http://www.KSCBNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=4168

SWMC Breaks Ground On $15 Million-Plus Project

LIBERAL, KS - It was a Kansas blustery, cold day but still, that did not stop progress for the $15 million-plus building project approved last March for Southwest Medical Center.

At an official groundbreaking ceremony November 16, hospital officials along with local and state officials gathered to participate in the ceremony which marked the beginning of the project.

It has taken a lot of planning to get to this point.

“A lot of people have been and are involved in this process,” said SWMC CEO/President Norm Lambert. “Since March, when the voters of Seward County overwhelmingly said they wanted to approve this project – we’ve spent the last eight months in planning, planning, planning.”

An estimated 120 people braved the cold to witness this historic day for the local healthcare facility, which commemorated the beginning of some much needed renovations.

United States Senator elect Jerry Moran was unable to attend the ceremony due to a scheduling conflict; however, Moran sent a letter of congratulations.

“Congratulations on a much anticipated groundbreaking of the remodeling and expansion project of Southwest Medical Center,” Moran stated in his letter. “The board of trustees, administrators and staff, civic leaders and citizens of Seward County deserve special thanks. Your determination and commitment to see this project through made this day possible. Because of your leadership, we are here to break ground and begin a new chapter in this hospital’s service to its community and area residents. Your dedication and hard work on this project have made certain that Southwest Medical Center will continue its tradition of keeping quality health care close to home. Thank you for continuing to ensure that citizens in Seward County have access to exceptional health care services.”

Moran also said the groundbreaking was illustrative that “good things happen when Kansans work together.”

Outgoing Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson was also unable to attend the ceremony, but sent a letter in his absence.

“It is very gratifying to see such a worthwhile project begin,” Parkinson’s letter stated. “I have no doubt that these wonderful improvements will only further enhance the hospital’s ability to serve the region. I commend all those in the community whose foresight, dedication and diligence has led to this groundbreaking. Your presence here today and your continuing support of the Southwest Medical Center is a fine testament of your commitment to improving the quality of life of all Kansans.”

Senator Pat Roberts was also unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts; however, Debbie Pugh from his office was in attendance on his behalf. Southwest Medical Center Chief of Staff Dr. Dennis Knudson was one of those to speak at the event. Knudson spoke of a similar project 19.5 years earlier.

“I had the good fortune…. of standing 100 feet or so off to the south and west as we dedicated this building,” he said. “Then, as now with this project, there were differences of opinion. There were feelings that we maybe shouldn’t do the project…. We look back and see this project from (19 years ago) has done much better than anybody ever dreamed of back then. I think the same thing,

hopefully, will happen here."

Southwest Medical Center Board of Trustee Chairman Joe Sealey said he feels that when it's "all said and done" everyone will be proud of the facility.

"The staff of this facility makes it what it is," he added. "We can't ever thank staff enough. All of the people involved with this project have done an outstanding job. The community believes in what we believe in, and I think the results are going to reflect that."

Copyright Southwest Medical Center