



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.courts.ca.gov

FACT SHEET

September 2013

Improving Trial Court Facilities: South County Justice Center, Porterville

The new South County Justice Center will serve Tulare County's growing need for court services, provide space for necessary expansion, enhance security, and consolidate court operations, enabling the Superior Court of Tulare County to greatly improve access and services for the southern half of the county.



Location:	300 East Olive Avenue, Porterville
Purpose:	Replace the overcrowded and inadequate Tulare County Courthouse and consolidate court functions into a South County Justice Center to accommodate the South County's growing population.
Capacity:	Three-story building; 9 courtrooms in 100,299 square feet
Project cost:	\$93.4 million for all project costs, \$67 million construction contract amount
Funded by:	Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, which established a revenue source of court user fees for judicial branch courthouse projects
Architect:	CO Architects
Construction:	Sundt Construction, Inc.
Project timeline:	Received initial funding in fiscal year 2007–2008. The 7.4-acre site was acquired from the City of Porterville in December 2009. Construction began in February 2012 and was completed under budget in September 2013. The building opens for public court business on October 15, 2013.

The Need

Constructed in 1959 and expanded in 1974, the Tulare County Courthouse in the Porterville Government Center is a two-story masonry building with three courtrooms. The building was far too small to meet the needs of the county's growing population. Among numerous functional and efficiency problems in the old building:

- Small courtrooms could not accommodate all litigating parties at the same time. Consequently, the public, attorneys, witnesses, and in-custody defendants had to wait together in narrow hallways.
- Most features such as service counters, courtrooms, restrooms, and the single elevator did not meet accessibility requirements. There were also numerous safety issues.
- Deputies had to escort defendants in chains to courtrooms through non-secure judicial and staff corridors.
- The roof was in poor condition and needed replacement.
- The building lacked a fire sprinkler and alarm system.
- The building suffered from outdated HVAC, electric, and plumbing systems and lack adequate space for public services, staff workspace, and storage.

Local Government Collaboration

The City of Porterville has been an active supporter of the project throughout its six-year history. The City agreed to sell to the state its 7.4-acre property at 300 East Olive Avenue, formerly the site of the Porterville Fairgrounds and Municipal Ballpark, for the new courthouse. The City relocated the fairgrounds to a new site near the airport.

During the site selection and acquisition phase, local members of the Project Advisory Group (including members of the Tulare Superior Court, local government representatives, and other justice partners) viewed and ranked prospective sites based on standard criteria. In addition, the California Environmental Quality Act process enabled the public to review and comment on the environmental report before it was finalized. Community meetings were also held about the archeological study that was done on the site.

More Information

Project Web Page: www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-tulare.htm

For further information, please contact Keby Boyer, Office of Communications, 415-865-7705 or keby.boyer@jud.ca.gov.