

Feds to release money for new courthouse in Fort Pierce

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Washington, D.C. - Some \$53.8 million will be released this year to begin construction of a new federal courthouse in Fort Pierce, according to U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson. The contract should be awarded before the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, he said.

Nelson and other lawmakers, including U.S. Rep. Tim Mahoney, got word of the funding earlier today, after Nelson received a call from the head of the Government Services Administration, Lurita Doan, who oversees the agency that controls federal building projects.

"The economic picture in Fort Pierce is going to change dramatically because of the courthouse," said Nelson, one of several lawmakers who pushed for its funding.

Said Mahoney, "Construction of the courthouse means significant redevelopment in an area of blighted houses and vacant storefronts. This is a major victory for Ft. Pierce and St. Lucie County."

Indeed, city and county officials have said the new courthouse will spur redevelopment along Orange Avenue and result in an estimated \$228.9 million being pumped into the local economy from both the public and private sectors.

The courthouse has been on the wish list of the federal judiciary for several years along with sites in New York, Utah, Mississippi, Georgia, Texas and California. But the White House has said no to those projects in its budgets.