



## Yolo gets first look at new county courthouse

By KATHERINE JARVIS / Daily Democrat

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Yolo County's new courthouse will be modern but not so much it will take away from downtown Woodland's historic characteristics.

More modern attributes include large windows and a glass lobby that will allow people to look into the courthouse from Main Street. But the courthouse entrance will have four large pillars, resembling the current building.

"You can see right into the courthouse," said Presiding Judge Dave Rosenberg Tuesday. "We wanted to demystify the courthouse." Yolo Superior Court released images of the courthouse's front side Tuesday evening at the Woodland City Council meeting.

Rosenberg, Court Executive Officer Jim Perry and Assistant Court Executive Officer Shawn Landry met with representatives from area newspapers

before the meeting.

"We're very mindful this first historic courthouse has served us well for a century," Rosenberg said. "Our intent is to build a new courthouse that will stand and serve the community for the next century."

The current courthouse was built in 1917 and stands four stories, although the fourth story is not accessible to the public. The new five-story building will be located at 1000 Main Street with the entrance facing Main Street between Fifth and Sixth streets on the south side.

"It was important to keep the courthouse in downtown Woodland," Landry said.

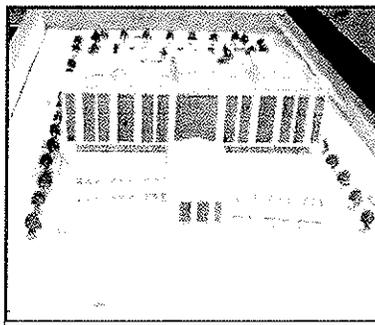
All the court facilities will be housed in one building, instead of six, which Rosenberg called "really amazing." The building will be 163,000 square feet

when complete.

"We built this building from the inside out," Rosenberg said, referring to designs. "The first step was what the courtroom would look like."

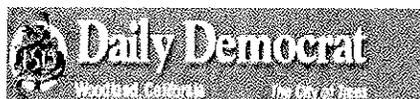
Current courtrooms are below the minimum standard size, Rosenberg said. Department 1 is the largest at 1,400 square feet while Department 6 is the smallest at less than 1,000 square feet.

The new courtrooms will be between 1,700 and 2,200 square feet. The largest courtrooms will be the most-used arraignment and small claims, traffic



A model of the proposed new Yolo County Courthouse. The building is scheduled for completion in 2013 and will be 163,000 square feet and five stories high. (Katherine Jarvis/Democrat)

and unlawful detainers. People will be able to get around the courthouse easier with seven elevators, including two that will transport inmates from a basement sallyport to the courtroom, Landry said. At



the current courthouse, inmates walk through the halls with security, momentarily stopping the public from walking around the court.

Yolo County is building its courthouse for what is needed now - 14 courtrooms. The state does not build facilities for the future, Rosenberg said.

"We've designed a facility the best we can to allow for future expansion," he said. "The third floor is laid out in a way that could be converted to four courtrooms."

The State Court Facilities Construction Fund, or SB 1407, provides the \$167.3 million needed to build Yolo County's courthouse. The funding is not from taxpayer dollars but from the fees defendants pay.

According to the California Courts website, it will cost \$605 per square foot to build the structure.

The funding for courthouse projects throughout the state was in flux following \$1.1 billion in cuts to the state's Judicial Branch. But Rosenberg is confident Yolo County will keep its funding as the courthouse is a high-priority project statewide.

The project should have a contractor next month as well as preliminary designs and drawings. Perry said 12 contractors have applied. The construction could bring "a major financial boost to Woodland," Rosenberg said.

A groundbreaking ceremony should be this spring at the Main Street site with construction beginning late 2012, Rosenberg said. Court officials could move from the current to new courthouse in late 2013.

The county will take over the courthouse when the new one opens.

"The challenge will be converting the building to county use," Rosenberg said.