

# SUBURBAN JOURNALS

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Last modified: Tuesday, February 3, 2009 3:13 AM CST



Rick Graefe photo/ Dodge mover Fran Wiseman pushes boxes of Wildwood records Friday, Jan. 30, into the city's new City Hall building at 183 Plaza Drive. The new City Hall opened for business Monday.

Wildwood City Hall, police precinct move

By [Mary Shapiro](#)

Movers were busy last week in Wildwood, getting the City Hall and Police Precinct headquarters into their new homes.

City Hall offices moved to 183 Plaza Drive, less than a mile from the old site on Manchester Road and opened for business Monday.

The St. Louis County Police Department's Wildwood Precinct moved Wednesday to 17014D New College Ave., less than a mile from the old offices at Metro West Fire Protection District headquarters at Highway 109 and Manchester Road.

Both City Hall and the police precinct are benefitting mightily from more space for staff and storage and, thus, more opportunities to serve the community.

City Administrator Dan Dubruiel said the new City Hall, featuring leased space on the second floor and more than half of the first floor of the new building, totals about 12,600 square feet as opposed to about 8,000 in the old City Hall. And there's more parking.

"And that's despite the fact that in 1999, our landlord expanded the old City Hall building to provide a new City Council chamber, meeting room and office," Dubruiel said. "We

grew too large for even that to accommodate us.

"Here (at the new site), you can walk around without having to elbow past people talking on the phone. The space is better configured for us. And we can have both our 20 city staff and our four public works employees in the same building. Public works staff had been housed in an annex."

Dubruiel said the new site gives the city "a better environment to conduct business and meet with residents and others having business with the city."

Plans are for City Hall to be housed in the new building for likely three to five years, he said, while a committee works on a permanent site that would be owned by Wildwood, he said.

"Leasing space, versus owning it, is very expensive," Dubruiel said.

Wildwood Precinct Commander Capt. Gary Crews was similarly pleased at his staff of 38 being able to stretch out.

"We have 4,800 square feet here, but just over 900 square feet in the old headquarters," he said. "In the past, we had no privacy. There were no private offices, and you couldn't do a victim interview without 15 people right around you. Likewise, we had only 26 lockers; some staff had to keep equipment in their personal cars. And we were forced to keep records stuffed in boxes under desks."

The new headquarters has plenty of storage space, staff offices (including for sergeants, traffic and neighborhood policing officers), a secure lobby area (with bulletproof glass and a buzzer to let people in), a prisoner holding cell (for up to three hours) with restroom, handicapped-accessible restrooms, separate locker rooms for male and female officers, evidence room, storage room, interview room, equipment room, fingerprint processing area, kitchen, roll call room and even a garage that can be used for bike storage and child safety-seat checks.

"Here, we'll be able to devise more community service programs," Crews said. "Before, our neighborhood policing officers didn't even have desks and had to work at a communal table."

Crews insisted his precinct always had a good rapport with Metro West.

They fire district even allowed the police precinct to take some of the district's furniture to the new site - and it was convenient having police and firefighters in the same building.

But not only did the precinct outgrow its space, Metro West did, too.

The fire district needed the police precinct's space to accommodate its own growth, said Crews, who, for the first time in 14 years, has an office.

"The difference for us now is like night and day," Crews said.

New Wildwood City Hall

183 Plaza Drive (at Plaza and Fountain Drives off Taylor Road)

Phone: (636) 458-0440 (unchanged)

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays except for holidays

New Wildwood Precinct/St. Louis County Police headquarters

17014D New College Ave. (in the new section of the Westridge Office Center, east of Highway 109, just south of Manchester Road)

Phone: (636) 458-9194 (unchanged)

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays except for holidays