

Logan County Hospital to unveil rehab center

By Kayla Cornett

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Logan County Hospital began construction on the Logan County Rehabilitation and Wellness Center in October and plans a grand opening on Saturday, June 2.

Originally, the hospital was supposed to break ground in mid-June, officials said, but the date had to be pushed back because of budget issues.

The grand opening will be in conjunction with the Logan County Healthcare Foundation's golf tournament, which will be on June 1, and a 5K run on June 2, when the hospital will dedicate the building.

Hospital Administrator Darcy Howard said the foundation recently gave the hospital \$124,000 to put a therapy pool in the center.

"That was a very nice gift to help us finish this project," Howard said.

"The health foundation is so generous, having the same vision that we do to improve health care in Logan County," said Marcia Kruse, director of nursing, "and they're so supportive of the hospital. They have a great group."

Gerry Baalman, director of physical therapy, said the pool will be a new service for her department that the hospital will be able to offer in the rehabilitation side of the center.

Services the hospital offers now include physical, occupational and speech therapy. Baalman said that these services, along with wound care, have taken up much of the space in the hospital, so the expansion was a necessity.

"We're really looking forward to it," Baalman said. "It's very much needed here."

Another section of the new area will be a fitness center called Fit for Life that will be available for the public to use. A membership will give a citizen access to exercise machines, a two-lap pool and classes such as aerobics. Also on that side will be cardiac rehabilitation.

Baalman said the fitness center came about because patients who had gone through cardiac rehab expressed interest in continuing their efforts with the hospital. She said the fitness center will provide this along with getting the rest of the public involved.

"Right now, our cardiac rehab rooms are so small, they're in two hospital rooms," Baalman said. "That right now serves a senior generation, but I think the fitness center that we're opening will draw the community. The lap pool is just going to be fabulous."

Aside from hotel pools, she said, the center's lap pool will be the only enclosed pool in Oakley. The center will be able to offer water aerobics year round.

"I think the goal is to do wellness education right along with it," Howard said, "and I think that's going to be huge for the community."

The hospital plans to offer community education classes in a conference room in the middle of the new building. John Newcomer, clinic director, said they have talked to the



The Logan County Rehabilitation and Wellness Center, an expansion of Logan County Hospital, is nearing completion. Construction began in October and the hospital plans to have a grand opening on Saturday, June 2.

- Photo by Kayla Cornett/Colby Free Press



Extension office about holding public education programs. They plan to have a talk on heart disease in women in conjunction with Extension in a couple of weeks.

Newcomer said they are looking at developing a stroke program as well as other classes

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St. Francis care center recovering from 2010 fire

By Karen Krien

The Saint Francis Herald
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The Cheyenne County Hospital is recovering after a setback caused by an October 2010 fire which heavily damaged the Good Samaritan Village, the county's only nursing home facility.

While no one was injured in the blaze, said Hospital Administrator Les Lacy, many lives were changed when residents were forced to move to homes in other towns, employees lost jobs and businesses suffered.

One of the businesses hurt by the fire was the hospital.

"Any event that impacts the population of a hospital's service area will impact the revenue of the hospital..." Mr. Lacy said. "If that hospital ... does not have a critical mass of population to support it, it will not be able to cut to reduce costs matching the loss in revenue."

"The Good Samaritan fire ... and its aftermath challenged us in a number of ways from reduced patient revenue, to a change in our payer mix that would affect our cost report, and providing meals on wheels until the nursing home could take over that operation once more."

The village was back up to 23 residents by the end of March and, in February that number should be up to 35, he said.

"We missed every resident as a person first," he said. "We also missed their business."

16-slice scanner

New at the hospital last year was a 16-slice CT scanner, which replaced a single slice scanner that took one image at a time.

The scanner takes images faster while improving image quality and does not require the patient to hold their breath as long, Lacy said. That in turn improves the experience for the patient.

Another advantage for the patient is that the software for the new scanner allows technicians to reduce the radiation dosage.

"These multislice scanners have become the standard of care for some types of images, such as pulmonary embolism studies," Lacy said. "They bring us a potential to do CT angiograms which would allow us to look at the perfusion of the kidneys or the Circle of Willis in the brain."

