

https://www.gazetterecord.com/news/article_4cad9f32-0ad5-11ee-aae3-9b672b71db55.html#tncms-source=login

St. Maries Gazette Record

Idaho Department of Lands eyeing new SM building

- Kirk Boxleitner Correspondent
- JUNE 14, 2023

The Idaho Department of Lands' facilities in St. Maries are getting an upgrade in the months to come, so the St. Maries Gazette Record spoke all about it with Tony Brede, the St. Joe area manager for the Idaho Department of Lands.

According to Brede, the current administration building, as well as the fire engine bays and shop, were piecemealed together over a span of more than six decades, and are well past their efficient life expectancy.

"The admin building is made up of four generations of construction," Brede said. "The initial office was built around 1946, as an office at Heyburn Park, and was moved to its current location, where it served as a fire district office."

Brede elaborated that the second addition was constructed in 1963, expanding the facility by four office spaces, while the third addition was constructed in 1970, which contributed yet another office space, plus a shower facility for firefighters.

The fourth and final addition was constructed in 1996, resulting in even more office space, a fire dispatch center and a conference room.

"The heating furnaces are outdated, and the overall structure requires significant maintenance and repair," said Brede, who shared that tentative plans call for the first

phase of the Idaho Department of Lands facility's replacement to start in September of this year.

This is expected to happen after the state of Idaho's Permanent Building Fund Advisory Council is slated to review the project at its July meeting, to provide comments on the plans and budget.

"Phase 1 will start with demolishing the current shop and engine bays, then constructing the new fire quarters and engine bays, followed by the new administration building," Brede said. "Phase 2 will demolish the old administration building, then construct employee and public parking lots."

Brede noted the total appropriation for the project was \$5 million, coming out of the Idaho Department of Lands' permanent building and general fund, although no companies have yet been retained as contractors.

"Public works and the architect are working to contain costs within the appropriated budget," Brede said. "The next step will be to request bids from prospective contractors."

Although the Idaho Department of Lands' existing administration building boasts two levels of approximately 5,800 square feet of office space, which is projected to be reduced to one level of approximately 5,840 square feet of office space in the new administration building, Brede promised the upgrade would be more evident in other areas.

For example, the existing shop and engine bays measure approximately 2,160 square feet, with an adjoining fire equipment cache of approximately 550 square feet, but the new fire building and engine bays are expected to expand to approximately 5,200 square feet, with an attached fire cache.

“Right now, we have 21 full-time employees, with two open positions, so we’d have 23 total if we were fully staffed,” Brede said. “During the summer field season, we have a total of approximately 42 employees, with the additional fire and timber seasonal employees.”

Other upgrades the new facility is set to feature include ADA-compliant access doors, restrooms and hallways, as well as what Brede touted as “modern wiring and a properly designed HVAC system,” to provide “a safer, more suitable and more cost-effective work environment.”

Brede pointed out that all the functions covered by the piecemeal-constructed facility will be housed under a single roof in the new business, to facilitate interoffice communications and networking between its functions.

Three of the fire building’s engine bays are planned to be heated engine bays, whereas none of the current engine bays are heated.

“This will allow the engines to remain in service longer, to respond to early spring and late fall assignments,” Brede said. “The fire building will be better able to accommodate our firefighters, with a full workout room, for them to stay in shape for their physically demanding jobs, plus sleeping quarters, men’s and women’s showers, and full washer/dryer facilities. The current fire building has none of these amenities.”

Brede elaborated that the sleeping quarters will be used for off-district resources “who assist us on our fires, and for our own employees who come off the fire line late at night, and are too tired to drive home safely.”

Besides the new facility’s ADA capabilities and an “efficient” waiting and reception area, Brede believes improved access to staff will be afforded by having them all on one level, to “help us better serve the public.”

Brede compared the current 20-person conference room to the 50-person conference room that's projected to be brought in, which he suggested could better accommodate hosting public meetings and conducting training opportunities for the public and Idaho Department of Lands personnel alike.

“The current facility needs costly maintenance and repairs, is not ADA-compliant, and has reached the end of its useful life,” Brede said. “In the past, additions to the facility were poorly constructed with low-value materials, given the inadequate funding at the time. Consequently, upkeep and maintenance costs continue to increase. Replacing the facility with a new building will alleviate these problems, and create a safe structure for our employees and the citizens we serve.”

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Copy article link](#)
- [Save](#)