

NEWS

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Supervisors approve plan to improve coroner operation

CHINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors took action today to help the Coroner’s Office meet the demands of the county’s growing population by approving an additional \$1.4 million to expand and improve the county morgue while adding 14 new employees to the coroner operation.

Facilities and staffing at the Coroner’s Office have not kept pace with the county’s explosive growth, resulting in impossibly high caseloads for coroner investigators and severe overcrowding in the morgue.

“The people of San Bernardino County deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing that they and their loved ones would be treated properly if or when they are ever in the care of the Coroner’s Office,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus. “My colleagues and I today took a major step toward making that a reality.”

During the past two years prior to today’s action, the Board of Supervisors had allocated more than \$1.4 million to expand the morgue. At about the same time, the Board of Supervisors turned over control of the Coroner’s Office to the Sheriff’s Department, and the Sheriff’s Department launched a comprehensive study to determine how best to use the funding and identify how much more would be needed to improve service and meet the county’s increasing needs. The study resulted in the recommendations approved today by the Board of Supervisors.

The \$2.8 million morgue expansion project will expand the morgue’s refrigeration and freezing units and add shelving, replace the morgue’s air conditioning system and add an emergency generator, replace three existing autopsy stations with five state-of-the-art stations, establish a forensic anthropology area, provide a dedicated tissue harvesting room, and add office space for medical examiners and autopsy assistants, among other improvements. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors today authorized the Sheriff to hire seven additional deputy coroner investigators, five autopsy assistants, and two sheriff’s service specialists.

“The action taken by the Board of Supervisors today ensures that the Coroner’s Office can and will continue to do a much better job serving the public,” Chairman Postmus said.