



NEWS RELEASE OC 06-11
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Architect Selected for Nevada City Courthouse

SAN FRANCISCO—The award-winning national architectural firm of SmithGroup has been selected to design the new Nevada City Courthouse, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) announced today. The proposed project, which is in the earliest phase of site selection, will replace the court's space in the current Nevada City Courthouse and Annex. The court's current space is unsafe, substandard, overcrowded, and functionally deficient. A state study applying current design standards indicates that the court needs more than twice the square footage it currently occupies.

This project was ranked as "critical need" in the judicial branch's capital-outlay plan, making it among the branch's highest-priority infrastructure projects. The project is currently in site selection. The local Court, AOC, and a project advisory group that includes members of the local community are reviewing potential sites. As announced previously, the AOC has also engaged the firm of RossDrulisCusenbery for a study to re-evaluate the feasibility and costs of reusing the existing downtown site. Architectural design for the proposed 6-courtroom building must wait until a site is selected and acquisition is approved by the State Public Works Board. Site selection and acquisition is typically a two-year process. The project is scheduled for completion in fall 2015.

SmithGroup, founded in 1853, is the oldest continuously practicing architecture and engineering firm in the U.S. The national firm serves a diverse clientele, including federal government agencies, colleges and universities, healthcare providers, research institutions, and Fortune 500 corporations. A leading sustainable design firm, SmithGroup has designed more than 50 projects to be certified by LEED, the design standard of the U.S. Green Building Council. Among its numerous projects is a molecular foundry for Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the award-winning Cathedral Hill Hospital for California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, and historic reuse of the Christman Building in Lansing, Michigan, the world's first dual LEED Platinum certified project. For the AOC, SmithGroup has also designed the new Hollister Courthouse, due to break ground next month.

The new Nevada City 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_nevada.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.