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## News

### New fire station plans move forward

by Brian Payne, Staff Writer

The new Durant central fire station has now moved one step closer towards completion.

After closing the old Farmers Market that was located on First Avenue and with the purchasing of the Rucker's produce building being in the final stages, the building of the station moves forward.

The final plans produced by Architect Steve Pierce, can help people envision what the empty lot and the building located directly to the south will soon look like.

“The firefighters are getting excited,” said Durant Fire Chief Steve Dow. “With every step we are getting closer, and we are really looking forward to it. The fire department has been located in the City hall building since the late thirties and the trucks have changed quite a bit, as well as increased in size. The new station will have three drive-through bays, and will make it a lot easier getting the trucks in and out.”

The fire department originally was manned with part-time and volunteers and now employs 33 full-time firefighters, a fire Marshall and fire chief.

“Durant has grown so much that the fire department has had to grow with it, to where we just do not have the room to do what needs to be done. When you walk in the door you are in Lisa Jackson's office. She needs to have an office to give her the room she needs to effectively do her duties. If she is trying to talk to someone, you have to cut through them to reach the other parts of the station. There is no reception area so as soon as someone walks in the door, unfortunately they think

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that is what her office is.”

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With more firefighters, it also means more equipment, unfortunately with only limited room available, some things are having to be stored in other rooms, corners or pretty much any usable space without something already in it. “My office is just full,” said Dow.

With the additional office space, storage space, and room for the trucks and equipment, it will also include a larger training room, different styled sleeping quarters and other improvements.

“The sleeping quarters we have currently are one big room, kind of barracks like. The new building will have individual bedrooms and enable the guys a little privacy.

“I love the location. Being able to stay in the downtown Durant area is a real plus for us. A lot of the older structures are located in the area and our response time to these structures are vital to us saving them. With a lot of the buildings still having older wiring and other electrical hazards, they are more likely to catch on fire and I am glad we were able to remain close,” said Dow.

In addition to better enable the firefighters to properly do their jobs, the extra room will also be beneficial when the public tours the station. “It will be a lot better when the kids come down for tours during the fire prevention month, or any other group or organization wanting to take a tour.”

“Hopefully in the future we will be able to build something on the west side of town, with the way Durant is growing out there. We would like to have a station on all sides of town to ensure our response times are low. We currently have a sub-station on the north side, the Choctaws are building a sub-station south of town by their complex, and with this one in the center, we'll be able to have Durant covered.”

When the men and women that protect the home and belongings of the citizens of Durant, get excited about receiving a new home, it will make easier on them to do their responsibilities.

“The ultimate winners from this will be the citizens of Durant,” said Dow.

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