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(Ken Martin / C-T)

Social Services Director Beverly Warren (right center) chats with DLP Construction President Dennis Pigg as DSS staffers Carole Thomas and Pam Wood Listen during tour of future human services facility.

Human services facility taking shape; renovations on schedule - 5/21/05

By **PHYLISS BOATWRIGHT, C-T Staff Writer**

Person County Social Services Director Beverly Warren and members of her staff said they felt like dancing when they got a peek Thursday at what will soon be their new offices.

The DSS employees were given a tour by DLP Construction President Dennis Pigg and Dennis Gibson, superintendent of the project that is rapidly turning the former Wal-Mart building on Madison Boulevard into a spacious office complex that will house county government human services agencies — DSS, the Person County Health Department, Person Counseling and a Federal Emergency Management Administration shelter, for use in case of emergencies such as hurricanes or other disasters.

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Walking through the building now, with its maze of offices, conference rooms, kitchens, restrooms, cubicle areas and hallways, it is difficult to remember that one is standing in what was a “big box” retail building. That fact did not seem to be lost on the DSS staff as they wound their way through the area they will soon inhabit from nine to five.

Work on the transformation is moving along on schedule, according to DLP, and the building should be ready for the contractor to “turn over” to the county on June 30. Pigg added that, so far, there have been few surprises in the project. He said he had received only a few change orders and that work was going well, with an average of 70 workers on the job each day.

The facility is beginning to look like an office complex, with cabinets in place, dry wall has been primed and, Pigg said, workers will begin next week putting in place nearly four miles of baseboard.

Windows were being hung this week, and ceilings will be completed next week, said Pigg, and flooring will begin the first of June.

County Manager Steve Carpenter said he was impressed with the work DLP and its subcontractors have done. Carpenter added that he was also impressed “with what they plan to do over the next few weeks.”

DSS Director Warren said she was pleased with the way work was going on her section of the building and excited about the thought of moving from the cramped quarters at the Sansbury Park complex on South Morgan Street that she and her staff have used for the past several years.

When asked if it was going to be different after the move, Warren exclaimed, “Big change!”

Pigg said he fully expects to have the building ready for occupancy June 30.

“It has been a very aggressive schedule,” he said, “it was to begin with, but we’re going to make it.”

DLP Construction is using 25 different subcontractors on the project, most of them based in North Carolina. MWP and C.M. Solomon of Roxboro are included in the list, as are other local companies. Pigg said, when his bid for the project was accepted, his goal was to “keep as much money as I could in Roxboro.”

New Plan Excel is responsible for the renovations of the 67,326 square-foot building and will be responsible for maintenance and utilities.

For the first five years of the lease, which is tentatively set to begin Aug. 1, the county will pay \$77,144. For the subsequent five years, the cost of the lease will be \$84,886. During the 10th to 15th years of the lease, the county will pay \$93,358 and the lease cost in the final five years will be \$102,678. Annual Medicare reimbursements will offset a portion of the lease costs.