

Courthouse Complex In Line For \$400,000 U.S. Grant

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Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruz county probably will be in line for approximately \$400,000 in federal money to help pay for its new courthouse complex.

The federal grant would be used to pay one-half of the construction costs of the emergency operating center to be located in the basement of the five-story office building.

Local officials met yesterday

with representatives from the state and federal civil defense offices to discuss the center.

Both Supervisors' Chairman Russ McCallie and County Administrative Officer Carl Millar reported that the Santa Cruz county center was rated "one of the best" that had been seen by William W. Ward Jr., regional administrator for the California Disaster office. Ward's office is involved in about 70 centers in cities and counties throughout California, according to Millar.

Ward said the local center is one of the best laid out and thought out plans for today and for the future that he has seen, Millar reported.

Federal participation in the project is on a matching basis. The emergency operating center preliminary cost estimate is \$800,000.

To qualify for the federal grant, the local center must be utilized in the daily operation of county government as well as be immediately available for emergency operation in case of local or national disaster, announced Col. Donald Gates, county civil defense head.

Col. Gates said the center will not only house his office but also communications (radio and telephone), data processing, the printing-reproduction section and radio repair.

During a disaster period, data processing would be responsible for preserving records while the printing section would publish general information bulletins.

A coffee break area and lounge area during the daily routine would be converted to a dining room and barracks during an emergency.

Rooms, ranging in size from small to large, would be used for meeting purposes, even by community organizations, during the day-to-day life. In an emergency, the spaces would be converted so county government could proceed. There are spaces for all departments.

An aid station and a press-radio facility are included in the emergency plans.

The basement area will have filtered air and will be protected from radio-active fallout. In case of a war-caused emergency, the center could be sealed off for two weeks and support 400 persons.

"Unless we can show we use the center every day, we aren't qualified for federal aid," Col. Gates said.

He said that during the normal routine of daily living that persons who visit the basement area will see it only as a "regular part of the courthouse operation."

"That's where the people gain," Col. Gates said. "We have to have a place for these facilities anyway and they fit perfectly into the emergency operating center."

Approval has been given to the center layout's preliminary plans. Architect Burton Rockwell now is making final drawings of the center.

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