



MEDIA ADVISORY

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For Immediate Release
June 29, 2009
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Legislature tackles deferred maintenance in state court facilities
Capital Construction Bill directs \$11 million for 32 projects throughout state

Salem—The Oregon Legislature has approved \$11 million to pay for deferred maintenance at state court facilities in 12 counties, Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene) and Sen. Vicki Walker (D-Eugene) announced today.

Among the 32 projects in the capital construction bill are fire sprinkler and alarm systems, emergency power supplies, generators, upgrades to lighting, and building security. These projects will create jobs for Oregonians in a dozen counties throughout the state.

“These projects are long overdue,” Nathanson said. “They will fix problems that have plagued our courts for years. Every project has received a thorough evaluation to ensure it’s really needed before we added it to the list.”

In September 2008, at the direction of the Interim Committee on Court Facilities the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) completed an assessment of 50 court facilities in all 36 counties. DAS worked with the Judicial Department and legislative staff to prioritize maintenance projects the state could pay for with limited funding.

The Judicial Department pulled together a list of deferred maintenance projects at court facilities for consideration under the state’s *Go Oregon!* economic stimulus package. The list included approximately 50 projects. Although the projects were all badly needed, only one met the *Go Oregon!* funding requirements, Nathanson said. So, the Legislature placed 32 projects in the capital construction funding process.

“The goal was to eliminate as many high-risk problems as possible,” said Walker. “The assessment found some facilities that were in fairly good shape, while others needed major upgrades.”

All the projects received evaluation under a specific group of objective criteria:

- Resolve high-risk issues that involve fire, personal safety.
- Improve protection of court Personnel from physical harm.
- Implement projects quickly; project design, engineering, procurement, and construction must occur in a minimal amount of time.
- Limit disruption to ongoing operations; give a high priority to projects that cause minimal disruption to the courts’ operations.
- Certify the need; approve only projects that represent well defined solutions to pressing problems.
- Give a high priority to buildings where courts use a high percentage of available space.

- Give a high priority to projects that cost \$10,000 to \$1 million, in order to expend limited funds throughout the state.

The evaluation of the projects for selection for the final list was carried out by Hennebery Eddy, Inc., the Department of Administrative Services, and a representative of the Judicial Department.

“The projects will provide work for Oregonians from August 2009 through March and April 2010,” Walker said. To ensure transparency and accountability, DAS will use the *Go Oregon!* Web-based tracking system. DAS will also coordinate the management of the projects with the Judicial Department and county governments.

“Courthouses are the symbol of justice in every Oregon county, but many are in desperate need of repairs,” said Chief Justice Paul De Muniz. “I am grateful for the leadership of Sen Walker and Rep Nathanson to help ensure that all Oregonians have safe and secure access to justice in Oregon.”

Over the next three to four years, the Judicial Department will use state court security funds to ensure all courts in Oregon have duress alarms, access control, security camera systems, armored benches and magnetometers. “These measures will enable all state courts to meet the minimum standards in court security,” Walker said.

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