Monterey County Administrative Office

CAO Weekly Report

The week of August 6, 2018

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The courtyard of the East West Wing is now an elegant open space.

County Notes

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East West Wing Shines Once Again, Opens its Doors

Movers are already hard at work resettling the District Attorney’s Office from the old portable buildings behind the courthouse in Salinas into the East West Wing; but throughout the process, you can see staff carrying or rolling boxes as well.

And who can blame them? This is a move 14 years in the making.
The long-awaited completion of the East Wing renovation brings this architectural gem back into service along with its historical artworks and air of elegance for all to enjoy; but it is a project that was not without its challenges, both to manage and to finance.

“From the beginning, this project was challenging due to its size, historical designation and the condition of the building,” says Assistant CAO Dewayne Woods who oversaw the project. “Thanks to the vision of the Board of Supervisors and its willingness to take a risk, we now have a re-polished gem that will benefit the community for years to come.”

Badly in need of space, the District Attorney’s Office moved out of the building in 2004 into portables used during the Administration building’s construction, with a promise the building would be renovated in a little more than a year’s time.

The buildings were vacated in 2010 and shifting finances meant renovation efforts could not be studied until 2014, with demolition and construction starting last year.

The work was extensive. The interior was gutted and completely remodeled for a modern work environment. The buildings original and historic windows were restored but some with a new twist - bullet proof glass in some places for security.
The old Board of Supervisors chambers is now a large meeting/training room but it includes some of the original chamber’s carved benches.

On the outside, it was a makeover on a grand scale: a new roof, the building exterior washed giving the historic heads featured throughout the building walls a refreshed gaze. The courtyard was remodeled to look more like it did when originally built in 1933, an elegant, wide space to linger or pass through. The courtyard’s centerpiece, a fountain feature with a Jo Mora sculpture, hosts low plantings to showcase the artwork. Gone are the maze-like hedges.

The District Attorney will be the primary occupant although the Civil Grand Jury, Law Library and the new Jo’s Café have space in the East Wing first floor.

In the West Wing on the first floor is the entrance to the DA’s Office, meeting rooms for truancy programs and a separate entrance for those using the Victims of Crime Unit. The second and third floors are office and workspace, the fourth floor holds the District Attorney’s armory and evidence storage.

While the interior still has some touches from the old days, it is firmly rooted in the present. If you visit, you’ll notice all restrooms are ‘all gender.’

The move for the District Attorney will be completed this weekend, and those offices will open their doors to the public Monday morning, August 13th. Congratulations to all involved for bringing this county treasure back to serve the public once again.
Civil Rights Office Relocating

Also on the move, the Civil Rights Office, which has been headquartered in the Administration Building on Alisal Street.

That office is relocating to Schilling Place Monday and Tuesday of next week. Its new home will be in the Schilling Place Complex’s North Building, across the hall from the Elections Department.

The primary driver behind the move is to better serve clients. Civil Rights Officer Juan Rodriguez says for some, coming to his office can be difficult. The new offices have a separate entrance, which offers more privacy.

“Our intent is to create an environment where employees and members of the public feel comfortable coming to talk with us,” says Rodriguez. “We know that sometimes, coming to the Civil Rights Office to discuss a workplace challenge can be stressful. We want to minimize that stress by having a more private meeting space, we also hope this can be a gathering place for conversations about civil rights and racial equity.”

The office’s phone number remains the same, 755-5117; look for an invitation to an open house in the near future.

The Civil Rights lending library will be available at the new location but you can browse the selection online. For those with concerns during the transition, here are links to the complaint process and reasonable accommodation requests.

Surplus Sale Lures Local Shoppers

Who doesn’t love a great sale? That was certainly the case as more than 100 buyers came to check out last week’s County Surplus sale.

This was one of the best crowds in recent memory, fueled by lots of chatter about the sale on

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County social media sites. What the county deems surplus can be a boon to local businesses or those with home offices, or people looking for storage equipment for home or garage.

County Contracts and Purchasing has been holding surplus sales every couple of months to reduce the inventory of office equipment that came with the Schilling Place complex. Patrons at the sale included county employees looking for equipment and furnishings as well as members of the public.

The sale lasted just three hours, and sales tallied $2,200.

Remember, County departments don’t need a sale to check out surplus items. Just call Contracts and Purchasing for information or an appointment.

But if you love a good sale, there will be another surplus sale this month, this time it will be at the modular offices behind the Administration Building currently being vacated by the District Attorney’s Office.

County departments can come through and check out what is available on August 20th, there will be a public sale on August 21st. Watch for additional details.