

# *News Advisory*

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



## **Cellblock to reopen at Newport courthouse**

**August 30, 2013:** The cellblock at the Florence K. Murray Judicial Complex in Newport will reopen Tuesday, September 3, as planned, after being closed since May 1 for renovations.

The cellblock's reopening means that pending criminal and juvenile matters in the Superior, Family and District Courts will return to normal. During the renovation period, certain matters involving prisoners were heard in Washington County or Kent County. With the cooperation of the Newport Police Department, some prisoners were held temporarily at the police station. Rhode Island state sheriffs were assigned to the police station as needed during the reconstruction. Newport County civil cases were largely unaffected by the work.

"I am grateful to Newport Police Chief Gary T. Silva and the Police Department for allowing the courts to utilize their building over the summer to help bridge the gap for prisoner holding and transportation," said State Court Administrator J. Joseph Baxter Jr. "It was a truly cooperative achievement."

Baxter also thanked the Sheriffs' Department, the state police, the Department of Attorney General and the Office of the Public Defender for their patience during the project.

The renovations addressed longstanding cellblock deficiencies in the courthouse, which was built in 1927. While there were three separate cells in the courthouse's holding area, they were all immediately adjacent to one another. They also had no toilets. The renovations provide toilets in the cells and make it possible to incarcerate and separate men, women and juveniles out of sight and hearing from one another.

The reconstructed cellblock will significantly enhance the health and safety of those who work in, visit, and attend court sessions in Newport.

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