The first step to a new public safety building

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Gallup is one step closer to getting a new public safety building. The groundbreaking for the new building at 451 Boardman Dr. was held on Nov. 1. City council members, Mayor Louis Bonaguidi, Gallup Police Chief Franklin Boyd, Captains Erin Toadlena-Pablo and Billy Padavich, and other city officials were in attendance, along with their family members.

Councilor Michael Schaaf, Dist. 2, said the event went well, with about 75 to 100 people attending.

He explained that the current building has experienced mold problems due to a leaking roof, and noted that people around the city have been saying Gallup has needed an updated public safety building since 2000. Now, 20 years later, it's finally coming to fruition.

"They've had a lot of problems with the building recently," Schaaf said. "The building is 50 years old, and it's had problems for years."

The new building will be bigger and better, with more advanced technology.

The current building is 39,000 square feet split between the police department (29,056 square feet) and the municipal court (7,718 square feet) and a separate, 2,000 square foot training facility. The new one will be located directly behind the current building.

It will be 41,213 square feet over two stories with 65 public parking spaces, compared to the 44 there now.

Plans originally called for 46,159 square feet and two elevators, but about 5,000 square feet and one elevator were "value engineered" out of the plans because of cost increases since the facility was originally planned. The city also opted for a few less expensive finish materials and different construction for the new impound lot when it goes in.

The new building will be two stories, and the McKinley County Municipal Court will have a new home on the top floor. The new courtroom will be roomier, and the judges and their staff will obtain more secure parking and entry.

Once the new facility is ready, the police department and municipal court will move in and the existing facility will be bulldozed. The space will be used for more parking, the new impound lot, and a K-9 space.

In a previous interview with the *Sun,* Boyd said he is looking forward to improving the work environment for his officers.

“When you have adequate and useful workspaces, it really helps our officers and detectives,” Boyd said. “We’re literally moving into a brand-new building instead of a dilapidated facility. That’s what we’re looking forward to, improving the overall work environment for our office. It’ll be great for morale. They won’t have to use space heaters anymore and they won’t have to worry about rain.”

The project does not have a set completion date.

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