

## Upgraded facility, debt-free hospital sets standard



Wednesday, 13 January 2010

- **Multi-year renovation project is nearly complete**
- **New patient care wing open house set for this Sunday**



The Dedication Ceremony and Open House for the newly completed expansion project at Jennie M. Melham Memorial Medical Center in Broken Bow will be this Sunday, Jan. 17, beginning at 2 p.m. at the hospital.

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Chief Editor

It is nearly finished. A multi-year project at Jennie M. Melham Medical Center in Broken Bow, which began in 1990, has all but completed the final phase; and this Sunday the public is invited to see the finished product. A dedication ceremony will take place in the Heritage Hall Multi Purpose room at 2 p.m. Jan. 17. Speakers for the event include Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy, Sen. Deb Fischer and Broken Bow Mayor Reynold McMeen. The open house and public tours of the new facility will begin at 3 p.m. Guests coming for the open house and tours are asked to park in the main hospital parking lot or in the new south employee parking lot.

The guests can then enter the hospital using the main hospital entrance (blue canopy) where JMMMC staff members will greet them and arrange a tour. Public tours will run from 3 to 5:30 p.m., with hospital employees serving as guides through the new patient care wing. Refreshments will be served at the open house.

Groundbreaking on the new patient care wing at the hospital took place in July 2008, and on Aug. 13, 2009, the last brick was laid in the \$12 million project. The new 33,000-square-foot addition contains 23 new private patient rooms and a new nurses' station.

Beckenhauer Construction of Norfolk served as the design, build and construction management firm for the project, with Cannon, Moss, Brygger & Assoc. of Grand Island hired to serve as architects, engineers and designers of the project.

According to hospital administrator Mike Steckler, local construction companies were invited to bid on the project and much of the work has been completed by companies with offices located in Custer County or the Sandhills region.

One of the new patient rooms will be set up to handle bariatric patients (up to 500 pounds). Special patient beds, chairs and other furniture designed for the heavier patient will be placed in these rooms. Special overhead lifts on steel tracks will be installed to assist staff in safely moving heavier patients from bed to chair, or to the bathroom.

Steckler says his staff is anticipating moving into the new patient care wing around Jan. 21, pending approval from the required authorities. Once vacated, the old patient care areas of the hospital will be remodeled to create a number of new workspaces, storage/mechanical rooms and office space.

A new space will also be developed in the old hospital area which will contain the physical therapy department, occupational therapy and cardiac rehabilitation departments. The current PT and cardiac rehab departments, which are near the front entrance, will be converted into business office space.

This new business office/insurance office area will be near the current front entrance to the hospital and will be more convenient for patients who are paying bills or who need help with insurance or billing issues. The old respiratory therapy department area will be redone to provide space for a new sleep testing service at the hospital.

The remodel work required as part of the final phase of the project in the old hospital area is expected to begin later this month and should take another five to six months to complete. Steckler anticipates the entire project will be completed by July.

The total project, consisting of all three phases of work, is expected to cost \$12,274,000. The entire cost of the project will be paid out of hospital reserve funds, gifts and current cash flows earned from operations during the life of the project, Steckler says.

"It should be noted that no borrowing or tax dollars are being used to pay for this project," said Steckler. "Even after completion of a major project such as this, JMMMC will continue to be completely debt-free."

The hospital was built in 1971, and has been debt-free since 1973. Hospital officials have planned through the years to complete projects as money was available, Steckler said, and continue to meet the changing health care needs of the region.

"We've been very fortunate in that we have had gifts and bequests and we have managed to keep cash flows good," said Steckler.

The ribbon cutting for the new patient care wing will take place during the ceremony Sunday, with JMMMC Board Members Dan Zach, chairman, John F. Smith, vice chairman, Deb Grantzinger, treasurer, Rick Maas, secretary and Jim Scott, member at large.

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