

## **New Haven Register Article December 5<sup>th</sup> 2008**

BRANFORD — The effort to build the Soundview Family YMCA got a welcome push Thursday when Gov. M. Jodi Rell said the state Bond Commission is expected to approve \$600,000 in construction funding for the five-town facility when it meets Dec. 12.

“The funds will provide a much-needed boost to this worthwhile project,” Rell said. “The new center will enhance the quality of life for so many shoreline families.”

The Soundview Family YMCA will serve residents of Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Madison and North Branford. Initial site preparation will soon begin, and full-scale site work will begin in the spring, Rell said.

An ongoing capital campaign is under way to finance the project. The effort has raised \$7.2 million so far, including \$1.55 million in new pledges this fall, said Soundview Family YMCA Executive Director Doug Shaw. The YMCA needs to raise a minimum of \$8 million to build a 36,000-square-foot facility with one pool, or \$10 million to build a 47,000-square-foot facility with two pools, one of them a “therapeutic” pool, he said.

The Y’s board of directors will make a final decision on the size of the facility by the end of January, Shaw said.

The \$600,000 in state bonding is part of a \$1 million authorization that the General Assembly already has approved, but which has yet to go to the state Bond Commission.

“Our hope, and what we were told, is that July 1 we can hopefully plan on getting the other \$400,000,” Shaw said.

“I am very happy — and what I’m most happy about is that this entire project has been supported in a very bipartisan way,” Shaw said.

Branford’s representatives in Hartford, who had worked to obtain the funding, were pleased to see it included on the Bond Commission’s agenda.

“We are delighted that this project is coming together with support from both the state and community,” state Reps. Patricia Widlitz, D-Guilford, and Peter Panaroni, D-Branford, said in a joint statement.

“Branford residents of all ages will benefit from the healthy family activities that are the hallmarks of the YMCA,” said Sen. Edward Meyer, D-Guilford. “This construction will also result in new jobs for our workers during our economic downturn.”

Plans call for the facility to have a gymnasium, locker rooms, exercise rooms, meeting rooms, office space, a wellness center, a teen center, racquetball and handball courts and two pools — an eight-lane, 25-yard “cold water” instructional pool and a four-lane, 25-yard “warm water” therapeutic pool, among other features.

The new Y is designed by Abonies King Vlock Architects and would be built by general contractor O, R & L Construction — both based in Branford