



CRDC FOCUS



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Agency celebrating 35th anniversary **CRDC in 'temp' quarters, staff awaits new facility**

With the start of construction on its new administration facility at the Jonesboro Human Development Center (JHDC) just around the corner, CRDC's executive director, Robert Wilford, says he is happy that the negotiations phase is near completion.

"I was hoping we would be in the new, 11,000-square foot facility during the celebration of our 35th anniversary, an event we launched in June of this year," Wilford explains. "I guess if you consider this a year-long event, we'll still make it ... but I expected it to be sooner."

"I'm ready to turn some dirt and then step back out of the way," he notes, explaining that he is speaking of groundbreaking ceremonies, an event "long anticipated and almost at hand."

The new facility will serve as the headquarters for CRDC's administration staff that oversees the operations in the vast Northeast Arkansas service area.

The agency's three-level headquarters building in downtown Jonesboro was sold in June. CRDC moved into in 1969, "as a 'temporary' solution to the agency's need for a headquarters facility," says Wilford. The building was sold to a Jonesboro

attorney who will turn the building into law offices and attempt to return the building to its original appearance.

CRDC recently signed a 30-year lease for approximately seven acres of land on properties owned by the State of Arkansas and managed by the JHDC in south Jonesboro.

On that seven acres, the first of a series of proposed buildings will be constructed by CRDC. Ramsons Construction Company of Jonesboro was recently selected for that task, Wilford notes.

Between now and then, Wilford says his crew will continue to occupy its temporary quarters at 4920 East

Nettleton in the Olde Nettleton Towne Centre where "we are providing leadership and support for this large agency and making sure we meet the needs of our customers."

The organization's phone numbers and mailing address aren't affected by the move.

Relocating is never an easy task, but Wilford says he is "pleasantly surprised by the smooth transition to date. Our staff has risen to the challenge and very little inconvenience was experienced by those we serve. And, our staff seems to like the temporary quarters."

The initial construction at the JHDC will provide housing for the administrative staff including executive, accounting, human resources, and other support personnel.

"This is just the start of what we foresee as a 'campus' environment," Wilford emphasizes. "Down the road, it is our intent to bring the other agency administrative staffs onto the 'campus' with each major department having its own facility."

The executive director stresses that he believes the gathering of all administrative functions into one tightly knit geographical area will provide a more cohesive group, and therefore, a more efficient organization.

