

Miramar police move into new digs after 10 years in makeshift headquarters



The Mediterranean-style, three-story, 65,000 square-foot building will also house the city's Emergency Operations Center and is located adjacent to City Hall.



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After more than a decade, the city's police officers will no longer have to keep suspects in their police cruisers because their makeshift headquarters at a strip mall has no holding cells.

Instead, they moved Monday into their new \$23 million headquarters in a Mediterranean-style building adjacent to City Hall.

The three-story, 65,000 square-foot building, which will also house the city's Emergency Operations Center, has full backup power and is Category 5 hurricane rated. It will have some mixed-use on the first floor, including retail shops and restaurants. The building also has a large community room for public meetings.

"I am thrilled that our police headquarters building is finally opening. While our police force did not miss a beat in protecting our community, this new building positions them to protect Miramar with the latest technology in their immediate environment," said Mayor Wayne Messam.

The need for the center began in 2005, when Hurricane Wilma tore a hole in the roof of the old police headquarters. Suddenly, the police department was without a place to conduct its day-to-day operations. It scrambled to find space large enough to accommodate almost 300 employees, and settled on offices at 3064 N. Commerce Parkway.

The department had to make numerous adjustments at the \$268,000-a-year facility that it rented. Some closets were converted into office space and the traffic unit and detectives were housed elsewhere.

There was only one interview room, and officers had to occasionally borrow space from the **Broward County** Sheriff's Office in Fort Lauderdale.

The years-long delay in building a new headquarters was the result of a disagreement between the city and insurers of the old headquarters. The city wrangled with FEMA and insurance companies over how much it would collect. And since 2011, commissioners and residents were divided over where the building should go.

In Aug. 2013, the commission approved issuing a \$60 million bond to pay for capital improvements, including a \$5.7 million, 5,000 seat amphitheater that is currently being built at Miramar Regional Park, and the police headquarters.

"Ever since Wilma, we've had extreme obstacles to funding. For many years there was only \$10 million reserved for the police headquarters," Messam said. "The bond set us on the path to where we are today."

"The Miramar police family has been eagerly waiting for our new home," said chief Dexter Williams. "The day we placed shovels in the ground sparked the beginning of a new adventure."

That groundbreaking was Dec. 10, 2014, and the two main figures at that ceremony, Police Chief Raymond Black and Mayor Lori Moseley, no longer hold those positions. Black retired in January and Moseley was defeated by Messam in last year's mayoral election.

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