



NEWS RELEASE OC 67-11
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2011

Preferred Site Approved for New Ukiah Courthouse

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) has approved selection of the preferred site in downtown Ukiah for the proposed new courthouse for the Superior Court of Mendocino County. The site, multiple parcels currently owned by the City of Ukiah and private parties, is approximately 4.5 acres bounded by Perkins, Main, Mason, and Smith Streets. An alternate site for the proposed project, approximately 4.5 acres located south of East Perkins Street and west of Leslie Street, was approved by the SPWB in August 2011.

The state has the authority to negotiate for two sites and is pursuing both concurrently with the expectation that one will be acquired. Site selection approval allows the state Administrative Office of the Courts, which is managing the project, to undertake further due diligence, environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act, and negotiations that will ultimately result in finalization of the site. Site selection and environmental review, as well as site acquisition (which also requires SPWB approval), must be complete before architectural design of the new courthouse can begin, currently scheduled for early 2013. The architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill has been selected to design the new courthouse.

The proposed project will house nine courtrooms in approximately 113,700 square feet. It will replace two unsafe, overcrowded, and physically deficient court facilities: the old Mendocino Courthouse, which dates to the 1950s, and the Willits branch, which closed at the end of 2009.

The new courthouse project was ranked as a “critical need” in the judicial branch’s capital-outlay plan, making it among the judicial branch’s highest-priority infrastructure projects. It is one of 41 projects funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments, without impact on the state’s General Fund. The state Budget Act for fiscal year 2011–2012 contains significant cuts to the judicial branch budget in general and to the account that funds SB 1407 projects in particular. These cuts may cause delays in SB 1407 projects. It will be several months before the impact of these cuts on specific projects is known, but in the meantime, site selection activities on the Ukiah project will continue.

More information about the project may be found at the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-mendocino.htm

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of

the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.