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## Construction resumes on Gooding hospital

Construction has started again on the successor to Gooding County Memorial Hospital after the project's funding was secured this week, hospital officials announced Wednesday.

Work on the new North Canyon Medical Center in Gooding came to a halt in December when its backers delayed selling \$30 million in bonds, citing difficult market conditions.

Two months later, Partners in Healthcare Inc. - the new hospital's governing nonprofit - has signed final contracts for the funding and locked in a 6.75 percent interest rate. It was also able to shave \$3 million off of the principal amount, in part because the bonds were sold on the traditional mortgage market rather than a tax-exempt one.

"It's very exciting," said hospital CEO Earl Fitzpatrick.

The traditional market usually would be too expensive for the hospital to use, Fitzpatrick said. But the two markets have flip-flopped in the current economy, and the traditional one ended up being cheaper.

Using a taxable market does not mean the hospital pays taxes it wouldn't have, he said. The categories refer to what rules investors have to follow, he said, and the hospital shouldn't encounter any odd quirks or problems down the line.

"We are done," he said.

Selling on the traditional market also meant the hospital didn't have to have as much cash at closing, and secured both a lower monthly payment and the option to refinance in five years rather than 10.

The 52,000-square-foot hospital was first set for completion in January 2010, but will now likely be delayed until April of that year. It's planned for the southeast corner of the intersection of U.S. Highway 26 and State Highway 46 in Gooding.