Having the new scanner helps keep people in town and may prevent expensive and potentially unnecessary transfers, he said.

"The CT scanner improves our ability to meet our mission of improving health through access to quality care," he said.

Tax credits

The CT scanner, costing \$313,428, was paid for in full in less than one year through the Kansas Department of Commerce's tax credit program, Lacy said. It's the fourth project the hospital has done using this program.



- **Beds** – 16 as a Critical Access Hospital.
- **Revenue** – \$7,216,948 before adjustments, audit.
- **Loss 2011** – \$600,000 (estimate) including charity care, depreciation, county health clinic and bad debt.
- **County Money** – \$511,767.46 from property and sales tax in 2011.
- **Providers** – Two physicians, two physician assistants, a resident nurse anesthetist, and visiting specialists.
- **Administrator** – Les Lacy.
- **Phone** – (785) 332-2104.

Late last year, the hospital was awarded more tax credits that had been pulled from other communities because it showed it could use them.

Through the Kansas Department of Commerce, Lacy said, the hospital has been blessed in its ability to successfully fulfill four major tax credit projects. These projects allow businesses and individuals to receive credits on their Kansas income tax when they contribute to an approved project.

Those who contribute to the hospital with this program, he said, are able to receive a 70 percent tax credit, with the exception of the 2010 tax year, which yielded a 63 percent tax credit because of state budget issues.

In the last decade, the total generated from these programs for capital expenses at the hospital is \$1,093,428.

The first tax credit program helped generate \$300,000 to remodel the Cheyenne County Clinic. The second also helped raise \$300,000 for the clinic. A third brought in \$180,000 to help create a new emergency entrance on the north side of the hospital.

Historically, Lacy said, the hospital has had success in using state and federal grants. It partnered for a grant to remodel of the emergency room in the late 1990s, a Rural Health Transitions Grant to develop physical therapy services, another Rural Health Transitions Grant to help outfit a county clinic in Bird City, and a Community Development Block Grant that helped create the county Health Department facility in the basement of the clinic in St. Francis.

The total generated from these grants for capital improvement in the last 15 years is around \$442,000, Lacy said.

Many other grants have been and continue to be used to sustain the Health Department and make various improvements over the

years.

"Writing, executing, and administering these grants and projects is a time-consuming process, but the results have been clear wins for the community," Lacy said. "I think these grants have been good deals for us, and I would give credit to the employees of hospital who have done the legwork to make these projects and grants successful."

Ultrasound, echocardiograms

Ultrasound and echocardiograms are other services found at the hospital.

Echocardiography is a painless test that uses sound waves to create images of your heart. It provides your doctor with information about the size and shape of your heart and how well your heart's chambers and valves are working.

Echo cardiograms were previously done by personnel from a cardiologist office or out of town, Lacy said. Sonography (ultrasound) was done each week when Jesse Villanueva was available.

"Darrell Reid has earned a bachelor's degree in diagnostic medical imaging/sonographer," Lacy said. "This gave us capability to make a daily ultrasound service available, as well as a local echocardiogram capability, he said. We have been capable of doing echocardiograms since October 2010.

Chemistry analyzer

The hospital recently added a new chemistry analyzer, an Abbott Architect ci4100. It replaces a Vitros 250 chemistry analyzer that is 13 years old and a TOSOH AIA 360 special chemistry analyzer that is 6 years old.

"While these machines have been well maintained and are serviceable, they are expensive to operate and will become obsolete at some point," he said.

The new analyzer has all the capability of two of the older machines and has the increased ability to do a variety of drug levels and other immuno- and chemical assays that the hospital previously had to send out.

"The advantage is that it gives us much better turnaround times for clinical decision making," Lacy said. "In addition, it helps us reduce the amount of work we have to send out to reference labs."

These are expensive pieces of equipment, with acquisition expenses well in excess of \$150,000, he said. Ongoing expenses include reagent, quality controls and maintenance, but the new machine will save about \$50,000 per year in operating expenses.

Lacy said the chemistry analyzer in a hospital lab is a high-precision workhorse that

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James E. Reeves

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