

Co-op Breaks Ground on New Headquarters

Construction is underway on Continental Divide Electric Co-op's new headquarters campus, adjacent to the Senior Citizens Center in Grants.

CDEC board members and employees gathered at the construction site Dec. 7, 2021, for a ceremonial groundbreaking. About 100 people attended, including elected officials and economic development leaders from the City of Grants, Village of Milan and Cibola County.

The campus sits on approximately 23 acres in the Cibola Industrial Park at 1821 Clif Lear Blvd. Construction is expected to take 13 months to complete.

The site enables CDEC to consolidate operations presently at two places – the co-op's administrative offices at 200 E. High St. in Grants and its pole yard on Elkins Road in Milan.

It also provides ample space for long-term technology improvements to make CDEC operations more efficient and its services more reliable.

"Over the past 19 months, most of us have had to adapt to video conferencing for work, play, education, and other life necessities," CDEC Board President Keith Gottlieb explained.

"Closing the 'digital divide' – locally and nationally – has become a top priority. Much like broadband internet, more modern facilities are necessary to provide superior energy and telecommunication services you've come to expect from our co-op," Gottlieb concluded.

The co-op purchased the land in 2018 and continued with its planning efforts that started in 2015. "Our present facility – a landmark in Grants since 1958 – no longer meets the needs of our growing workforce," CDEC Chief Executive Officer Robert E. Castillo said.

The co-op's current headquarters consists of a 14,000-square-foot administration building, two equipment warehouses and a fleet maintenance shop. The new administration building will be nearly twice as large – 23,000 square feet – with an additional 24,000 square feet of warehouse and maintenance space.

One of the features that will significantly benefit CDEC co-op members is a planned drive-thru payment window.

Also included is a 1,200-square-foot classroom for employee training and companywide meetings and public meeting space for community groups who request its use.



Above is a conceptual rendering that illustrates Continental Divide Electric Co-op's new administrative building. Although planning and design phases are complete, final aesthetic details could change. Collaborating with CDEC on the design-build project is Franken Co., and FORMATIVE Architecture, both of Albuquerque and Shelly M. Hughes Architects PC, of Cloudcroft.

"When construction is complete, we fully anticipate our new campus – visible from Interstate 40 – will further encourage economic growth along this stretch of the I-40 corridor," said Castillo, who also serves as board president of the Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation.

After the co-op moves into its new quarters, a ribbon cutting will be held, and the public will be invited, CDEC Member Services Manager Mac Juarez said.

"CDEC incorporated in 1945, which made us 75 years old in 2020. Embarking on another 75 years of service in a new facility is a major milestone for our co-op family," Juarez said.