

Plymouth's new Ops Center under way in Cedarville

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Wicked Local Plymouth

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PLYMOUTH — Residents who voted in Cedarville earlier this month got a surprise when arrived at the polls.

Instead of casting their ballots in the familiar Cedarville Community Center, residents of Precinct 8 found voting machines located in the upstairs bays normally reserved for the fire engines.

The community center was closed for repairs and renovations, part of a larger project that will build a permanent Emergency Operations Center behind Station 6.

Site work on the new EOC is already underway. Emerald Excavating has nearly finished digging the septic system for the addition.

The project, initially projected to cost \$1.5 million, is currently expected to come in under budget. Construction costs are \$1.1 million. With the cost of an architect and project manager will push expenses to \$1,420,000.

A 24-week construction schedule will have the new building online well before the June start of hurricane season. Fire Chief Bradley said he anticipates moving the town's emergency operations into its new home in late April or early May.

The town currently uses space in the former Sheriff's Department headquarters on Obery Street for its emergency operations. Entergy rents the entire building from the county and maintains its own Emergency Operations Center in the building's basement.

Aaron Wallace, the town's emergency management director, maintains an office in a situation room on the first floor. The room and an adjacent communications center are filled with desks, computers, maps and telephones but the space remains largely unoccupied but for tests and the rare emergency.

The town decided to construct its own EOC six years ago and secured \$500,000 in funding for the project from Entergy. Bradley said the town looked at several different options before deciding on the Cedarville site.

The town rejected downtown locations, including Memorial Hall and a pumping station off Billington Street, as too congested and too close to the Pilgrim Station Nuclear Power Plant. A plan to put the center near the airport in West Plymouth was rejected as too costly.

The Cedarville site fit the bill because it is nearly eight miles from the nuclear plant and generally upwind of prevailing winds. The site is also part of an existing building that offers a round-the-clock presence.

The decision to move to Cedarville also reflects new federal guidelines aimed at moving emergency operations centers far from nuclear plants. The existing EOC is only two miles from Pilgrim Station.

The Cedarville site is just under 12 miles and about 15 minutes from the existing EOC.

Seaver Construction is the general contractor for the project.

The work includes remediation of a mold problem in the community room.

Bradley said the mold developed during a rainy, humid summer several years ago and was compounded by an energy-saving heating, air conditioning and ventilation system that shut down when the room was not in use.

Mold grew instead, forcing contractors to gut the community room and replace the system and the furniture. Bradley said it would have cost \$125,000 to complete the remediation alone without the EOC project. With subcontractors already on site, the work cost \$57,900. The furniture will cost an additional \$22,500 to replace.

The town has twice unsuccessfully sought a Homeland Security grant that would match Entergy's \$500,000 contribution. The town will apply again this year as well.

Any grant money would be used to reduce the town's share of the costs.

Town Meeting, meanwhile, will be asked to supply the funding for the mold work.

Groups that use the community room have since found other winter venues for their meetings. Once the new center opens, the Cedarville Community Center would be pressed into service as a media room in the event of an emergency.

The 3,400-square-foot new center that will take shape off the back of the station will feature a large command room with overhead screens as well as storage rooms for emergency supplies and a briefing room for town officials.

The new operations center will be more than 12 miles from Town Hall, but will be close to southern evacuation routes and within just a couple of miles from the transportation staging area at Scusset Beach.

Bradley said the town considered building a center near police headquarters but the costs would be excessive because the proximity to the nuclear plant would require a special air intake system.

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I wonder if they have a desk for the Entergy PR people?

Rent_a_Cop

4 days ago

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They're gonna have to install double doors so 'Baghdad Dave' Tarantino can get his head through them.

wedgeb

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The town shouldn't have to spend a penny on this. It should all come from Entergy. There should also be a system in place so we can see on our computer what is happening if there ever was a nuclear accident down in Manomet. The plant is old and tired and will be interesting to watch over the next few years. Leaks and puffs crap out into the air.

wtfplymouth

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On your computer???????

Do you have any idea how stupid you sound!!!!!!!

wedgeb

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Not that stupid at all. There should be a website we can all go to if there ever is an accident at the plant. They could give all the pertinent information like direction and exactly where the radioactive plume is going. What is so crazy about that?

Dickies gotta go

23 hours ago

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Dickie will save us. He always does. Well, er, ummmm.....Nevermind that wedgeb

2 hours ago

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This opeation center and the whole evacuation plan is junk. It makes some peole feel better because at least they are doing something. They are all craz that any event at that plant will start the every man for himself mode here in town and all the surrounding towns. Ask the experts and they will even sa will prevent anyone from moving at all on the streets. Once the sirens sound you can bet that it's bad so any exposure outside could be deadly. That's wh real time info online and on cable tv.

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