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Progress now seen

Fruitland Medical Plaza is under construction

FRUITLAND — It was a hot day in June as dozens of people gathered near and under a tent on a vacant lot in Fruitland. Those attending listened as officials with Trinity Health Care and Saint Alphonse Medical Center-Ontario spoke of the future and what would become of that vacant lot on U.S. Highway 30 just west of its intersection with U.S. Highway 95.

Between then and October, though, little was done with the site. The pile of dirt that was used for the ceremonious groundbreaking stood virtually untouched.

Until now. Recently, crews began removing pavement from the lot and dismantling a building that sat on the back edge of the land. Leveling has taken place and markers have been set. The Fruitland Medical Plaza is officially under construction.



Crews work in a former vacant lot in Fruitland will be home to a new urgent care center with Trinity Health Care. Not much progress has taken place since the announcement in June, until recently. Crews have begun removing pavement and dismantling the vacant building on the lot.

“We were spending a lot of time designing it right,” Saint Alphonse-Ontario CEO Rick Palagi said about the long wait for construction to begin.

“Getting this all on paper was the first thing that was done.”

Palagi said teams of people spent countless hours pouring over designs for the new medical plaza. Those plans included looking at every room that would be in the new facility — from how large the rooms would be to which way the doors would open, down to intricate details such as where outlets would be located and where exam tables would be situated.

“It is a myriad of details,” Palagi said. “We wanted to completely think this through before we started on the infrastructure.”

Palagi said Trinity and Saint Alphonse have been involved in a variety of discussions with Fruitland about the plaza and easements on the land, but the delay in construction had nothing to do with Fruitland’s impending sewer bond election Nov. 8.

“The city has been extremely helpful and supportive,” Palagi said. “We have spent the last 3 1/2 months on paper and have spent it very fruitfully.”

One thing Palagi said impressed him about the new facility is the ability for it to be a state-of-the-art medical center. “There will be 7,000 data ports in the building,” he said. “Every room in that building will have data ports.”

Along with that, he said, doctors will use a mobile computer which can be used in every exam room.

Recently, he said, IrvCo Asphalt and Gravel out of Fruitland was awarded a bid to begin work on preparing the ground for construction.

When that is complete, he said, people will see the building begin to go vertical around the first of the year. “This is a team approach toward taking care of people,” Palagi said.

Palagi said the bidding process for construction is ongoing and more bids will be awarded in November. He said anyone who may be interested in the bidding of different areas should contact Alan Uhlorn with Bennington Construction at (208) 884-0027.