



Judges unveil new courthouse design to Woodland Council

By GEOFF JOHNSON

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Yolo County judges unveiled Tuesday night their designs for a courthouse designed to last through the next century.

The 14-courtroom, 163,000-square-foot courthouse has long been anticipated at the corner of Fifth and Main streets in downtown Woodland. Once built, it is expected to concentrate the traffic from seven other buildings into one -- a move meant not only to enhance the safety and convenience of judges, attorneys and court officials but also to infuse downtown Main Street with new life.

Presiding Judge Dave Rosenberg, who's handled much of the courthouse publicity so far, explained to Tuesday's City Council meeting that the wide, four-story building was designed to be inviting and will be almost literally transparent, with enormous glass windows on the north and south sides of the building that will allow future passerbys to look inside.

"It's not closed to the public, it's open," Rosenberg said.

But judges also wanted the building to be recognizable as a courthouse and included in its design four towering columns at the north entrance, as well as a series of shorter, smaller columns running along either side of it.

"This reflects the dignity of the court, and yet, I think it's a very welcoming building," Rosenberg said.

The building will be built to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's Gold standard and feature improvements to security such as separate hallways for the public, court staff and in-custody defendants,

as well as better seismic safety, access and efficiency for staff and visitors.

Work will begin on the building in 2013 without using a single taxpayer dollar, he said. The building's construction is paid for by a state fund made up of collected court fees.

Councilman Tom Stallard said he was just grateful that the courthouse would keep defendants off the streets, who are still sometimes walked from courthouse to courthouse.

"We will no longer have to look at the unfortunate sight of inmates being transferred through our streets in jail chains," he said.

In a news release following the presentation, Rosenberg said the courthouse is also expected to generate hundreds of construction jobs and thousands more jobs through indirect benefit to the local economy.

The project's construction manager at risk, currently being selected, will conduct local outreach to ensure that qualified local subcontractors and suppliers have the opportunity to participate in bidding, currently scheduled for late 2012.

