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Construction Milestone Celebrated for New Medical Examiner Office

Final steel beam hoisted atop the voter-approved project; half of local hires on the construction team from the Bayview

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San Francisco, CA – Today, Mayor Ed Lee, City officials, construction crews and a jubilant crowd of onlookers watched as the ceremonial final steel beam was hoisted into place to honor the topping out of San Francisco’s new Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in the Bayview. The event marked the milestone of completing the steel structure for the resilient \$65 million facility at 1 Newhall St. that is scheduled to open in fall 2017.

The City broke ground for the project in November of last year. More than 6,100 working hours from local residents have gone into the facility’s construction, with more than half coming from the Bayview-Hunters Point community. In collaboration with the CityBuild program led by the City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the project is meeting local hiring expectations: San Francisco residents make up 30 percent of the crew. In addition, 34 local small business are involved with the project, with more than half from Bayview-Hunters Point.

This is the first major project funded by the \$400 million Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response Bond, approved by voters in 2014. The project will move the Medical Examiner’s Office to a new, state-of-the-art building in the City’s southeast neighborhood from its previous location at the 50-year-old, seismically deficient Hall of Justice at 850 Bryant St.

“Making these voter-approved investments is essential for San Francisco to continue to be a world-class city that places the safety and protection of our diverse population first,” Mayor Lee said. “This state-of-the-art Medical Examiner’s Office will provide the City with the 21st-century tools needed to uphold the highest-level of responsiveness, preparedness and efficiency. And, we have put San Franciscans to work to get it built.”

The Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), through the CityBuild program, partners with the community to help residents secure job opportunities in the construction industry. OEWD provides critical workforce training programs and also enforces the City’s Local Hire Policy.

“As we upgrade our City’s infrastructure, we increase our capacity to provide public safety and to make positive impacts to the local economy including creating jobs for our residents,” said City Administrator Naomi Kelly. “The new Office of the Chief Medical Examiner also builds on our commitment to protecting the City’s infrastructure and meeting crucial needs that have been identified and prioritized with community input.”

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San Francisco Public Works oversaw design of the unique building and its highly technical laboratories and is responsible for construction management.

“As with each of our hundreds of building and design jobs, Public Works is determined to deliver this construction project to the people of San Francisco in a timely and fiscally responsible manner,” said San Francisco Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru. “We have been delighted to collaborate through the design and construction phases of this project to engage the community and create a new civic facility that will bring benefits to surrounding neighborhoods and serve the entire City for generations to come.”

Services provided by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner are essential for the community, public safety and first-responder services, as well as the City’s criminal justice system. The office investigates more than 1,200 deaths each year. With the newly built 46,000 square foot facility, the Medical Examiner will be equipped to provide continuous, reliable service with enhanced capacity to efficiently handle cases and produce timely results for victims of crimes, for the criminal justice system and for medical authorities.

“With this construction milestone, our office and its staff is closer to moving into the new facility,” said San Francisco Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Michael Hunter. “The new, modern space is an investment that will improve how we serve the public, and accommodate evolving practices and technologies in our field.”

The general contractor for the project is Clark Construction and the architect is KMD Architects. To wish the facility good luck and continued growth, a symbolic evergreen tree, alongside an American flag, was mounted atop the ceremonial steel beam. Placing the tree on the last beam is a tradition at topping out celebrations tracing back generations meant to send thanks to the trees and lumber used for construction.

“Clark Construction is honored to work in partnership with Mayor Ed Lee, the City Administrator’s Office and Public Works to upgrade the City’s infrastructure by delivering this new Chief Medical Examiner facility,” said Steve Dell’Orto, senior vice president of Clark Construction Group. “We are equally proud to extend such investment to the local economy by working alongside local small businesses and local residents in building state-of-the-art and seismically safe facilities for our community.”

The Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response Bond program continues to bring seismically safe, upgraded public safety facilities to San Francisco. Upcoming projects include improving all 10 district police stations, rebuilding neighborhood firehouses in the Marina and Fillmore neighborhoods, continuing repairs to the emergency firefighting water system and constructing a new facility for the City’s motorcycle police and crime lab.

About San Francisco Public Works: The 24/7 City agency cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and nurtures City-maintained street trees; designs, constructs and maintains City-owned facilities; inspects streets and sidewalks; builds curb ramps; eradicates graffiti; partners with neighborhoods; trains people for jobs; greens the right of way; and educates our communities.