

New Henderson city hall complex designed to change town's image

By Jay D. Evensen
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Architect Dennis Rusk sees it as a "living, organic" structure rising majestically from the upper elevations of downtown Henderson, visible from the northernmost entrances to the Las Vegas Valley.

City leaders see it as means of revitalizing a sagging downtown economy and changing the image of the town that has been the butt of

jokes in Clark County.

If nothing else, workers and residents in Henderson are hoping the new city hall will eliminate the need for a road map in getting from one department of city government to another.

Last week the City Council approved plans for construction of a six-story, 34,000-square-foot city hall on a lot directly across from the current building. The \$4 million project

has almost unanimous support from city officials. The money will come from the land fund, which has enough money to pay for the building in one lump sum. Construction could begin in August.

"We recently had to add an additional draftsman and we had to cut the (photocopying) room in half to make room," City Manager Gary Bloomquist said, emphasizing the

lack of space currently available. "It's a management nightmare."

Since the current City Hall, 243 Water St., was built in 1963, Henderson has grown to a point that its offices have spilled out of the building and into other offices spread around town.

Mayor Lorna Kesterson cannot hold a private conversation or meditate in quiet. She shares an office with her secretary. They are separat-

ed by a small partition.

Two departments and five divisions are located in a temporary building next to a recently paved parking lot at 225 Lead St. The building has been rearranged so many times to accommodate new employees and filing cabinets that workers frequently call it the "puzzle palace." The Parks and Recreation Department is in another building at 201 Lead St.

Residents and employees often must walk from one building to the next to take care of business.

"We coordinate our departments, but it's very costly to coordinate the way we have it set up now," Bloomquist said. "The city is going to grow. We expect to add somewhere around 10 to 12 employees a year."

Rusk hopes his drawings will eliminate all those problems. Each floor

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