

Rexburg Standard Journal, Thursday, May 15, 2008 – by Joseph Law (2 pages)

Hospital prepares to open its new doors

The expansion of Madison Memorial is nearly complete, and the hospital is gearing up to show off its new look. Open house tours for the public are scheduled for next week. Today there will be music and fireworks at Smith Park to celebrate the renovation and expansion, with festivities starting at 8 p.m.

The hospital is preparing to open the new facilities for use within the two-week period after Memorial Day. At a preview tour Monday, hospital officials explained the advances made in the new section of the hospital. Chief Executive Officer David Rowe said the hospital has been built under a new concept called “evidence-based design.”

He said people expect a hospital to have the latest in technology, but there are some intangible elements that affect the healing process such as opportunities to continue connections with family and friends and the way patients interact with a hospital’s space.

The concept is first noticeable in the lobby of the hospital, which resembles a hotel lobby and has private offices for checking into the hospital. One of the primary areas of focus under the new concept is enhancing patients’ sense of well-being to assist in the healing process.

With that in mind, the new rooms are private and have been designed to offer aesthetics and amenities to make for a pleasant stay. Windows have been placed to enhance the view, and each room has a lounge chair that can be made out into a bed if someone close to the patient stays overnight.

Diagnostic areas have been designed to respect each patient’s privacy. Emergency room space has been set up so that those concerned about the patient or multiple patients from the same family are not isolated from each other. The hospital also has small antennas mounted in the ceiling so that patients can have mobility and doctors and nurses can still monitor their condition through electronic devices.

Another technological advance will benefit university students. “Every room has a wifi connection so students can take classes and stay in touch with peers and family,” Chief Operations Officer Marc Harrison said. Intensive-care units have also been designed to enhance each patient’s experience with small touches like night-lights.

“ We believe the community will benefit from the new hospital,” Rowe said. “Even when it was under construction, people could see it was something special – to have an environment where people can get well sooner.”

Bruce Arnell, chairman of the hospital’s Board of Trustees, said although the board takes its financial responsibility seriously, it also looked to the future.

“You do not plant a tree for your generation,” he said. “The hospital will be something that our children and grandchildren will look at with pride.”

Madison hospital 1

The new emergency room is close to the new surgical suite and diagnostic imaging center to streamline patient care. Nursing stations are designed to be closer to the patient rooms. The hospital has a chapel for patients and those who visit them. A new cafeteria will also be part of the changes.

Although the maternity area will remain where it now is in the hospital, a new neonatal facility will be constructed next to it after the move into the new section is made.

The physical therapy department and the pharmacy will remain in their present locations.

Space that is vacated during the move into the new section will be reconstructed for information technology offices and other support services.

The hospital has also been built to accommodate the growth of the community. “Anybody who has worked within the walls of a hospital knows that there are ongoing changes in technology and the hospital has to adapt itself to that technology,” Rowe said.

“I compare it to the last time you took a ride on a jet airliner. You may be on an airliner that was designed and built in the 60s, but it’s been rebuilt many, many times and the aircraft is essentially new. The footprint (of the hospital) is designed to maximize the land we have here. There are a number of places where we have shell space so we can expand. It’s built to the highest building code so it should have a life of 40 years.”