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Saint Luke's Health System has 10-year growth plan

By Anne Wallace Allen
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Founded in 1902, St. Luke's Health System has grown from a six-bed hospital to the state's largest health care provider, with 766,000 outpatient visits and 47,000 inpatient stays each year.

The downtown St. Luke's oversees patient care at a network of hospitals, including St. Luke's Boise Medical Center, St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center, Mountain States Tumor Institute, St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center, and St. Luke's Magic Valley Medical Center. In October, St. Luke's will assume ownership of McCall Memorial Hospital as well. The health system also has management relationships with hospitals in Weiser and Mountain Home.

St. Luke's is known for its cancer, heart, and women's and children's care. It is home to Idaho's only children's hospital, which treats more than 50,000 children every year and includes a pediatric emergency department.

With 8,300 employees, 1,600 of them hired in the last year, St. Luke's is now Idaho's largest employer. Many of those new employees are physicians who were in private practice until they were hired by the hospital as direct



Largest employers

employees in the last year or so.

The hospital is poised to grow even larger with a ten-year plan that includes \$1 billion in construction in Boise and Meridian. The construction plan, part of the health system's long-

range strategic plan, includes a new downtown tower that would house St. Luke's cardiac care services and an open heart surgery hospital, said hospital spokesman Ken Dey.

The 30-year-old Mountain States Tumor Institute, which is growing out of its downtown building, would be moved to a new facility in Meridian.

There is no set date for these developments; Dey said it would depend on several factors, including population and demand for medical care.

"They're all part of our long-term strategic planning, depending on what happens with our economy and health reform," Dey said.

The hospital will be launching a capital campaign sometime in the next year to help raise money for the construction.

Being Idaho's largest employer was never a goal, Dey said.

"We'd be more than happy with any other employer being larger than us," he said.

But now that they are, the health system has a strong impact on the communities it serves, both in its patient care and in its treatment of employees.

"We'll still give the best medical care to anybody, regardless of their ability to pay, and give jobs to employees that they enjoy and that pay the benefits they need to live a happy life," Dey said.