

## **Second Judicial District Juvenile Justice Center Closed Until Tuesday**

**Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 27, 2020** — The Second Judicial District Court’s Juvenile Justice Center will be closed until Tuesday, March 31, 2020 after an individual working on the construction of a new courtroom was sent home with a fever on Thursday afternoon.

“These steps were taken in an abundance of caution to protect our employees, JJC partners, and the public given the current State of Emergency. At this time, we have no reason to believe anyone was exposed to the COVID-19 virus,” said Marie Ward, presiding judge of the Second Judicial District Children’s Court.

Bernalillo County is managing the courtroom construction at John E. Brown Juvenile Justice Center, located at 5100 Second St. NW. Upon hearing about the worker’s illness, the county stopped work on the project and requested that the court close as a preventive measure to allow the county time to provide a comprehensive, thorough and deep cleaning of JJC.

“An employee of the contractor who is building the courtroom was sent home with a fever,” said Mary Murnane, facilities director for Bernalillo County. “The person has not yet been tested for coronavirus. The Department of Health has been contacted and advised that the person be self-quarantined and monitored to see if the fever lasts more than 72 hours or reaches 104 degrees.”

In the meantime, Bernalillo County has ordered five county employees who had contact with the sick individual to self-quarantine pending resolution of the sick individual’s status. The county also has placed the courtroom construction project on an indefinite hold pending resolution of that individual’s status.

Murnane said the court’s operations should be able to continue on Tuesday, after the building is thoroughly cleaned, but the construction project will not continue until the county gets assurances that none of the contractor’s or the county’s employees have the coronavirus.

“Fortunately, the construction is taking place in an isolated area of the building,” Murnane said. “We don’t have reason to believe there is any danger to courtroom employees or the public. Still, we think it is prudent to give the building a thorough cleaning before anyone is allowed back in.”

While the Juvenile Justice Center is closed, all necessary proceedings will take place at the Second Judicial District Court’s downtown location. Those proceedings will be conducted via telephone and video conferencing.

Second Judicial District Court Chief Judge Stan Whitaker also has asked the county to do an additional thorough cleaning on the downtown courthouse.