



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
94102-3688  
Tel 415-865-4200  
TDD 415-865-4272  
Fax 415-865-4205  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)

## FACT SHEET

June 2007

### Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Funding Requests

#### *Lassen—New Susanville Courthouse*

Calaveras—New San Andreas Courthouse  
Los Angeles—New Long Beach Courthouse  
Madera—New Madera Courthouse  
Riverside—New Riverside Mid-County Region Courthouse  
San Benito—New Hollister Courthouse  
San Bernardino—New San Bernardino Courthouse  
San Joaquin—New Stockton Courthouse  
Tulare—New Porterville Courthouse

In April 2007 the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital Outlay Plan that includes 175 new construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.8 billion (January 2007 dollars). In August 2006 the Judicial Council directed staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to submit, as part of the fiscal year 2007–2008 budget process, funding requests for nine new trial court facilities. The initial funding request for these nine urgently needed projects is \$31.2 million in 2007-2008 with total project costs estimated to be \$1.2 billion, which would be funded by State Court Facilities Construction Funds. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for courts across California. As noted below, the judicial branch will additionally pursue alternative revenue sources over the next several years to support the full implementation of the statewide capital plan.

#### New Susanville Courthouse

A new Susanville courthouse is proposed by the AOC for initial funding of \$1.5 million for fiscal year 2007–2008. The new facility will house three courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this 36,600-gross-square-foot courthouse is \$38.8 million (escalated to construction mid-point estimated as spring of 2010). A site has not been selected for the new courthouse. This project—ranked in the Immediate Need priority group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan—is one of the highest priority capital outlay projects for the judicial branch.

#### No Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The Superior Court of California, County of Lassen operates out of three facilities adjacent to one another in downtown Susanville. The Historic Courthouse was constructed in 1915 with one courtroom; by the early 1980s the court was severely overcrowded and it was not until 1991 that the court moved into the “Court Annex”

originally constructed for county offices and the public library. The court leases space nearby for the Access to Justice Self Help Center. Separated court operations confuse the public and create operating inefficiencies. The Historic Courthouse and Annex are functionally deficient, overcrowded, and among the worst in the state in terms of security and physical conditions. The existing facilities will remain incapable of meeting the region's current demand for court services. The deplorable conditions of the existing facilities and the public's hindered access to court services are among the reasons why the proposed new Susanville courthouse is urgently needed.



Inadequate Courtroom Interior

### Local Government Collaboration on Project

The Lassen County Board of Supervisors and the City of Susanville adopted resolutions in October in support of the need to replace the existing Lassen courthouse with a new facility in Susanville. The AOC will work collaboratively with the county and city to select a site for the new facility and develop a project that meets the goals of the local community.

### Long-term Funding Needs

The California judicial branch is exploring additional, alternative means to fund the state's sizable need for courthouse infrastructure improvements. Options include pursuing bond funding—consideration will be given to both revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing criminal penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects. While

these initiatives evolve, the Judicial Council will pursue annual funding requests to begin to address the most critical deficiencies in the state's courthouses.

#### More Information

A project feasibility report for the New Susanville courthouse, dated September 8, 2006, was prepared by AOC staff to document the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court facilities in Lassen County, explore options for how best to meet the need for improved facilities, and estimate the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from

[http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final\\_susanville\\_pfr\\_06\\_09\\_06.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final_susanville_pfr_06_09_06.pdf).

For further information, please contact Lisa Hinton at 916-263-2508 or email at [lisa.hinton@jud.ca.gov](mailto:lisa.hinton@jud.ca.gov).