

McCall Star News, Thursday, March 26, 2009

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Rhodes

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Two and a half years later with CPA in hand, Rhodes went to work at Deaconess Medical Center in Spokane as accounting supervisor.

After a total of 5-1/2 years in Spokane, Rhodes returned to his home state to raise a family with his wife, Tami. The couple have two grown sons in college, Kitrick, 22, at Montana State University in Bozeman and Kellen, 20, at Montana Tech in Butte.

Rhodes took a position as director of finance at St. James Health Care in Butte, Mt., a job he held about six years until he was promoted to chief finance officer at St. James.

About four years later, he again was promoted, this time to chief of operations. In that role, he oversaw hospital departments that included dietary, housekeeping, laboratory, maintenance, oncology and radiology. Rhodes further advanced his career, taking the CEO opening in Roundup.

High-quality Physicians

The McCall hospital is already functioning at a high level with the good fortune of recruiting high quality physicians, something not typical for small, rural hospitals, Rhodes said.

"I'm impressed with the caliber of medical staff, the hospital board foundation and employees," he said. Strategic planning is on his

plate for this fall. In spite of the nation's foundering economy, expansion plans announced last year are still necessary, he said. The hospital is "space challenged," he said.

He learned during a tour of the McCall hospital's radiology department just how cramped is the room for the hospital's 64-slice CAT scanner.

Space for the sliding table behind the device's large doughnut-shaped scanner is too cramped to accept people over six feet tall. He credited department staff for finding ways around the problem.

"They get pretty creative to make it work," Rhodes said. Another example of the

space crunch saw three administrative offices subdivided into six smaller offices to provide administrative staffers' office space while meeting other departments' growth needs, he said.

More operating rooms would be needed to reduce competition for time and space if the hospital decides to add an orthopedic surgeon to its staff in the future, he said. The hospital brought a general surgeon on staff last summer.

Rhodes enjoys Nordic skiing in winter and golf, fishing and water skiing in the summer. He is tempted to take up alpine skiing once again with ski hills at Brundage

Mountain and Little Ski Hill close by. "McCall has all that, and I was looking for a place with rivers, lakes and mountains," he said. Rhodes does not work directly for the hospital but is employed by St. Luke's Health System, which also operates St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Boise. St. Luke's oversees the hospital as part of a management agreement with the hospital's board of trustees.

Rhodes is the only hospital staffer who works for St. Luke's. As such, his salary is not subject to public disclosure.

New McCall hospital chief ready for job

BY LUCIA V. KNUDSON

The Star-News

McCall Memorial Hospital faces the same challenge as all hospitals nationally - which direction health-care funding will take, the hospital's new administrator said.

"The question is how that would effect reimbursement for hospitals for better or for worse," said Lee Rhodes, 52, who took over management of the hospital from Karen Kellie earlier this month.

Before coming to McCall, Rhodes was CEO for six years at Roundup Memorial Hospital in Roundup, Mont., about 45 miles north of Billings.

The McCall hospital will retain Kellie to work on special projects, such as the master plan, and she will report to Rhodes. Kellie is due to retire in 2010.

"She's going to be a great resource for me, having been here 25 years," Rhodes said.

Rhodes was born and raised in Montana, attending public school in Helena. After graduating high school, he enrolled at the University of Montana in Missoula, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis on accounting.

He went to work for Blue Cross of Montana as a Medicare auditor. To earn certification as a certified public accountant, Rhodes next went to Spokane, Wash., working at the LeMaster & Daniels accounting firm.

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Lee Rhodes

McCall Memorial Hospital is a 15-bed hospital with 71 full-time and 90 part-time employees. Here are its 2008 statistics at a glance:

- Gross revenue, \$18,130,000.
- Number of admissions, 617.
- Acute care patient days, 1,083.
- Babies delivered, 141.
- Newborn patient days, 227.
- Emergency Room visits, 4,525.
- Outpatient visits, 27,215.