

**Twin Falls Times News, Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2008 – by Ben Botkin**

## A step toward modernization

### *Ground broken for North Canyon Medical Center in Gooding*

Ground was officially broken Tuesday for North Canyon Medical Center and hospital officials looked ahead to when the new Gooding facility will open.

When finished, North Canyon Medical Center will be a 50,000-square-foot building that will replace Gooding County Memorial Hospital. The project is being paid for with \$30.5 million in bonds, a price that also includes furnishings and equipment at the new hospital, located at the southeast corner of the intersection of U.S. Highway 26 and State Highway 46 in Gooding.

The project is scheduled to be open and ready for patients in January 2010. The goal is to meet the current and future health care needs of the region, Earl Fitzpatrick, CEO of Gooding County Memorial Hospital, said in a speech before the groundbreaking.

"Today we have reached that goal and we are here to celebrate," he said.

Work is currently underway on the hospital's footings for the foundation. North Canyon Medical Center will have technology that includes CT scans, surgical imaging and digital mammography. The emergency room will have two waiting rooms and six examination rooms.

There also will be a 6,000-square-foot surgical services area with two operating rooms and services such as general surgery, orthopedic and podiatry surgery.

The expansion will carry on a tradition of serving the community, said Dr. Samantha Marshall, chief of staff. At the Gooding hospital, patients ask for lab technicians and other staff by name that they remember, she said.

"They do not feel like just another number," Marshall said.

Pat Nelson, chair of the hospital board, said the new medical center will help the Gooding hospital modernize. "Everyone has worked together keeping a common goal in mind: We need a new hospital," she said.

When North Canyon Medical Center is built, an additional 15 to 20 employees will be hired, which will bring the hospital's total staff to above 100. The future of the existing Gooding County Memorial Hospital building is undecided, Fitzpatrick said.

The hospital has also partnered with St. Luke's Health System and the two entities will work together on tasks such as coordination of patient care and purchasing supplies at group rates. "We're more pleased than you can imagine to be a partner with the Gooding region," said Ed Dahlberg, president and CEO of St. Luke's Health System.