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TOP 10 OF 2010

• 2009 PROJECT UPDATES

• PROJECTS OF NOTE

New Orleans
City BUSINESS

TOP CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS 2010



Jobs hit record \$23.7B total

Expansions, upgrades comprise majority of work



Work is expected to start this month on a \$76 million, 165,000-square-foot kitchen and warehouse facility at the Orleans Parish Prison.

10

TOP 10 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Orleans Parish Prison complex

\$270 million

Project description: rebuilding of the Orleans Parish Prison complex including a 1,438-bed jail facility, new intake and processing center, administrative office, visitor center, kitchen and warehouse

Developer: city of New Orleans

Peak construction employment: 150

Project manager: OMK, a joint venture of Ozanne Construction Co., Montgomery Watson Harza, Kwame Building Group

General contractors: Woodward Design+Build

Construction is finally starting to replace Hurricane Katrina-damaged facilities at the Orleans Parish Prison complex and bring the facility into the 21st century.

The first major component will be a building to house its kitchen, warehouse and central power plant. Lee Currault, project manager with Woodward Design+Build, expected ground to be broken on the 165,000-square-foot structure by this week. Architects on the project are Sizeler Thompson Brown, Grace and Hebert Architects Billes Architecture.

The \$76 million first phase of redevelopment at the complex is slated for completion by October 2012, said Sheriff Marlin Gusman.

"We're dealing with facilities that were built in the 1920s and 1930s, and a lot has changed since then," Gusman said. "We are building all of our facilities to meet the current codes and standards of the American Correctional Association. There's going to be some very good facilities. And we're going to be consolidated, not spread all around like we were before."

Gusman said the next phase — a new 1,438-bed facility and a new intake and processing center, as well as an administration wing — will cost about \$130 million and will go out for bid in June or July. Plans call for work to begin in September, with completion anticipated before the end of the year.

The prison's current capacity is 3,500 inmates, but officials aren't looking to expand beyond another 800 to 900 beds.

"That's a hot button item," Gusman said. "Some people believe we need a much smaller jail. We're only doing what we need to do. When you talk in terms of number of beds, that doesn't mean every bed is filled. You can't fill every bed because you have different issues to deal with, protective custody and things like that."

Another phase involves the Templeman 1 and 2 buildings, the green-roofed structures visible from Interstate 10, which are owned by the city. Those structures are being demolished and haven't been occupied since Katrina. Gusman said officials are considering whether to repair or replace Templeman 5.

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"It's really up in the air right now," Gusman said. "And it's difficult to say when construction would start, but we want it to happen expeditiously. It's between the site of our kitchen warehouse and central power plant and the new intake and housing unit, so it's a critical site and we're really hoping we can get some movement on it."

Gusman is optimistic all work will be completed by 2013.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is funding 85 percent to 90 percent of the renovations and rebuilding, which is helpful, Gusman said, because the FEMA money provides for upgrades to meet current codes and standards, not the condition the complex was at the time of Katrina.

The rest of the money will come from \$63.2 million in bonds issued by the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff that voters approved in October 2008.

While only \$40 million of that was allocated to the sheriff's office, Gusman said the bond money is a big factor and will allow for more efficiencies than what were present before, such as reducing energy costs. •