

HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE MOVES:

The New Mexico Human Services Department will move its heavily visited office in the South Valley to a state-owned building to be built about

two miles away.

Human Services is in its 11th year of leasing the 20,800-square-foot building at 1401 Old Coors SW near Coors, according to Alex Cuellar, spokesman for the General Services Department.

During that time, the lease rate has increased to \$21.50 a square foot, comparable to the rates paid for prime office space at the Journal Center, a hot sub-submarket near Interstate 25 and Paseo del Norte.

The state will build the new 20,000-square-foot office at Unser and Tower SW. When the move is completed around the end of 2006, Cuellar said, the state will save \$14,920 a year in building overhead.

The General Services Department handles the state's real estate needs.

Eighty employees work at the Human Services office, which serves the southwest quadrant of Bernalillo County, said department spokesman Marty Eckert. The office administers programs such as food stamps, Medicaid eligibility, temporary assistance for needy families with dependent children and energy assistance for low-income families.

"We see hundreds of people there every day," said Eckert, who estimated the office works with 18,000 to 20,000 families.

The current office at Coors and Old Coors, which has more than 180 parking spaces, is on the market for \$2.1 million. It was originally built for Human Services in an area that's not really sought after by office users.

The listing agent, John Davidson of Metro Commercial Realty, admits it will be a challenge to find a buyer but said he believes the building could see use as a government office, call center or medical facility.

Richard Metcalf covers commercial real estate for the Journal. You can reach him at 823-3972 or rmetcalf@abqjournal.com.