

Georgetown area gets new DMV facility

Expanded complex will accommodate growth in Sussex

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Sussex County motorists can finally jump in the fast lane along with their northern counterparts when renewing their vehicle registration.

They'll bid goodbye Tuesday to the aging trailer and crammed building, with its six teller windows and two inspection lanes, that make up the Division of Motor Vehicles facility near Georgetown. A \$12.5 million complex featuring seven inspection lanes and 22 customer service windows is replacing it.

"We'll be glad when it's open and we can move right through it," said Amos Corkell, a Milford motorist, while he waited in the crowded trailer that DMV has been using for its driver services.

The 38,500-square-foot facility took root on 31 acres just east of the existing DMV complex on South Bedford Street Extended. It replaces a 30-year-old facility with 12,000 square feet.

Some features of the new site include a drive-through service for routine renewals, electronic signs for inspection lanes, a news and DMV messaging system, and an integrated building security system.

The design mirrors that of the DMV facility in Miquadale, which won the 2001 Excellence in Architecture Award from the Delaware chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The spacious lobby resembles an airport terminal, with plenty of seating and walls between the counters.



Eric Timmons of Advantech installs security equipment at the new Division of Motor Vehicles building near Georgetown. The new facility is scheduled to open Tuesday.

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Drivers' services will be moving out of this old, cramped trailer into the new facility, which has 22 customer service windows.

"The way it's set up now anyone can see what's going on next to them. This will ensure privacy," said Pamela Smith, DMV's Georgetown lane manager.

The old facility will be torn down and the space converted to a parking lot for 350 cars by the end of the year.

A bigger complex has long been needed to accommodate the growth of Sussex County. DMV reported that Sussex County has some 200,000 registered vehicles so far this year, an increase of 16,000 vehicles since the end of 2004.

More new cars have been registered in Sussex than in Kent or New Castle counties so far this year.

"Those rising numbers of registered vehicles, as well as the growth of licensed drivers, bring with them an increase in the need for customer services," said Gov. Ruth Ann Minner.

Sussex County Council supported the state's plan to build a new complex, despite the opposition of Councilman Dale R. Dukes, D-Laurel, and Finley B. Jones Jr., D-Greenwood. They thought it should be placed in the fast-growing coastal area.

State officials said the Georgetown-area facility needed an upgrade and they could not afford to build two new buildings.

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