



Rocky Flats Cold War Museum

NEWS RELEASE

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MUSEUM BOARD APPROVES LEASE OF OLD ARVADA POST OFFICE

The Rocky Flats Cold War Museum board signed an agreement to lease the old Arvada Post Office building at 5608-5610 Yukon St. in Olde Town Arvada beginning April 1, but it will likely take a year or more to develop exhibits and related educational programs, hire staff and open the museum.

The one-story, 7,000 square foot property has open exhibition space, two functional kitchen areas and several classrooms and offices. Minor remodeling will be done to meet the needs of the museum.

The mission of the museum is to document the historical, social, environmental and scientific aspects of Rocky Flats, the former nuclear weapons plant in northern Jefferson County. The board is committed to telling all sides of the colorful, complex story of Rocky Flats.

Shirley Garcia, president of the museum board, said, "We are delighted to find a central location for our museum. We hope to attract many school groups and others interested in science, local history and the role Rocky Flats played in the Cold War. We have fascinating oral histories and artifacts to share for all age levels."

Garcia said the building's location, a block west of Olde Wadsworth Blvd. and north of Grandview Ave., should be convenient for tourists, area residents, history buffs, former Rocky Flats workers and school groups. The facility is one block from a future light rail stop and has street parking in front and 13 parking spaces in back.

Former U.S. Senator Wayne Allard helped secure a Congressional appropriation of \$492,000 in late 2007 for a museum building and exhibits. The museum board created an oral history collection of more than 100 interviews of former workers, activists, community and political leaders and others. A consultant is currently documenting the artifacts in a museum database with the help of volunteers who worked at Rocky Flats.

The Rocky Flats Plant was a secret, high security federal facility that produced cores for nuclear weapons for the nation's defense using plutonium, highly enriched uranium and other materials. Construction of the plant started six years after the end of World War II.

The U.S. Department of Energy plant was built in 1951 and contractors operated it. The 6,200-acre site is located about 16 miles northwest of downtown Denver, between Golden and Boulder, bounded by Highway 93 on the west, Indiana St. on the east, Highway 128 on the north and Highway 72 on the south.

Production at the plant stopped after an FBI Raid in June 1989; the site was later fined for violations of environmental laws. After a decision was announced in 1992 to decommission and decontaminate the site, a Superfund cleanup began in 1995. It took 10 years and \$7 billion to complete the massive project. Some 800 structures and buildings were demolished and removed, and nuclear material was shipped to other sites. Radioactive wastes were removed, soil was remediated, and groundwater treatment systems were installed. Long-term environmental monitoring continues at the site, primarily to protect area drinking water sources and to ensure the remedy is functioning as designed.

A 2001 law designated most of the Rocky Flats site a National Wildlife Refuge, preventing development of the land. The central industrial area is fenced off and would not be open to the public. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had not yet opened the refuge.

Interested citizens began meeting in 1999 to preserve the site's history and incorporated the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum in July 2001 as a 501(c) 3 organization. Eight nearby cities and two counties have passed resolutions supporting the museum.

Volunteers are needed to help develop the museum. They may call 720-898-7125 or go to www.rockyflatsmuseum.org to volunteer, donate artifacts or sign up for the museum newsletter *Weapons to Wildlife*.

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