

# County to consider options for new courthouse

The current Johnson County Courthouse in downtown Olathe has housed the Tenth District Court of Kansas for more than half a century.

For more than a decade, however, the facility has been an unsolved problem with overcrowding conditions, accessibility and security issues, and demands for future space needs for more courtrooms as Johnson County continues to grow.

Studies and master planning in 2005 and 2008 concluded the courthouse is "inadequate and fails to meet even the current space requirements of the John-

son County Courts."

- The studies cited inefficiencies in:
- security, including movement, transportation, and separation of inmates between visitors and court officials;
  - costly mechanical systems;
  - failing to meet ADA requirements; and,
  - serving the general public.

Studies also concluded that the county's growth will require more space for court hearings in the future.

Heading into the New Year, plans and discussion are now underway regarding a proposal to construct a new 28-courtroom courthouse across Santa Fe Street and

north of the existing building.

Final detailed plans for the project will be completed in early 2016 for review and consideration by the Johnson County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) along with possible funding options.

The BOCC will discuss the courthouse proposal during its Committee of a Whole session on January 28 with an official vote on the project and funding options probably to occur in February.

The meetings are open to the public and take place in the Johnson County Administration Building, 111 South Cherry Street, in downtown Olathe. **BT**

## Arts & Heritage Center to mark start of project

The ground already has been broken, but an unofficial groundbreaking celebration is planned on January 14 as construction work continues at the future location for the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center.

The new facility is being built at the old King Louie Building, 8788 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, where the public event will take place at 3 p.m.

Work in the project is well underway with general contractor Mc-

Cown-Gordon Construction LLC serving as construction manager for the project. SFS Architecture Inc. is leading the redesign of the old King Louie building into the new Arts & Heritage Center. The facility will serve as the home of the Johnson County Museum, which is being moved from its current home at 6305 Lackman Road in Shawnee, and house offices for the Johnson County Parks & Recreation District.

The tentative grand opening for the Arts & Heritage Center is set for April 2017. **BT**



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