



Courtesy Adams County Sheriff's Office

An artist's rendering shows the proposed Flatrock Regional Training Facility, to be located near Riverdale Road and 144th Avenue.

Chasing funds for training center

By Brady Delander

Staff Writer

Good news followed bad last week concerning a proposed multi-million-dollar training facility for regional law enforcement agencies based in Adams County.

The county sought a portion of \$17 million in grants available through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs to help fund the facility but came up empty. There was a silver lining, however, as DOLA officials saw the benefits of the project and decided to pitch it to local congressman and a senator.

"It's kind of a mixed bag," Adams County Sheriff Doug Darr said of DOLA's decision. "On one hand, we would have loved to see the DOLA dollars. On the other hand, getting recognition of the value of our project and getting help and support to build it is a pretty big deal."

Darr said that DOLA Director Susan Kirkpatrick was impressed enough with the project that she notified U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet and Congressmen Ed Perlmutter and Jared Polis. Darr met with Perlmutter's staff last week to discuss plans for the facility.

The project was one of seven finalists for the DOLA funds, which are a one-time allocation for energy-impacted cities and towns. The town of Parachute received \$8 million, and another \$9 million was split between the city of Delta, Mesa County and the Southwest Council of Governments.

The county applied for \$2.8 million for initial infrastructure and construction costs for the Flatrock Regional Training Facility, to be situated on 339 acres off Riverdale Road near 144th Avenue. The facility would be built in phases, with firearms training and emergency vehicle training viewed as priorities. The first phase is projected to cost between \$20 million and \$30 million.

As many as 40 law enforcement agencies would use the facility. Thornton, Northglenn, Commerce City and Jefferson County are among 11 partners committed to completion of the project, and another 31 agencies have expressed interest in training at the facility, according to Darr.

"The training facility is something Adams County needs," said Northglenn Mayor Joyce Downing. "But with the condi-

tion of the economy right now it's a bit on the iffy side. It's something we really support if we can get the funds."

The Adams County Sheriff's Office unveiled plans for the facility in late 2008. In April of last year, County Commissioner Larry Pace said the project was in limbo.

"The money to go forward is not there at this time," Pace said at the time.

The county purchased the land for \$4 million – which includes an additional 60 attached acres that will be used for a public shooting range.

Included in the project plans are a 200-yard rifle range, a structure for SWAT training, an area to train in inclement weather, skid pads and off-road and city-grid driving ranges.

"All of our partnerships are in place, the business plan is in place and the commissioners have pledged \$13 million worth of certificates of participation to help fund the balance of the project," Darr said. "The bottom line is we're ready to roll. We're ready to turn dirt right now."

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