

MARTIN COUNTY REGIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE CENTER

Fairmont, Minnesota



In 2018, Martin County conducted a formal review of operations at the county’s historic courthouse and justice center. The study concluded that the County should construct a new facility to address growing safety and security deficiencies created by new state correctional regulations. The County is seeking \$19.2 million in state funds to match \$19.2 million in local funds to construct a new 71,000 square foot facility to house co-located county sheriff and city police, law enforcement operations including dispatch, emergency management services. The new facility will also include courtrooms, court services, victim services, a behavioral health unit, and a 50-bed jail. In

2020, the County received bonding funding for \$2.167 million in planning & design money. (Architects rendering photo shown at top left)

“In support of H.F. 618, Martin County requests \$19.2 million in the 2023 legislative session for the Martin County Regional Public Safety and Justice Center”

Unfunded State Mandates, Safety Requirements, Gender Inequities, Increased Costs & Regional Impacts: Current state correctional department mandates require established sight and sound barriers within jail facilities that have rendered the current jail obsolete and out of compliance with these state mandates. As a result, the County is no longer able to house female offenders and must transport women to facilities in other counties, thus creating a serious gender inequity problem in the county’s correctional system. Juveniles cannot be held for any time which results in up to 6-hour round trip transports or more to the closest juvenile detention center. Due to these mandates and non-compliance by the County’s existing facility, women, juveniles, and maximum-security inmates must be transported 1-3 hours away due to a lack of regional facilities, increasing continuing costs for taxpayers by up to \$400,000 per year not including salaries.

County Tax Base Challenges, Economic Uncertainty, & Jobs Impact: The County’s agriculture-based economy with low population places the burden of funding this vital governmental function directly on local property taxes. Without state bonding, funding the entire \$40.567 million facility could require up to an 11% property tax rate increase on county residents and agricultural operations that are already facing commodity volatility and uncertainty in today’s economy. The County is MN’s largest producer of pork – the 6th largest producer in the U.S. and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, swine producers and processing facilities were disproportionately impacted due to the temporary closures. Placing additional strain on the County’s tax base now would exacerbate the economic challenges our state is seeing. This project will create 300+ construction trades jobs in Greater Minnesota.