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Markell, Steele Commemorate Grand Opening of the new Kent County Courthouse

Dover – Today, Governor Jack Markell and Chief Justice Myron T. Steele, joined by Superior Court President Judge James T. Vaughn, Jr., Kent County Resident Judge William L. Witham, Jr. and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Ann Visalli, celebrated the grand opening of the new Kent County Courthouse in Dover.

“This is where reason is harnessed to solve through argument what in other places is solved by force, to give those wronged access to justice, and to give those accused fair chance to be heard,” said Markell. “Our judiciary is recognized worldwide and plays an important role in attracting employers to our state. This building was designed to help the government function to uphold justice more efficiently and effectively.”

The construction of the new 148,600 sq. ft. facility was completed on budget and ahead of schedule in late May 2011. The project construction manager was Nason Construction, and Moeckel Carbonell/Ricci Greene Associates were the project architects.

“The new courthouse building is magnificent and truly represents the world-class judiciary we have in Kent County,” said Steele. “This facility serves as a testament to the great cooperation between the executive, judicial and legislative branches of Delaware state government.”

The new facility features state-of-the-art energy efficiency, security and technology enhancements. Energy efficiency features include solar panels on the upper roof, a “green” roof on other portions of the building, water reducing lavatory fixtures, lighting controls using light harvesting technology and high efficiency electric transformers to save resources and money. Additionally, the layout and design of the new facility allow for a better accommodation of the high volume of people coming through the courthouse and a more secure management of inmates entering and exiting the building.

“Countless hours of work and dedication by my staff at OMB, judicial staff throughout the State, the Legislative Oversight Committee and so many more brought this great idea to life,” said Visalli. “It is truly a remarkable achievement for the State, and it is my pleasure to welcome the Kent County judiciary to their new home.”

The new courthouse contains seven courtrooms, including four large courtrooms, two hearing rooms and an arraignment courtroom, and space for an additional two courtrooms for future expansion. Superior Court, Court of Common Pleas, Department of Correction, Capitol Police and Court Collections (Administrative Office of the Courts) are located in the new building, and the Court of Chancery will be housed in the new building until the renovations of the old building are complete.

Total cost for the new building is \$75 million, and the renovations to the old building will cost \$12 million. The renovations to the old building are expected to start by the end of June 2011.