



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF INYO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 3, 2020

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Inyo County, Developer to Break Ground on Consolidated Office Building

Inyo County officials and representatives from Wolverine/Inyo LLC will officially break ground on the Consolidated Office Building in Bishop this Friday, March 6, 2020. The public is invited to attend the ceremony – an occasion at least 10 years in the making – at the site of the future building at 1360 N. Main St. (north of Grocery Outlet).

The groundbreaking begins at 10 a.m. and will include light refreshments and remarks from County officials and principles for the developer, Wolverine/Inyo LLC.

“After some time in the making, we’re excited to bring all of Inyo County’s Bishop departments together into one single structure,” said developer Jim Leslie, principle of Wolverine Interests. “The new municipal building will promote efficiency and pride in the community.”

“Our current Board as well as past boards of supervisors have worked for over a decade to make this building possible,” Board Chairperson and Fifth District Supervisor Matt Kingsley said. “This building is not a monument to county government, but rather an efficient and simple building that will save future generations millions of tax dollars and provide consistent and comfortable working space for our county employees.”

The two-story, 42,000 square-foot building will house in a single location the Bishop operations of approximately 16 departments currently spread across 8 separate locations in the City of Bishop, including Probation, Health & Human Services, Administration, County Counsel, Information Services, Risk Management, Parks, Motor Pool, Solid Waste, Child Support Services, District Attorney, Environmental Health, Veterans Services, Sheriff, UCE Farm Advisor, and the Public Administrator-Public Guardian.

The Independence and/or Lone Pine locations of these same departments will remain in Independence and Lone Pine with their current staff. The Board of Supervisors has been adamant that the new building in Bishop not result in the relocation of any staff or services from the southern end of the county.

The project has been in the works since 2010, when the County determined that renting office space all over the city for its Bishop-based programs was neither financially sustainable nor in the best interest of the public and its employees. With ever-increasing rent and repair and maintenance costs at the different sites – some of which are beyond their useful life and not conducive to healthy, productive working environments or efficient service delivery – the County landed on a plan to build a new facility to better suit the various departments’ needs, improve customer service, and save taxpayer money over the long-term.

“Not only will the new building provide a better environment for our constituents and employees,” said District 2 Supervisor Jeff Griffiths, “but we will also save millions of taxpayer dollars in the years to come.”

The County entered into an exclusive negotiating agreement with a developer in 2011, and after several public meetings in 2013, directed staff to move forward with negotiations. Those negotiations stalled out, but were resumed in 2017 and resulted in more favorable lease terms and pricing for the County. County Administrator Clint Quilter and the Board of Supervisors give much credit for the successful negotiations to County Counsel Marshall Rudolph.

“Mr. Rudolph was able to work through some difficult legal situations and worked with the developer to come up with innovative, outside-the-box solutions to move the project forward,” Quilter said.

He and the Board also credited real estate consultant Allan D. Kotin for his expertise in conducting several cost analyses and presenting the Board with options for moving forward with the project. They also noted the tremendous effort put into steering the project forward by former County Administrator Officer Kevin Carunchio, who worked on the idea of a Consolidated Office Building with the Board and public for 8 years.

The Board approved a Build-to-Suit Lease Agreement with Wolverine/Inyo LLC on January 15, 2019. Per the agreement, Wolverine/Inyo LLC will develop the property to the County’s specifications, and receive lease payments from Inyo County over a 20-year period. Title to the property transfers to Inyo County at the end of the 20-year lease. Cost analyses were conducted on other potential locations in Bishop, including the old Kmart Building and the Cottonwood Grove center. These analyses identified the Consolidated Office Building as the best value. The building is expected to generate substantial savings in general. The County will begin saving money over its current leased facility, including maintenance and utilities, in 7 years and lease payments will go away entirely in 20 years.

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