

East Wenatchee's growth is crowding City Hall — even the toilet is strained

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World photo/Kathryn Stevens

Mary Beth Holzerland, an assistant court administrator in East Wenatchee, feeds paper into a printer in the bathroom of the court clerk's office. The office is so small that they use the bathroom to house the refrigerator, microwave, and the printer. Because of the way the printer is situated, and the fact that they have to feed documents into the printer from a box, they sit on the lidless toilet to use it.



World photo/Kathryn Stevens

The Court Clerk's office is small to say the least. They use the bathroom to print official documents, like these "Notice of Hearing" forms.

EAST WENATCHEE — East Wenatchee City Hall is bursting at its seams. Case in point: the East Wenatchee Municipal Court administration office's "multipurpose room."

It houses a filing cabinet, refrigerator, microwave, computer router, a court document printer — and a toilet.

“Well, it’s kind of disgusting. It’s not very sanitary,” Joan Sims, court administrator, said of the room she and her coworkers use throughout the work day in City Hall.

The three women who work in the office say they use the toilet for its intended purpose. They also sit on it to read the printer’s command screen while printing documents.

The expansion of the city, by annexation and natural growth has led to the building’s overcrowding. Areas that were formerly used for storage, in the basement of the building, are now offices for city personnel.

Now the court’s storage area is any open space in the office. Every nook and cranny is filled with boxes of paper for court records. And the court library is simply a bookshelf in the hallway.

“This is actually in violation of fire code,” said Sims.

She said that when the building was built in September 1994, the municipal court was new to the city. After nearly 16 years, court records that have to be kept on hand have taken up more and more space in the office.

The city has also grown significantly through annexation, adding to the municipal court’s responsibilities.

In the past five years, traffic stops and arrests have increased with the city.

“It’s amazing how everything has increased,” Sims said.

Sims’ office is used by the court’s part-time judge, Chancey Crowell. He has a desk fashioned from a utility table in the office, which is also used for pretrial conferences.

That means Sims must go elsewhere when the judge and lawyers occasionally meet before trials.

The police department’s space at City Hall is similarly crowded, though relief of sorts is on its way.

In the women’s locker room, used by four staffers, is a maze of police files.

In the office, each police officer shares a cubicle — including computer — with another, each has their own cabinet, a cubby hole of sorts. Three sergeants share one office.

The move has already been made, though, for the police department to get a bit more space. Once remodeling is finished, the police chief, his assistant and the detectives will move to an annex east of City Hall.

As for the rest of the people working at City Hall, they’ll just have to sit and wait.

“There isn’t the money right now,” said City Attorney Devin Poulson.

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