



FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT COURTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE 11/8/2019

As the calendar flipped over to November work continues at a rapid pace on the massive renovation project that is underway at the Campbell Building, located on the south side of the Benton Public Square.

River City Construction Company, the successful low bidder for the \$1.4 million project, began work at the Campbell Building on September 30, 2019 with a projected completion date of December 20, 2019. RCCC, with offices located in Benton, is currently on schedule to have the work completed by the December 20 date.

The plan calls for construction of two offices on the south end of the ground floor that will permanently house the county clerk's and county treasurer's office. As of November 5, those offices have been framed in, with wiring completed and sheetrock is being installed. Another entrance/exit door was also cut through the solid concrete wall on the south side of the ground floor offices. All total the area being finished to house the county clerk's office and treasurer's office is approximately 5,000 square feet.

Additionally, the 10,000-square feet basement will be renovated to temporarily house the circuit clerk's office, women's advocate office and three courtrooms with judge's chambers. In the basement area the walls have been framed and wiring and plumbing is ongoing with sheetrock installation scheduled to begin the week of November 11.

Also as part of the renovation project, a 40-foot-by-24-foot addition is currently being constructed on the east side of the Campbell Building. This addition will serve as the main entrance to the Campbell Building. The north entrance of the Campbell Building (the door onto the Public Square) will be used for an exit door only.

A new elevator and a stairway to the basement area will be included in the new east side addition. Work is underway on the east side of the building where the elevator shaft is under construction. Concrete footing and part of the shaft was poured the week of November 4, 2019. A new entrance was cut through the 12-inch thick wall that will allow entrance from the elevator to basement area of the Campbell Building. The new entrance will be located near the entry to the Circuit Clerk's office.

The county also recently closed on the purchase of the building that formerly housed the Benton Evening News. Now that the building is in the possession of the county it is expected the deteriorating structure will be torn down in the coming weeks and then will be paved to create more parking space off the Public Square. The county recently obtained a \$99,999 grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture for parking. The grant will be used to cover the purchase price and for additional work on the lot.

Additionally, meetings are ongoing between the architect firms of White & Borgognoni and Fentress Architects concerning 'needs-assessment' for the new courthouse. County officials, including the chief judge, county board members, sheriff, state's attorney, county engineer and circuit clerk have been involved in the meetings discussing the size and design of courtrooms, circuit clerk's office, conference rooms, women's advocate office, county board room, sally-port and security concerns. The current projected size of the new courthouse is 40,000-square feet – approximately 10,000 square feet less than first expected.

Holcomb Foundation Engineering recently completed boring holes on the Public Square. Each hole was 30-feet deep and was completed to determine if the area had been undermined or if any problems existed that would hinder construction of the new three-story courthouse. According to the Holcomb report the ground is has not been undermined and is highly suitable for construction and also for the basement area of the new structure.

It was also approved by the county board to locate all the servers for the county clerk's office, the county clerk's office and the circuit clerk's office in the basement of the Campbell Building where they will remain in a climate-controlled room. Fiber optic lines will be installed from the Campbell Building back to the new courthouse.

Important dates approaching concerning the transition and closing of the courthouse begins on January 17 through January 20, 2020. During that four-day span the majority of items in the courthouse, including desks, printers, computers, files, etc. will be moved to the Campbell Building. Universal Moving Solutions, located in Herrin, IL, has been contracted to complete the mammoth task. The county clerk's office and the county treasurer's office will get new furnishing and the circuit clerk's office will use existing.

There will not be any court dates (except for emergencies) from January 20, 2020 through February 7, 2020 to allow the transition to take place from the old courthouse to the Campbell Building.



Basement level view of the newly-poured floor surrounding the elevator shaft located east of the Campbell Building. The elevator will be located in a 40-feet-by-24-feet addition to the building. Located on the east side, the entrance will serve as the main entry-way to the Campbell building.



This picture shows the work area (in the foreground) and the offices in the Franklin County Circuit Clerk's office. This is located in the basement of the Campbell area and will house the circuit clerk's office for approximately 18 months while the old courthouse is being torn down and the new 40,000 square foot, three story structure is being built.



Using grant money obtained through the United States Department of Agriculture, Franklin County recently purchased the building that formerly housed the Benton Evening News. Located at 111 East Church St., the property is immediately east of the Campbell Building and will be torn down to allow for up to 20 more parking spaces. The county closed on the property on November 5, 2019.



This sketch shows a proposed showcase area that will be located in the lobby of the new courthouse. The showcase will contain many of the pictures and other historic memorabilia that is currently located in the old courthouse. One interesting note is that proposal calls for the curved railing around the lower part of the showcase to be made from the handrails on the spiral staircase between the first and second floor of the 144-year-old courthouse.