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Feature Story - February 2005

Going Vertical

High-Rise Construction Comes Back to Life in Downtown Fresno

By Thomas York



A \$19.5 million, 1,500-space garage-designed by Watry Design Inc. and being built by McCarthy Building Cos. Inc.-is scheduled to be finished in June (photo courtesy of Watry Design).

based Moore Ruble Yudell is the designer of what will be the tallest building in Fresno when it is completed in April.

To better serve the courthouse, the city of Fresno is building an adjacent \$19.5-million, 1,500-space garage. Redwood City-based Watry Design Inc. is the architect and the San Francisco office of McCarthy Building Cos. Inc. is general contractor for the 569,000-sq.-ft. project to be finished in June.

The Sacramento office of the Kitchell Corp. is providing construction management services for a new \$180 million, 655,000-sq.-ft. juvenile justice complex that replaces two facilities.

"It is the largest project ever undertaken by the county of Fresno," Raj Brar, Kitchell's project manager, said of the 1,020-bed facility.

San Francisco-based Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz is the master plan architect for the juvenile complex. Fresno-based Harris Construction is handling site preparation, while the Clark Construction Group's Oakland office is the general contractor for the buildings, which will be completed in December. Fresno-based Kaweah Construction is building an adjacent wastewater treatment plant.

Meanwhile, the Construction Industry Research

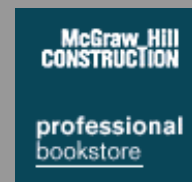
To be sure, higher education construction is not the only bright spot for the Fresno area. The region also is benefiting from an increase in new government and commercial buildings.

One large example is a 440,000-sq.-ft., \$120-million federal courthouse in downtown Fresno.

The nine-story project is being built by the joint venture of general contractors Dick Corp. of Pittsburgh and Santa Fe Springs-based Matt Construction. Gruen Associates of Los Angeles is the executive architect and Santa Monica-



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Board in Burbank reports that commercial and industrial permits issued in the Fresno/Clovis region through the first 10 months of 2004 totaled \$257 million, down 12 percent from the \$297 million in permits issued for the first 10 months in 2003.

A courtroom in the 440,000-sq.-ft., \$120-million federal courthouse under construction in downtown Fresno. The nine-story project will be completed in April (photo courtesy of Dick Corp./Matt Construction).

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But Ben Bartolotto, director of the Burbank-based Construction Industry Research Board, said 2003 was "an exceptional year" in which a number of commercial permits were issued for a few costly large projects. "We don't think 2005 will be as good as 2004," he said. "But it's still going to be a good year."

Indeed, local developers Richard Gunner and George Andros plan to start construction of a high-rise office building in downtown Fresno in July. The building is first in a series that will make up Old Armenian Town, a 7-acre redevelopment effort. The developers then plan to start construction of a second office building in 2007 and a third in 2010. California state officials said they will start construction of a state appellate courthouse in May on 2 acres of the redevelopment zone. Once completed, the project will add 700,000 sq. ft. of office space and 20,000 sq. ft. of retail space to the market.

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