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**Groundbreaking set for Lee County Public Safety Center  
Expansion of EOC to take about 19 months**

Fort Myers, FL, Oct. 5, 2023 – The public is invited to a groundbreaking at 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 2, for a two-story addition to the existing Emergency Operations Center, which will be renamed the Lee County Public Safety Center when it's completed.

The event at 2675 Ortiz Ave., Fort Myers, will include comments from county commissioners and other officials. The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted to award the contract for the 36,873 square-foot expansion in September.

During blue-sky normal operations, the expanded building will house Public Safety Administration, Emergency Medical Services, and a new Emergency Communications Center, with space for Public Safety's Division of Emergency Communications, Lee County Sheriff's Office Communications, and the Lee County Department of Transportation's Traffic Operations Center. Lee County Emergency Management will remain in its existing location.

When activated for an emergency such as a hurricane, the center will be staffed with key personnel from first-responder agencies, emergency relief organizations, county departments, municipalities, utility companies and other essential agencies.

To accommodate the numerous personnel during activation, the new facility will be equipped with technology and equipment, numerous restrooms, showers and sleeping accommodations, an extensive training facility, and additional amenities to contribute to the building's efficiency and operational requirements.

This expansion was being planned well before Hurricane Ian made landfall in 2022. The Board approved a contract with an architectural firm in June 2019. BSSW Architects Inc. designed the expansion, and Manhattan Construction Co. was selected through the bidding process to provide construction services for a \$28.7 million contract.

This project is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and State Appropriation Funds with key support from Lee County's legislative delegation.

Construction is expected to take about 19 months.

Those unable to attend the ceremony can watch it via livestream on Lee County's YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@LeeCountyFLBOCC/videos>.

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2314, Florida Relay Service 711, or [jlguardia@leegov.com](mailto:jlguardia@leegov.com). Accommodation will be provided at no cost to the requester. Requests should be made at least five business days in advance.