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VA Medical Center to expand main hospital

Boise Veterans Affairs Medical Center will nearly double the size of its main hospital building in a construction project expected to start by early summer.

Bids to expand the three-story building were collected March 28, and hospital officials aim to select a general contractor this month, said Bryan Lightfield, project engineer with Boise VA Medical Center. The selected contractor is expected to submit detailed plans in May and begin the project by early summer.

The structure is known as Building 85. It anchors the campus at 500 W. Fort St.

Plans call for expanding each 9,000-square-foot floor by about 8,000 square feet. Completion of the more than $9 million project is targeted for November 2013, Lightfield said.

Work on the third floor will provide needed additional space for operating room facilities and the intensive care unit, he said.

“It’s outdated and has a lot of bays,” Lightfield said. “Everything is going to private rooms, bigger rooms.”

The expanded third floor will include 10 private rooms, two new operating room suites, a nurse station, support staff space and waiting areas, he said. The intensive care unit will occupy the new space, leaving room to expand and renovate 1970s-era operating facilities now too small for some procedures, he said.

A new emergency room drop-off, entrance, admitting area and waiting room will occupy first-floor expansion space, Lightfield said. This part of the project aims to improve the ER’s flow and efficiency, he said.

The second story will be built out with an unfinished “shell” interior, to be completed and occupied later as demand warrants, he said. Initially, the main function of the second floor expansion will be to support the enlarged third floor and to house some mechanical equipment temporarily, he said.