



West Valley VIEW

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ
Phone (623) 535-8439

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

\$6 million safety facility moves forward *Staff from Avondale, Litchfield Park, EMCC agree on early design*

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Avondale's Senior Engineering Project Manager Charles Andrews normally doesn't have so many "bosses."

When it comes to the \$6 million public safety building project on the northwest corner of Dysart Road and Sage Lane, he needs to constantly make sure all his ducks are in a row.

After all, the 18,200-square-foot building will be a full functioning fire station, a police substation, have space for a Southwest Ambulance crew, two classrooms belonging to Estrella Mountain Community College and space for the college's public safety division.

Plus, the fire station will serve both Avondale and Litchfield Park residents.

"It is challenging because there are a lot of stakeholders," Andrews said. "We make sure everyone is in agreement before we move on."

Recently, Andrews made sure city council members from Avondale and Litchfield Park, as well as employees at EMCC, Avondale Fire, Avondale Police and Southwest Ambulance, agreed on "the preliminary scheme of what the exterior would look like."

Two options, A and B, were produced by the Phoenix-based Dick & Fritsche Design Group.

A's all around

John Dick, president of the 38-year-old design group, appeared in front of the Avondale City Council Sept. 15 to explain the two options. He did the same thing two days later at the Litchfield Park City Council meeting.

"Both city councils elected option A, so we're going to start developing [that] design further," Dick said. "What was presented was an overall concept, not a lot of detail to it. So we're going to incorporate a little more color, masonry, a little more character and a sense of detail."

"I thought both options were nice. I thought A more resembled the college than B," said Randy Mauldin, director of Facilities Planning and Development for Estrella Mountain Community College.

Plus, as Litchfield Park City Manager Darryl Crossman said, A "was the less expensive of the two."

And for a project already over budget, that makes a big difference.

Dick said he plans to return to both city councils with new designs before the end of the year.

The project was budgeted for \$6 million, Andrews said. However, after all the design and architect fees, as well as adding water, sewer, electricity and utilities to the site, \$4.3 million is left for the construction process. Design A will cost about \$4.4 million, Andrews said.

"We still have some ways to go, so we are confident we can get the budget to where it needs to be," Andrews said.

EMCC expansion

The approximate breakdown for square footage goes like this: 8,800 to the fire station, 9,000 for the police, 2,700 for EMCC, 750 to Southwest Ambulance and 1,500 in shared space, including conference rooms, Andrews said.

The college plans to move its public safety division into the new building, as well as two classrooms that will feature "EMT classes and probably other criminal justice and public safety classes," Mauldin said. "It's a perfect fit for that building. You put those academic classes in there that hope to [work in the public safety building] one day."

Mauldin said having the public safety division move frees up about 1,000 square feet on campus, which he said will be used for academic purposes.

Andrews said construction of the public safety building is planned to begin in March, with completion somewhere in the middle of January 2010.

Almost at the same time, the campus will be constructing Mariposa Hall, a 25,000-square-foot building that will house nine classrooms and three laboratories, two belonging to the nursing program, Mauldin said. That project is expected to be completed around the same time, as well.

The campus is in the conceptual stage for expansion of Estrella Hall, with plans to double the size of that facility. Mauldin said he hopes planning will be done within six weeks and a new Estrella Hall should be ready for 2011.

"I have to make sure it doesn't interfere with the academic process," Mauldin said of the construction.

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