

[From Winter 2002]

The Center Is Coming

After more than 30 years of planning for a new visitor facility, the Herbert H. Bateman Educational and Administrative Center is now under construction at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. Two contracts were awarded to bring the project to fruition: the first to MidEastern Builders for building construction which commenced early this year, and the second, more recent award, to Showtime Exhibit Builders to fabricate and install the exhibits. Once opened, the facility will instantly become the most-visited Service facility in the country and will finally meet visitors' increasing demand for wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities.

This state-of-the-art facility will include: 5,000 feet of exhibits, classroom/wetlab, teacher resource room, and a 125-seat auditorium. Exhibits are designed to educate the refuge's more than 1.4 million visitors (from all 50 states and more than 43 different countries) about the critical role Chincoteague NWR and the refuge system play in safeguarding and sustaining wild living resources. The entire building is now under roof and contractors have begun to fabricate the exhibits.

Prior to the new facility, Chincoteague NWR operated most of their visitor services programs in a 1,000 square foot visitor contact station which was constructed as a "temporary" building devoid of running water and flushing toilets -and a converted garage which served as a makeshift auditorium.

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