

SCREENING FACILITY WILL DELIVER INCREASED SECURITY

The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia is designing a sophisticated screening facility to conduct more vigilant inspections of vehicles off-site, which will deliver better protection for employees and increased security for the Bank. Construction is expected to get underway this spring to transform the former parking lot across from the Bank's Seventh Street entrance into a 6,300-square-foot screening annex. The project is expected to be completed in 2009.

Plans call for the screening site to employ the most advanced technology and highly trained employees to identify and mitigate potential threats, such as explosives lurking in the largest pallets or hazardous chemicals hiding in the smallest parcels. When the new building opens, the Bank's Law Enforcement officers will be able to scrutinize every vehicle, from armored cash carriers to ordinary office supply trucks, in a more controlled environment and at a safer distance from the building. It is a tremendous responsibility that involves inspecting about 7,000 to 10,000 vehicles each year.

"In today's security-conscious world, we must look for everything from explosives to powders to biological agents. Our job is to deter potential threats and minimize risks. The off-site screening facility is a very significant step in making the whole building safer," said James Welch,

assistant vice president of the Bank's Law Enforcement Department.

The Federal Reserve began enhancing its security after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and has continued to boost its controls. "We are a guardian of the country's banking and payments system, and we will diligently carry out our responsibilities. We value our employees, and we work hard to both keep them safe and ensure that they feel safe," said Welch. The Bank's security measures have obviously made an impression on employees: According to a recent Bank survey, 89 percent of employees feel that the Bank is a safe and secure place to work.

"We are satisfying all of the most important physical requirements for a safer, more secure building," said Richard A. Elliott, vice president of Facilities Management, Records, and Document Services, who is overseeing the project. Before he



Architect's rendering of the new screening facility

joined the Philadelphia Fed in 2004, Elliott was part of the team charged with building a security command center at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors in Washington, D.C. He emphasized the importance of using more sophisticated technology to identify potential threats.

Technology coupled with a well-trained staff has become an integral part of the Bank's expanding security program. "As we use more sophisticated detection equipment, we need more thorough training. It is more complicated than standing at a post," Welch explained. Just how many employees will be needed to handle all of the various deliveries — ranging from check pallets to cafeteria food — is being carefully studied.

The off-site screening structure's design calls for brighter lighting, better shelter, and more security features. One of the new features is an X-ray machine large enough to examine entire pallets. As a result, the complete inspection process and the off-loading of packages are expected to become easier and faster. Furthermore, ample parking space will permit unexpected deliveries to be handled more effectively. Additional parking, traffic lights, and signage will help traffic flow.

Elliott stressed the importance of striking a balance between providing security and minimally interrupting the Bank's business lines, particularly the check and cash operations. The Philadelphia Fed is one of four full-service regional check processing sites in the Federal Reserve System handling large volumes of checks daily. The larger staging area for checks will further streamline the process. In 2006, the Bank's existing loading dock was renovated to accommodate the increase in checks after the Bank acquired the New York Reserve Bank's check processing.

Elliott is convinced that we have a tremendous opportunity to become even more efficient. Why?

"We are integrating state-of-the-art technology with minimal staffing and minimal costs. We'll have more flexibility and a screening process that is easier, faster, and even more secure," he said.

Land for the site was purchased for \$4.2 million from the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia. The price tag for the former parking lot in addition to the land also covered the required geographic studies, legal fees, and closing costs.

Architectural firm Ewing Cole, well known regionally for its role in constructing Citizens Bank Park, the home of the Philadelphia Phillies, is under contract to design the annex. Probably less well

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known is the fact that the firm also designed the Philadelphia Reserve Bank's building and redesigned the Bank's loading dock.

Ewing Cole's design will incorporate green, or environmentally sound, features. For example, lighting will minimize light pollution and energy consumption. Philadelphia's Percent for Art ordinance requires that a percentage of construction costs be earmarked for public art. Representatives from the Bank and the city's Redevelopment Authority will decide on the theme and commission the work from an artist with a connection to the Bank's Third District.

The exterior of the annex is an important consideration. But what the public doesn't see is even more important as the Philadelphia Fed continues to execute a more comprehensive security program that will ultimately help protect employees, mitigate imminent threats, and safeguard our role in the nation's economy and payment system.