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Gertrude Baker,
actor and arts
patron, remembered
fondly. **Page 4B**



U.S. HOUSE SPENDING BILL | SAN ANTONIO GETS SLICE OF \$24 BILLION IN FUNDING

Cash set for new courthouse

\$4 million earmarked to design \$142 million project.

BY GARY MARTIN

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WASHINGTON — A \$24 billion spending bill approved by the House on Thursday includes \$4 million to hire an architect to design the new federal courthouse in San Antonio.

The House voted 219-208 to approve the spending bill for financial services nationwide, which includes the funds that will begin

replacement of the John H. Wood Jr. U.S. Courthouse on Durango Street.

"The current building was never designed as a courthouse," said Rep. Charlie Gonzalez, D-San Antonio.

Gonzalez and Rep. Lamar Smith, R-San Antonio, sought the \$4 million earmark to expedite design on the new \$142 million courthouse.

"The population of San Anto-

nio has more than doubled since the current facility opened in 1975," said Smith, the ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee.

The federal government intends to swap the current courthouse property and adjacent government buildings to the city of San Antonio for another site, likely the current property where the San Antonio Police Department headquarters is located.

The \$4 million in the spending bill is additional funding to allow the General Services Administration to hire an architect to design the new courthouse.

Meanwhile, \$8 million in funds for other San Antonio projects were included in a defense spending bill that has drawn a veto threat from President Barack Obama because lawmakers added nearly \$1 billion in new spending for F-22 fighter jets and an additional engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The San Antonio projects are not controversial, but the bill could get caught up in a veto battle between Obama and Congress.

The House Appropriations Committee approved \$2.5 million in the bill for research on combat injuries at the National Trauma

Institute in San Antonio.

Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, D-San Antonio, a member of the Appropriations Committee, said the funding would "support some of the most critical research taking place in the world of defense today."

In addition, the defense spending bill includes:

■ \$4.5 million for a combat identification system produced by ATR Electronics in San Antonio to curb friendly-fire casualties.

■ \$1 million for unmanned aerial vehicle night vision technology made by Mission Technology in San Antonio.