



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA • ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Project Advisory Group Named for New Los Banos Courthouse

San Francisco—The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Superior Court of Merced County have named a project advisory group for the proposed new Los Banos courthouse. The proposed project, currently in the earliest phase of site selection, would replace the current courthouse, with a new two-courtroom facility. The existing building is overcrowded, functionally deficient, and significantly lacking in security features meeting current standards.

Members represent a broad base of community-elected officials and leaders in addition to the Superior Court and the AOC. A list of project advisory group members is attached.

The Administrative Office of the Courts is the staff agency of the Judicial Council, the policymaking body of the California courts. Among its responsibilities, the AOC now manages all courthouses statewide. The AOC is managing all aspects of the proposed new Los Banos courthouse project, working with officials from the court.

The Project Advisory Group will provide advice and input to the project, primarily during site selection and design. The site selection process typically takes one to two years. The AOC and the Project Advisory Group will first establish criteria for site selection. The panel will validate a ranking of a short list of potential sites based on these criteria. The AOC will ultimately select preferred and alternate potential sites to be approved by the State Public Works Board. Following that approval, the AOC will conduct environmental work in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The public will be invited to review and comment on the draft environmental report.

Later this month, the AOC expects to begin the process of selecting an architectural and engineering firm for the project. The final selection will be announced in mid-2010.

The proposed project, with an estimated total cost of \$32.6 million, is funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances new and renovated court facilities using court user fees rather than the state's General Fund.

More information about the project:

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_losbanos.htm

(more)

**New Los Banos Courthouse, Superior Court of Merced County
Project Advisory Group**

Mr. Edward M. Amaral, Attorney at Law, Germino, Amaral, & Jordan, Los Banos
Commander Gary Brizzee, City of Los Banos Police Department
Mr. Jim Brown, Assistant County Executive Officer, County of Merced
Mr. Larry Combs, County Executive Officer, County of Merced
Ms. Kim Davis, Manager, Design and Construction, AOC
Ms. Kathleen Goetsch, Executive Officer, Superior Court of Merced County
Hon. John D. Kiriara, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Merced County
Chief Mark Knapp, Chief of Police, City of Los Banos Police Department
Ms. Donnelle Long, Deputy Court Administrator, Superior Court of Merced County
Hon. Brian L. McCabe, Assistant Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Merced County
Mr. Paul Menard, Senior Facilities Planner, AOC
Hon. Jerry O'Banion, Supervisor, County of Merced Board of Supervisors
Sheriff Mark Pazin, Merced County Sheriff
Mr. Steve Rath, City Manager, City of Los Banos
Ms. Marty Shugart, Supervisor, Clerk's Office, Superior Court of Merced County
Mr. Joe Thims, Senior Security Coordinator, AOC
Mr. William A. Vaughn, City Attorney, City of Los Banos
Sergeant Gerard Verderber, Merced County Sheriff
Mr. Steve Wagner, Facility Operations Supervisor, AOC
Ms. Jeannette Wong, Senior Real Estate Analyst, AOC

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.