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# Two long-awaited building projects transform Pines and Miramar

Two massive building projects set to transform public access in southwestern Broward County sits just two miles apart in Pembroke Pines and Miramar. Pines' new civic center will include a city hall and a 3,500-seat auditorium expected to be completed late this year.



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Sun Sentinel

FEBRUARY 11, 2016, 6:03 PM

**T**wo massive building projects just two miles apart in Pembroke Pines and Miramar are set to transform public access in southwestern **Broward County**.

The towering concrete walls of Pines' new civic center dominate the expanse of land that had been prepped for construction almost a decade ago but sat undeveloped.

The civic center, which will include city hall and a 3,500-seat auditorium, is expected to be completed late this year, the cornerstone of the city's ambitious plan to create a vibrant downtown area where people live, shop, eat and watch a movie. The project had been stalled by the Great Recession.

Two miles away, Miramar Town Center is nearing completion, after years of delays because of insurance issues and haggling over a suitable location.

Its new \$23 million police headquarters is just weeks away from being done, and more than 270 police personnel are expected to move in by the end of April. The old police headquarters was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma in 2005.

In Miramar, the 65,000-square-foot building features a Mediterranean facade.

The most expensive building Pines has built — at \$58 million — has modern lines and a signature glass side in 167,000 square feet.

Both buildings are LEED certified- energy efficient and environmentally friendly — and built with future growth in mind.

"The department, personnel-wise, hasn't caught up yet to the city's growth," said Eric Watters, a Miramar police commander who has served as the department's project manager for the new headquarters.

"We have built with that in mind, so there will be space to put additional people," he said.

The police headquarters is built to withstand a Category 5 hurricane and has its own full power backup.

For nearly 10 years, the police department operated out of leased offices in a strip mall that lacked basic police essentials, like a holding cell and booking space, officials said. Arrestees have been processed at a Broward Sheriff's Office facility. And since there was no space for detectives, they have been operating out of the department's west substation.

The new building brings everything under one roof and includes the city's emergency operations. A large community room will be available for homeowners association meetings and other residents' group meetings.

Mayors from both cities attended each other's groundbreaking, in December 2014 for the police headquarters and May 2015 for the civic center.

"We are definitely supportive of each other on these projects and look forward to their completion," said Pines Mayor Frank Ortis.

On Feb. 24, Ortis will present a town hall meeting featuring a time-lapse presentation on the civic center construction. He's had a bird's-eye view from his office at the current city hall several hundred yards away. More than 500 employees will move into the center when it's done, Ortis said.

"The residents are excited, every time I see someone they tell me they can't wait until it opens," he said.

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