

BOCC Hosts Ribbon Cutting, Tour of New Medical Examiner Facility June 19

Crawl Key, Monroe County

Monroe County Board of County Commissioners will officially open the new state-of-the-art Medical Examiner Facility on Crawl Key, MM 56.5, on Thursday, June 19, 2008, at 11:30 a.m. The public is welcome to attend and take a tour. The new facility consists of an administration office, main morgue, and auxiliary morgue, and will be operated by three full-time staff; a Medical Examiner, Chief Forensic Investigator, and Office Manager.

Some of the features of the new facility include:

- A family room offering remote identification by closed circuit camera system
- An advanced air filtration system (the same type used on submarines) to eliminate airborne diseases and odors
- A digital x-ray machine – previously, x-rays had to be conducted after hours at area hospitals
- An air-conditioned loading dock, capable of accepting a vehicle wrecker so that body extraction and initial vehicle analysis can be completed inside the controlled setting of the facility instead of on the roadside
- The capability of hosting multiple mass-fatality response teams onsite, including exterior space for a mobile morgue unit from F.E.M.O.R.S. (Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System). The cooler storage is quadruple the current County-wide capacity. The County was not previously equipped to address a mass fatality event without extensive outside assistance.
- An elevated generator with 6,000 gallon fuel capacity, capable of running the entire facility for 8 – 14 days
- Workspace for pathologist, investigators, detectives/law enforcement, as needed

The Medical Examiner duties have been conducted at Dean Lopez Funeral Home on Big Pine Key and Beyer Funeral Home in Key Largo, with Dr. Hunter's administrative offices on Ramrod Key, while the new facility has been under construction. Prior to the opening of the new facility, Monroe County was the last County in the State of Florida with a Medical Examiner conducting autopsies at funeral homes. The new facility provides more security, central record-keeping, and a single location for all services and administration. The current Medical Examiner, Dr. Michael Hunter, is relocating to Bay County along with his staff, Chief Forensic Investigator Michael Bates and Office Manager June Williams. Dr. Hunter has agreed to stay through the end of the June to help the County recruit his replacement, and will assist the County in contracting Medical Examiner services if a replacement has not been hired by that time.

Construction details:

9,500 s.f.

Building Budget: \$4,013,377.40

Actual Building Construction Cost: \$4,095,594

Architect: Harvard Jolly

Contractor: Fonticiella (Project Manager Larry Perez)

County Project Manager: Kevin Wilson

County Owner Rep. Inspector: William Harrington

Questions can be directed to:

Facility/operations questions: Dr. Michael Hunter, Medical Examiner (305) 872-4720

Project construction questions: Jerry Barnett, Director of Facilities Development (305) 292-4416

General event questions: Dawn Acker, Senior Administrator, Special Projects (305) 292-4524

Photos of the site under construction can be found at the following link:

http://monroecofl.virtualltownhall.net/Pages/MonroeCoFL_Engineering/projects/medExaminers/index