



*Estes Park Convention & Visitors Bureau  
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## **Groundbreaking for new Visitors Center set for Friday**

With groundbreaking ceremonies scheduled for 9 a.m. Friday, May 20, construction of a new Estes Park Visitors Information Center officially will be underway.

The new building will be situated on the same 5.4 acre parcel at the intersection of U.S. Highways 34 and 36 where the 1970-vintage center currently sits. The current structure will remain in use during the eight-month construction period. Once the new building is occupied in January, the current building will be demolished to make way for an expanded parking lot serving the West side of the building.

Planning for the new center has been underway for nine months. Last August town officials began surveying the feasibility of expanding the current structure and making it ADA accessible.

“It became very clear that it would cost more to expand improve the structure than it would to build from the ground up,” said Estes Park Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director Tom Pickering.

Total budget for the project is set at \$1.7 million; \$400,000 of the total is dedicated to adding paved and striped parking for 130 vehicles. Another \$100,000 is being set aside in a contingency budget. Total funding for the project comes from the town’s Community Reinvestment Fund.

In its 9,052 square feet, the structure will provide about 2,500 square feet for space used by an estimated 250,000 visitors annually along with public restrooms that will be accessible 24-hours a day. The remaining first floor square footage, 3,106 square feet, will house eight permanent CVB staff along with six summer temporary staff and the 75-member Ambassador volunteers who provide customer information services to visitors at the information desk.

The building’s second floor, 3,446 square feet, is set aside for future expansion.

Earlier this spring in preparation for the construction, more than a dozen mature pine trees were removed from the current site and planted on the Estes Valley Recreation & Park District 18-hole golf course for safekeeping. In an arrangement with EVRPD the trees will be removed from the golf course in 2006 and replanted around the new building.

Work to establishing a gravel parking lot for visitor and employee use this summer is expected in to begin immediately. Directional signage indicating how to access temporary parking will be in place and all accesses to the current structure will remain open throughout the construction period.

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