

Building event center a slow, steady process

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POCATELLO — While work to get an event center built continues, Raul Cano says it simply isn't a quick process to bond for and contract construction of a \$6.8 million multi-use facility.

"It's not an easy process," said Cano, executive director of the Pocatello-Chubbuck Auditorium District. "There is a lot to consider and look at. We are looking at a \$6.8 million project, it's not like buying a home."

The auditorium district received judicial approval earlier this year to raise the \$6.8 million it will take to build the facility through bonding with the aid of the Chubbuck Development Authority, which is serving as a "conduit" for the financing, Steve Smart, Chubbuck's public works director and city engineer told the Journal earlier this year.

The judicial approval also means the auditorium district doesn't have to seek voter approval to raise the funds through bonding.

The 40,000-square-foot, multi-use facility will be built on six acres on Knudson Boulevard in Chubbuck. Court documents related to the judicial confirmation show that the Auditorium Districts receives approximately \$869,000 annually on average through a 5-percent tax on hotel rooms. That's far in excess of the annual \$545,000 in payments the court documents show the district would pay for the bonding.

Since receiving the judicial approval, Cano says the auditorium district has been working to finalize all that it wants to be included in the event center and to line up potential financing.

"We are hoping to parallel the financing and construction-bid package to be able to have those happen at about the same time," Cano said. "We want to make sure we have the right bid and the right financing."

Cano said the project is tentatively set to go out for bid on July 29. But the process is fairly restrictive as only contractors with a public works license can bid the project.

Also adding to the timeline has been a study to ensure the land has not been previously used in a manner that would have caused any environmental concerns.

Although construction on the facility won't likely start until late this year at the earliest, some of the infrastructure, including gas and power lines are already being



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In addition to the work on coordinating the bid process and lining up the financing, Cano said some planning is being started in regards to sponsorship opportunities, which could include naming rights for some portions of the facility.

"We are proposing to area businesses that we are going to have some opportunities to have a permanent presence in the facility," he said.

Among those opportunities is the name of the event center.

"If a business is interested in naming rights, it would be a permanent relationship with the center," Cano said.

Reiterating that the process of funding and constructing the event center is not a quick or easy one, Cano said he would like to see construction on the project begin by the end of this year.