

SWMC Groundbreaking Planned For Tuesday

LIBERAL, KS - After several months of “ground work” and making sure all plans are in place, the groundbreaking for the Southwest Medical Center building project has been set. Tuesday, November 16 at 2 p.m., officials and medical staff from the hospital along with local and area government officials will gather to move the first “official” dirt of the project.

“This is a very exciting day,” said Southwest Medical Center Public Relations Director Nancy Kletecka, adding, “and marks the beginning of a project that not only we saw as vital to our facility, but the community saw as well. They showed their support when 82 percent of Seward County voters endorsed this project in March.”

The bond issue that was passed eight months ago will finance extensive improvements.

“The improvements we have planned include expanding the emergency room area, installing a new magnetic resonance imaging unit, creating a new canopied front entrance, and lobby and reception areas, upgrading utility systems, and constructing new corridors to connect the hospital to a planned medical office,” Kletecka explained, adding that the medical office, “was not part of the bond issue - it will be financed by the medical center and not from bond proceeds.”

Although not part of the bond issue, the medical office itself is vital to the efforts and goals made by hospital administration and board members in recruiting new physicians to Liberal.

“When recruiting physicians, one of the problems we face time after time is the lack of adequate office space,” said Kletecka. “That is why the new medical office building is so vital to this project. We need physicians and the physicians need offices to be able to practice. You can’t have one without the other – it just doesn’t work that way. And unfortunately, we don’t have a lot to choose from in the form of office spaces that are suitable for physicians’ offices.”

Offices for physicians have to be equipped a certain way in order to be usable, such as having sufficient plumbing.

“Whenever we find a space, almost every time we have to do renovations to bring it up to the needs of our physicians – that is very costly,” Kletecka said. “Now we will not only have space that is ‘move-in ready’, we will be renting the space – not paying thousands of dollars a month to rent one from someone else.”

A new parking plan will be in place very soon for the project.

“We will be releasing that plan to the media so that not only our staff, but our visitors and patients will know where they should park,” Kletecka said. “It will be a challenge for awhile, but when the project is finished – it will be great.”

The project is set for completion sometime in 2012.

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