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Temporary Cedar Rapids School Offices Nearly Complete

By Dave Franzman, Reporter

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Associate Superintendent Jay Marino walks along an elevated deck to the Superintendent/Board Secretary office building at the Cedar Rapids Community School District's new Educational Service Center north of Kingston Stadium on Thursday, Aug. 21, 2008, in southwest Cedar Rapids. The office park of modular buildings was built after June flooding damaged the district's ESC along Second Avenue SW. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

CEDAR RAPIDS- A "hurry-up" project to build a new central office complex for Cedar Rapids public schools is just about ready to use. And federal officials along with school administrators formally dedicated the project on Thursday.

The new Educational Service Center is a series of 35 modular homes linked with a wooden boardwalk that stretches a full city block. It's located just north of Kingston Stadium. The district's old offices, on 2nd Avenue S.W., took on eight feet of water during the June flooding.

The Army Corps of Engineers launched construction back on July 12th and contractors worked seven days a week to allow the district back in by the start of classes. FEMA and the state of Iowa funded the nearly \$4-million dollar project.

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Even using modular buildings assembled on site, such a project normally takes three to four months to

complete. FEMA regional administrator Dick Hainje said "yeah, they moved heaven and earth on this one to get this here (in seven weeks)."

Right now, many of the 130 district central office workers are scattered in makeshift space around the city. So connected offices will be a definite improvement.


But administrators say visitors attending school board meetings or needing to conduct business with administrators will find this a big improvement as well.

District associate superintendent Jay Marino said "right now, if you wanted to talk to multiple departments, you'd literally have to get in your car and sometimes drive across town to find some departments because we're scattered--I think the convenience will be definitely a plus."

Over the next few days, administrators and staff will locate their new space and contractors will finish up a few details. The big move in push will take place over the Labor Day weekend.

Although it's being called a "temporary" facility, there's no decision yet about rebuilding or moving the flooded out district offices. So the modular village could be the home to the school district for two years or longer.

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