



Sentinel/Dan Irving

DONE: A demolition crew removes the last pieces of concrete wall from the former courthouse building on Eighth Street Wednesday morning.

Final pieces of old courthouse demolished

By **JOHN CHARLES ROBBINS**

Staff writer

The old Holland District Courthouse is history — loudly rendered to a dusty pit of rubble in the last week by a wrecking crew.

The noise and dirt signal the last act of major construction on West Eighth Street in downtown Holland.

When the dust finally settles for good — in about two months — a parking lot and landscaped pocket park will fill the space the single-story courthouse used to occupy.

“We’re looking at mid-October for having everything completed,” said Al Vanderberg, Ottawa County administrator, on Thursday.

County officials plan to host an open house and dedication in late October for the new courthouse, he said.

Over the last three years, nearly the entire north block of

HOLLAND

Eighth Street between River and Pine avenues has been reborn with a new Holland city police department, new county courthouse, a parking structure and now the parking lot.

“We’re anxiously waiting to get into the site,” said Stan Elenbaas, project manager with Erhardt Construction Co.

“We’re kind of out of the loop of the demolition... we’re not involved,” Elenbaas said, noting the county directly contracted with a demolition company to clear the site.

“We anticipate being in there next week, to start back-filling... the demolition is supposed to be done anytime this week,” he said.

“We’re ready to go,” said Elenbaas.

The county’s new 58,000-square-foot courthouse, an \$8 million project, was built on the footprint of the former Holland Police Department building.

Work began in November 2004.

The new courthouse opened in June and houses the 58th District Court, court probation and the county prosecutor.

The new facility replaces the former 14,000-square-foot courthouse, a fixture on Eighth Street for nearly 30 years.

“It went very well, pretty smooth,” Elenbaas said of the new courthouse. “And everybody was excited to move into their new space.”

The overall project required working with Holland because the county and city share a lobby and security corridor between the new police headquarters and courthouse.

“I think it’s a good example of the great things that can happen when you have a partnership between government agencies, the county and the city,” said Vanderberg.

“We have a great new facility that will serve the law enforcement needs of the city and coun-

ty for many years to come,” he said.

The demolition of the old courthouse building began a later than originally expected, Vanderberg said, but the impact on the project timetable is insignificant.

Although he didn’t know the details of the small park, Vanderberg said there will indeed be one on the site.

“Holland’s planning commission wanted it there and we agreed to put it there,” he said. “There will be a pocket park.”

Elenbaas said there will be a small area between the new parking lot and the sidewalk on Eighth Street that will be shaped and landscaped, along with new tree plantings similar to those down the street near the new police building.

The new parking lot will be tied into the city’s snowmelt system, keeping the pavement clear in winter.

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