

Idaho State Journal, Thursday, June 25, 2009 – by Jimmy Hancock (2 pages)

Building PMC

Hospital breaks ground on \$200M project

POCATELLO — Portneuf Medical Center's east campus began buzzing with tractors pushing around dirt earlier this month, but on Wednesday, the re-igniting of PMC's consolidation project got the official nod with an elaborate groundbreaking ceremony.

More than 150 people joined top personnel from PMC, Legacy Hospital Partners and the Portneuf Health Care Foundation, as well as several local public officials, to celebrate the restart of the \$200 million



project.

Portneuf Medical Center Board of Trustees member Nancy Renn, Ph.D., center, joins almost four dozen people at Wednesday's groundbreaking ceremony for PMC's new single campus hospital center.

Mark Buckalew, current board chairman of the Portneuf Health Care Foundation and a former member of PMC's board of trustees, addressed the crowd on Wednesday, making it clear he'd invested more than just time in the process.

"The last two years, for me, have been an interesting time, a very emotional one for us who went through the process," Buckalew said. "What this project ensures is that the legacy will live on for our children."

The two years Buckalew talked about began in early 2007 when PMC realized it might have difficulty continuing the consolidation of its east and west campuses at its Hospital Way location because of an Idaho Supreme Court ruling that would require the hospital to get voter approval for bonding.

A process that began with PMC attempting to determine possible avenues of financing in 2007, ended in November of 2008 with voter approval of a partnership with Plano, Texas-based Legacy Hospital Partners, which brought in the capital to get PMC's project back on track.

In February, with the closing of the deal that turned the county-owned assets of PMC over to the Portneuf Health Care Foundation, a joint venture between Legacy and the PHCF took ownership of the hospital.

A goal set by Legacy during the process of selling the public on the partnership, was to get a new hospital built within 30 months of closing the deal. Legacy appears to be on track to fulfill that promise.

Denny Shelton, chairman of Legacy, said the next party at the Hospital Way location will be in the

spring of 2011.

“We’ll be back here in 22 to 24 months. That’s more time than I usually allow him, but he said there are some tough winters here,” Shelton said, adding a little ribbing to the general contractor who will oversee construction.

The number of people involved in bringing PMC to the point of its new incarnation was never more evidenced than by the numerous gold shovels lined up for the ceremonial first turning of the soil, and the more than 40 VIPs who ultimately used those shovels.

PMC’s new chief executive officer, Norm Stephens, revealed a bit of his sense of humor, taking a shot at his own line of gold shovels.

“With as many shovels that are out there, the crews are worried they won’t have anything to do when we are finished,” he said.