

Off The Cuff Of...Chief Steve Springer

Well, it is finally under way! The new Fairview heights Police facility is now under construction. The initial planning sessions for this project began back in 1996. At that time a needs assessment study was conducted by the Polson Architectural firm, a company that specialized in the construction of police facilities. Their study revealed that, although the current police facility was approximately 9,800 square feet in area, the police department actually required 21,980 square feet to function optimally in 1996. Their study also projected the needs of the police department for twenty years into the future. Thus, they estimated that in twenty years the police department would need approximately 27,000 square feet to operate efficiently. Their recommendations also addressed a number of other issues including ergonomic aspects, functionality concerns, and changing legal restrictions regarding police facilities.

Although the plans for the new police facility lay dormant for a period of time, in May of 1999, the new police facility issue was resurrected. From May of 1999 until October 2001 plans for the new police facility were developed and refined. Then in December 2001, the construction bids were approved; and, in early February, construction began on the new 25,000 square foot police facility. A brief ground breaking ceremony was held on February 24, 2002, to formally commemorate the beginning of construction on this project. It is estimated that it will take approximately 13-15 months to complete construction on the new police facility. So with any luck (and plenty of good weather), we hope to have the building completed by May of 2003.

The new police facility provides for enhancements and improvements in the size and functionality of literally every area of the police department (telecommunication, records, investigations, patrol, administration, Detention, and storage). It also provides for a much more secure environment for police operations through the following new features: two enclosed sally ports (garage type areas where prisoners can be removed from a police vehicle and escorted into the detention area of the building in a safe and secure environment); video monitoring of the entire detention area; additional detention cells; and video monitoring of the parking areas.

In closing, I would like to say that the new police facility was designed not for the present but rather for twenty years in the future. Once completed, it will greatly enhance the overall operations and work flow of the police department. I would also like to thank all the elected officials for their support and input during this process. Further, I would be remiss if I did not thank all of the police department employees for their input, assistance and patience throughout this long and complex process. This project is undoubtedly one of the brightest highlights in the history of the Fairview Heights Police Department.

STEPHEN M. SPRINGER
Chief of Police