

AHS Waterbury website vision article

In this Waterbury update article Doug Racine, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Human Services, provides us with the Agency's vision, goals and objectives regarding the relocation to the new Waterbury State Office Complex (WSOC).

How is the work on Waterbury progressing?

DR: *The work is moving forward and is on schedule still for a December 2015 move date. This move will take about three to four months to complete. The steel is up on two thirds of the new building and the historic core has been almost completely gutted.*

What is the Agency's vision for the new WSOC?

DR: The flood that destroyed the old Waterbury facility in 2011 took away more than just our offices. It swept away a significant part of our history, disrupted many lives and scattered Agency staff throughout the State. Rebuilding the WSOC is a massive project, taking a significant amount of time, effort and investment. The Agency's vision of the future includes an effective and efficient office environment, a safe and comfortable work space and the ability for the Agency to continuously improve the way it operates by integration of our many services.

What are the Agency's goals that support the vision?

DR: First, we are learning from the past as we move toward the future. The investment we are making in renovating the historic building, constructing a brand new building, new office equipment and designs all contribute to the Agency's goal of creating a modern work environment. Second, we have been careful to preserve as much of the historic building as possible while bringing it up to modern standards. And most important, the dedicated and hard-working Agency staff are all contributing to our success.

What are the Agency's objectives for the new WSOC?

DR: We see the new WSOC as a bridge between the "old" and the "new." Close to 125 years of history can be seen on the outside of the historic building. The new building and the interior of the historic building will have a modern office layout, better heating and cooling and a more efficient, flexible and effective work environment. AHS Leadership, Agency of Administration, BGS and contractors are committed to the project's success and transitioning departments and close to 900 staff to the new WSOC starting December of 2015.

How will the new WSOC compare to other Agency offices?

DR: While tragic, the flood did provide us with somewhat of a "clean slate", allowing us to leave the status quo behind and redesign how the WSOC will look in the future. The new WSOC will have a modern office layout with an HVAC system that solves the "too hot in the summer, too cold in the winter" problems which plagued the old facility. The facility will have natural lighting, better air quality, more workspace options, flexible furniture and an aesthetically soothing décor. The modern open office design will instill a collaborative work environment, allow us to quickly adapt to changes in work requirements and will extend the useful life of equipment and space.

What other thoughts do you have regarding the WSOC?

DR: After the flood, we were in damage control mode and had to quickly react to a disaster. Now, we can afford to be proactive and carefully plan the transition to the new WSOC over a longer period of time. The WSOC reconstruction project's ultimate goal is to become the new beginning, energize people and create a unified sense of commitment toward the future of the Agency. I see the WSOC representing the new standard of excellence for the Agency, its staff and all of the Vermonters we proudly serve. Personally, I am very excited about the move back to Waterbury and the opportunity to work closer to the departments and staff who have been scattered throughout the region.