



**NEWS RELEASE** OC 35-10  
Contact: Teresa Ruano, 415-865-7447

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Site Selection Begins for New Mojave Courthouse Project**

SAN FRANCISCO—A market survey to identify potential site options for a new courthouse in Mojave is beginning with the selection of a local broker by the state Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project. Coldwell Banker Best Realty, of Tehachapi, will focus on potential sites in Mojave. The project requires 2.6 acres for the new courthouse and associated parking for the staff and public. The process will evaluate both publicly held and privately owned potential sites.

The AOC will work with the Superior Court of Kern County and a local project advisory group, to be selected in the coming weeks, to determine site selection criteria, tour prospective sites, and rank the sites according to the site selection criteria. The proposed project will replace the significantly overcrowded, physically deficient Mojave Justice Center with a modern, secure courthouse with three courtrooms in 40,655 square feet. It will enable the court to greatly improve security and provide basic services currently not possible because of space limits, such as a self-help center; jury assembly room, attorney-client meeting rooms, and a children's waiting room. The proposed project also includes surface parking for 135 staff, visitors, and jurors.

“Whether you work at the courthouse, appear at the courthouse, or serve as a juror, the new courthouse will be a great improvement over the current facility,” said Supervising Judge Cory L. Woodward, Eastern Division, Superior Court of Kern County. “East Kern court users will not have to stand in a hallway while discussing private issues easily overheard by others standing nearby. Jurors will be able to assemble in a room exclusively for them instead of taking over the employee break room. Our employees will be more efficient, with space to work and storage on location rather than several miles away. Everyone will benefit, and East Kern is fortunate to be at the top of the list for replacement of its courthouse facility.”

The proposed project, ranked as an “immediate need” by the Judicial Council, is funded by Senate Bill 1407. According to Chief Justice Ronald M. George, “Strengthening the physical foundation of our judicial system is more than a metaphor. Courthouses are as vital a part of California’s infrastructure as bridges, highways, and water systems. It is time to adequately fund this fundamental component of the infrastructure of our democracy. Public safety and the interests of 38 million Californians require it.”

SB 1407 was enacted by the state Legislature last year to provide up to \$5 billion in funding for critically needed new and renovated court facilities using court user fees rather than the state’s General Fund. To initiate each SB 1407 project, the AOC seeks funding authorization from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee of the State Legislature as well as the SPWB. This initial funding

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approval enables the AOC to proceed with site selection and preliminary plans, which is the initial phase of architectural design. The Mojave project was authorized in April 2010.

These projects provide valuable economic stimulus in local communities—the Mojave courthouse project is estimated to create several hundred direct and indirect jobs as it progresses through design, construction, and completion. Expediting these projects enables the AOC to take advantage of a unique window of opportunity—afforded by the current recession—for reduced pricing on land, design, and construction. The Mojave courthouse project is scheduled for completion by fall 2015.

More information about the project: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects\\_mojave.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_mojave.htm)

More information about the AOC's process for building courthouses in California:  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/building.htm](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/building.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.*