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## Regula credits teamwork for making federal building project a reality

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They kept trying to give him credit for downtown's newest project, but U.S. Rep. Ralph Regula insisted that he had a lot of help.

"This is a product of teamwork," Regula told the crowd gathered for the official groundbreaking of the city's new federal building.

The U.S. General Services Administration - the federal government's real-estate manager - will lease the building, which will go up at the corner of McKinley Avenue and Third Street SW.

The new facility will cost about \$14 million and replace the 76-year-old Frank T. Bow Federal Building a block east of the site. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court and clerk's office, U.S. Trustee program, U.S. Marshal's service, Social Security Administration and Internal Revenue Service will occupy parts of the 45,000-square-foot complex.

Construction is set to begin in February, said James C. Handley, the GSA's regional administrator based in Chicago. Plans call for work to be finished in June 2010.

Developers will use four blocks bounded by McKinley Avenue, Third Street, High Avenue and Fifth Street SW. The complex will have two buildings, one housing court services and the other for IRS and Social Security offices. There also will be secured and public parking areas.

### PLENTY OF PLANNING

It's taken more than five years to bring the project together. Speakers at Thursday morning's event noted that Regula has been the one constant through the process.

Stephen A. Perry, former GSA director and now president and executive director at the Pro Football Hall of Fame, credited Regula for conceiving the idea of a new federal building. Regula suggested the GSA review the Bow building to see if it met security needs and other requirements, Perry said. The study showed the Bow building was outdated.

Regula's leadership and perseverance pushed the project to completion, Perry said.

The new building and surrounding grounds should become an anchor for future development on the southwest side of downtown, Regula said. The new buildings also gives the public better access to the agencies that will call it home, he said.

"What a wonderful facility to serve the people," Regula said.

Efforts to get the federal building have spanned the terms of three Canton mayors, Richard Watkins, Janet Weir Creighton and current Mayor William J. Healy II.

"We all know that Ralph Regula was huge in making this happen," Healy said of the project.

### HONORING REGULA

Healy then endorsed efforts to have the new federal building named in Regula's honor.

That process has started in Washington, where Sen. Sherrod Brown and Sen. George Voinovich introduced a bill to have the building be named for Regula. Brown also has written a letter and talked with GSA acting Administrator Jim Williams about the idea.

There's a "very high probability" the building will be named for Regula, Handley said. The proposal has strong support, which often factors into a final decision, he said.

Fedcar Co., a subsidiary of Carnegie Development and Management Corp. based in Westlake, is developer for the project. The developer is leasing property from the city, and the government is leasing the building. The 20-year lease calls for rent payments of \$2.01 million per year. After 20 years the government will have an option to buy the building, Handley said.

GSA plans to dispose of the Bow building. Under the federal disposal process, the building must be offered for government use. Past plans have indicated the city will take over the building to house Canton Municipal Court.