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News Release

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Wayne County officials to break ground on \$300-million jail facility

(DETROIT) -- Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and Sheriff Benny Napoleon will break ground on a new, state-of-art \$300-million jail facility Thursday.

"Building a new jail isn't cause to celebrate," said Ficano. "What we are saying is in these economic times, you have to look at everything in terms of improving efficiency and cutting costs. That's what this project will do."

The 715,000-square-foot new Wayne County Jail will be located on the corner of Gratiot Avenue and St. Antoine (across the street from the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice).

With 2,192 beds, the new facility will consolidate prisoners from the two downtown jails as well as the Hamtramck jail.

It's slated to open July 2014.

Utilizing new technologies and consolidating prisoners, the new facility will save the county approximately \$20 million per year, enough to service the annual debt and still have \$2 to \$3 million left in savings.

"There is no question this center is crucial to alleviating many of our fiscal issues," said Sheriff Napoleon. "We know that we cannot incarcerate our way out of the ills plaguing our county. However, we can take the measured steps to streamline our system so that money we have available is being used to its utmost benefit. "

This is one of the largest construction initiatives Wayne County has undertaken in several years.

By adopting proven, best-practice technologies in the new facility, less manpower will be needed to supervise prisoners, and prisoner-movement will be kept to a minimum, creating safer environments for employees and prisoners.

One new feature will be video visitation. No longer will prisoners have to be moved from their cells to see a visitor. From their cells and with the use of cameras and television screens, prisoners will see relatives and clergy in a separate, first-floor room.

Wayne County officials estimate that about 2000 to 2,500 jobs will be created by the project's end.

The project's total cost includes construction, excavation of the site and architectural and legal fees.

Wayne County, in an effort to stimulate local economic activity, used a consulting firm to pre-qualify contractors. To date, approximately 425 potential contractors have been pre-qualified, of which 60 percent are Wayne County- and City of Detroit-based.

Plans are to demolish the two downtown jails upon the completion of the new facility.

The groundbreaking ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 15, on site, at the corner of Gratiot and St. Antoine.

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