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## **Architect Selected for Fresno County Courthouse Renovation**

SAN FRANCISCO—The award-winning Northern California architectural firm Ratcliff has been selected to design the renovation of the Fresno County Courthouse, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) announced today. The proposed project, which is in the preliminary design phase, will improve the safety, security, and functionality of the courthouse as the Superior Court of Fresno County's primary criminal court facility.

Presiding Judge Gary Hoff of the Superior Court of Fresno County indicated that the judges are very excited about this important and long-overdue project. The main courthouse in Fresno opened in 1964, and over the years, the design of the building has caused problems associated with public and ADA accessibility and operational efficiencies. "This renovation will enable the Court to accomplish its mission of providing better access by, and service to, the public," Hoff said.

This project was ranked in the "immediate need" category in the judicial branch's capital-outlay plan, making it among the branch's highest-priority infrastructure projects. The project is currently in the preliminary design stage, awaiting the engagement of the architecture firm and a construction-manager-at-risk. Work will be completed in phases while the building is occupied, and the project is scheduled for completion in early 2016.

Ratcliff Architects arose from the ashes of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and has been designing schools, churches, hospitals and office buildings with an eye on sustainable architecture that preserves the earth's resources and creates healthy indoor environments. Among its most notable projects are the Oakland International Airport terminal expansion, the John Muir Medical Center Campus in Walnut Creek, the renovated and expanded San Mateo County Health Center, and the University of California at Berkeley Law Library expansion and renovation. Ratcliff was named the California Council of the American Institute of Architects' Firm of the Year in 2005.

The renovated Fresno courthouse is among 41 projects to be funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments, without reliance on the state's General Fund. To date, 36 architectural firms have been selected or hired for trial court capital projects in the AOC's courthouse construction program. The overall program will create thousands more jobs in local communities as the projects proceed through design and construction over the next five years.

More information about the project is on the California Courts website at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects\\_fresno\\_renovate.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_fresno_renovate.htm)

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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.*