



Traffic Court to Open May 2



Traffic and misdemeanor cases assigned to the Kane County Judicial Center, 37W777 Route 38, in St. Charles, will be shifted to the county's newest judicial facility at 540 Randall Road, in St. Charles, effective May 2.

The move, to a shared facility with the Kane County Circuit Clerk's office, is part of the first phase of a broader plan to better accommodate the space needs of the 16th Judicial Circuit. Renovation and remodeling work at the former Montgomery Ward building, on Randall Road, is scheduled to be completed April 25, according to Tim Harbaugh, Kane County director of Facilities, Subdivision and Environmental Resources.

The traffic and misdemeanor court call for central Kane County, which the new Randall Road facility is designed to accommodate, averages about 1,000 cases per week, according to Harbaugh. The southern portion of the former department store has been home to the Circuit Clerk's office and used as a county storage facility for several years. The main entrance to the entire facility is being relocated to the north end of 109,000-square-foot building. Public parking is at the front, or west side, of the building adjacent to Randall Road.

The court relocation to Randall Road does not affect existing traffic and misdemeanor court calls in Elgin, Aurora or Carpentersville, where they will continue to be held as scheduled.

The roughly \$4 million Randall Road project is part of a roughly \$5.4 million judicial space allocation plan that has involved changes at both the Judicial Center and the historic Third Street Courthouse, in downtown Geneva.

The plan was designed to help alleviate a complicated space crunch in the county's court system as well as provide accommodations for the three or four additional circuit judges that were seated Dec. 1.

The county board-approved plan was recommended by the county's 2010 Building & Capital Investment Task Force, which was charged with determining the best location for additional courtrooms and office space for up to four additional judges. The task force met for several months exploring the best ways to alleviate the court system space crunch.

Moving traffic and misdemeanor court to Randall Road is expected to significantly reduce the morning security line to get into the Judicial Center and those waiting in line at the new facility likely will no longer face the possibility of having to wait outside on days when the weather is inclement or temperatures are excessive, said Harbaugh. Parking-related problems at the Judicial Center also are expected to subside as a result of the move, and no parking problems are anticipated at the new traffic court, he said.

Holding cells have been constructed at the Randall Road site to accommodate anyone who shows up with a warrant. Anyone being held at those cells would be transferred to the jail. All DUI and felony cases will stay at the Judicial Center.

As part of the plan, the Abuse and Neglect Unit courtroom has been moved from the Judicial Center into renovated, first-floor courtroom space at the Third Street Courthouse and, in its place, in Courtroom 005, is divorce court. Funding for the projects came from the county's Five-year Capital Improvement Fund and Capital Fund. Meanwhile, planning is underway at the county for a more detailed examination of the county's court facilities, future court needs and how to finance any future construction projects.

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