

ESSEX COUNTY



Page 21 Tuesday, July 10, 2007

City Editor Bruno Tedeschi News (973) 392-1727 Fax (973) 274-8587 E-mail essex@starledger.com Online www.nj.com/essex
Advertising (973) 392-4072 Delivery 1-888-453-3437

EX

The Star-Ledger

Obituaries 26 Weather 29

Essex lawyers moving to courthouse

Bar association bringing headquarters to historic Newark building

BY WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Seven years ago, the Essex County Bar Association was so fed up with conditions at the old county courthouse, a place where vermin and stray cats infested the basement, that it filed a lawsuit against the county.

Yesterday, the association announced it was moving its head-

quarters into the very same basement, albeit one that has been extensively renovated.

In an effort to gain easier access to the public and the courts, the bar association will move out of its Livingston offices and set up shop in the basement of the historic county courthouse in Newark.

Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo announced the move in a morning press conference with

leaders of the bar association, who said they will move into the new office in coming weeks.

DiVincenzo noted the irony that the bar association had sued the county several years ago, but he said the two parties are now working together to better serve the public in the courts.

In part because of the lawsuit, the 90-year-old courthouse, which is nationally renowned for its archi-

ecture, was renovated at a cost of \$49 million and reopened on Dec 29, 2004. It now houses most of the county's civil courts.

"A priority of my administration is providing the best possible customer service to people who come to the Hall of Records or courthouse to conduct business," DiVincenzo said. "This is an opportunity to turn an underutilized space in our courthouse into an area that serves the people."

Marc Gross, president of the bar association, said all of the group's functions will be moved into the three-room office, with its cream-colored walls, arched doorways and stained-oak trim. He said the public will have greater access to the bar's lawyer referral service.

"For too long, we have been traveling without a home," Gross said. "Our offices will now be here where the judges are, where the courtrooms are."