

# Edwardsville marks groundbreaking for new Public Safety Building in style

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**(All Photos by Brian Munoz)**

**EDWARDSVILLE** – The groundbreaking for the new **Public Safety Building** at **333 S. Main** at the corner of South Main and Schwarz in Edwardsville was an emotional and special time for key officials in attendance on Saturday.

**Edwardsville City Administrator Tim Harr** said Saturday was exciting because it had been a long process where their team of architects worked closely with the police and fire department to determine what their needs were for the station.

“We’re building a building that’s satisfying our needs today that allows for future growth,” he said. “The entire process has been in place for 8 to 10 years, recognizing that our existing building was filled and used to capacity and trying to come up for solutions for the future. The opportunity came up to buy this property and so that’s how we started moving forward. It’s about a 14-month building process from the start now to the completion of the building.”

**Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton** described where the Public Safety Building would be constructed as “hallowed ground.”

“This property was initially settled in the 1800’s by the Robinson family,” he said.” They had a 100-acre parcel that stretched from the old high school to R.P. Lumber. This particular location was their homestead; this is where they build their home and had many public gatherings. The property changed hands in the mid-1800’s; it went from private ownership to public ownership. It was purchased by Madison County, these 10 acres, this piece and was used by the county as farm, hospital, tuberculosis clinic, a shelter care and a food pantry.

“All of the county buildings were removed by 2007 and the city acquired the property in 2013. With the investment of the Leon Corlew park, the Spray n Play Park and now with the public safety facility, we can now proudly say that this property will remain a significant place for the public for another century. It’s only fitting that the property of such significant civic value be occupied by our most appreciated employees — the men and women of our fire and police departments. The single-most important function for any city is it’s public safety.”

Mayor Patton said the community loves the Edwardsville Police and Fire Department members and they want to extend that love back.

“When any of you need help, you dial 911, without hesitation our professionals are on their way to assist,” he said. “Last year, there were over 2,100 EMS calls, 600 fire emergencies, and 26,000 calls for service or reported contacts from our police department. Never do they ask about religion, race, financial needs or potential risk. They respond, they save lives, they save property and they go above and beyond to serve us.

“It is only appropriate for the city council to unanimously approve this facility with full support of the community. I’ve always singled out one employee who without their additional efforts, the project would have not have been successful. Hands down, no one put this project together and made it what is today better than our city administrator, Tim Harr.”



**Rebecca Savage**, FGM Architects, Project Manager said: “The project started in 2015, in the design stage, but went on hold for a little bit as the departments explored the possibility of adding a basement in the facility. Ultimately, the project was restarted around January/February time frame, so we bid the project last month and now we’re breaking ground. It was a joint effort. Lots of meetings with the police chief, the fire chief, and all of the personnel to get input from them in order to see how they would like their facility to be built and what they would like to see in their new building.”

**Jay Keewan**, Chief of Police for City of Edwardsville said the police department has outgrown and overused the current space for public safety at **400 North Main St.** in Edwardsville.

“We currently share a building with the fire department at 400 North Main St.,” he said. “We are very excited to move in into a bigger and better equipped facility. We understand it’s about a 14-month turnaround but by late next year we will be excited to move into a state-of-the-art facility. We more comfortable interview rooms. Our interview rooms are kind of cramped and crowded, backed by our booking area. So it’s nice when someone is coming in for a non-criminal arrest they would be towards the front of the building and we won’t have to drag people through the booking area.”

Keevan added: “We will have a much larger sally-port which will be uncluttered. It allows safety for our officers as well as people we take into custody. We have a great working relationship with the fire department and enjoy working with them like I mentioned before. I am sincere to say that our EMT services are top notch, they train hard and in a serious, meaningful manner.”











