is administered by the Department of Information Technology.

The project is slated to cost \$1.06 million. Prior to awarding the construc-

tion contract to Conrad Construction of Sanford, staff investigated, through an engineering study, the possibility of modifying the existing County warehouse facility to provide environmentally-controlled archival storage space. The estimated cost to convert 12,500 square feet of space to climate-controlled records storage was a little less than \$970,000. The cost to convert the entire facility to an environmental-controlled space was \$1.1 million.

"As these costs are very close to the cost of providing additional building space, it was felt that the additional space acquisition would benefit the County in the long term," Swenson said.

NEW PROJECT

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said Kristian Swenson, Interim Director of the Lake County Department of Facilities Development & Management.

The Judicial Center expansion is expected to begin in June, and EOC construction could follow later, but the goal is to have both buildings finished at the same time in 2012. First, the idea of the proposed EOC facility must be refined with a firm cost estimate.

"The programming phase includes a needs assessment and it helps to figure out how much space is needed and what are all the items that need to go in the facility," Swenson said. "From the programming phase, a cost can be established of how much it would be to construct the proposed facility."