

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102-3688

TO: Members of the Judicial Council

FROM: Hon. Terence L. Bruiniers, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of Contra Costa County

DATE: September 25, 2008

SUBJECT: Facilities: Naming of the Contra Costa East County Courthouse (Action  
Required)

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Issue Statement

We will shortly commence construction in Contra Costa County of the first new state-funded trial court facility. A ceremonial groundbreaking has been tentatively scheduled for December 12, 2008, and it is expected that the building will be completed in June 2010. The new seven-courtroom courthouse, located in the City of Pittsburg, will be a regional justice center serving the rapidly growing eastern population centers in our county. It will include juvenile and family law courtrooms and will replace an aging and inadequate building that was determined by the Judicial Council to qualify as an “immediate need” priority for replacement.

During the planning and development phases, the new building has been referred to generically as the East County Court House (ECCH). Rather than assigning a generic name to what will be a historic first, it is the desire of our bench and of our bar to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of a particularly distinguished jurist and a pioneering member of the bar in eastern Contra Costa County, Judge Richard E. Arnason, by naming the new facility in his honor.

Recommendation

On behalf of the bench of the Superior Court of Contra Costa County and the Contra Costa County Bar Association, we respectfully request that the Judicial Council approve and authorize the naming of the new East Contra Costa County Court House as the Richard E. Arnason Justice Center.

Rationale for Recommendation

Judge Arnason was appointed to the Contra Costa Superior Court in October 1963, serving as presiding judge in 1968 and 1978. Since his official “retirement” in 1995, he has continued to sit on assignment with our court, handling a felony trial department, and

he has been considered the “dean” of this bench for many years. Over the years he has regularly served as a faculty member for a wide range of criminal justice programs of the Center for Judicial Education and Research. He is a well known and well respected jurist with a statewide reputation and was named Judge of the Year by the California Trial Lawyers Association in 1978.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Arnason, who is a 1945 graduate of Boalt Hall, practiced in the city of Antioch in eastern Contra Costa County, establishing the firm of Hamm, Arnason, Waldie & Rockwell in 1949. He was active in civic affairs in eastern Contra Costa County, serving on the Antioch Personnel Board, the Board of Trustees of the Antioch Unified School District, the Board of Directors of Delta Memorial Hospital, and as President of the Antioch chamber of Commerce.

We can think of no one more deserving of having his name permanently associated with our new regional justice center, and this proposal has the unanimous support of our bench. I can further represent that we have the enthusiastic support of the Contra Costa County Bar Association, as expressed by its board of directors.

I have discussed this matter at length with the Administrative Office of the Courts’ Office of Court Construction and Management (OCCM). Recognizing that, as of yet, no policies or protocols have been developed to address naming of newly constructed state trial court facilities, that office has no objection to this proposal. OCCM has requested that we seek prompt action to permit planning for signage.