

New surgery center being built in Arco

An Arco medical center will begin building an extensive surgical services suite thanks to a partnership with Bingham Memorial Hospital.

Lost Rivers Medical Center will have a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday for the construction of its new surgical facility, expected to be finished by the summer of 2018, a Bingham Memorial news release said.

The surgical center will offer services to residents of rural areas in Butte and Custer counties who otherwise would have to travel long distances to be treated. The two hospitals partnered to provide a state-of-the-art surgical suite at the Arco hospital. The new suite will offer surgeries from orthopedic to gastrointestinal care.

Chief Executive Officer Brad Huerta said the construction project is projected to cost approximately \$1.3 million. Lost River has been saving funds to pay most of the cost, with Bingham Memorial Hospital providing the surgeons once the suite is built.

“Being Arco, it’s hard for us to recruit surgeons,” Huerta said. “Bingham has been great as a partner. They’ve really stepped up and said ‘We get you.’”

Bingham Memorial isn’t the only organization to take notice of the rural hospital. A recent Politico story profiled the hospital, pointing to its expansion and necessary medical services to a rural populace in a town that has seen many of its businesses close and its population drop by 16 percent since 2000. (The in-depth profile of the hospital can be found at tinyurl.com/mf3gloq).

“We have people that need to get gall bladders out or need knee scopes, just like everybody else,” Huerta said.

Bingham Memorial spokesman Mark Baker said talks regarding partnering with Lost Rivers have been underway for at least six months. Baker said Bingham Memorial is engaged in both a consultative and financial partnership with the Arco hospital.

Lost Rivers Medical Center operates as a Critical Access Hospital, the designation of which was established by law under the Medicare program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services require Critical Access Hospitals to, among other requirements:

- “Furnish 24-hour emergency care services seven days a week, using either on-site or on-call staff, with specific on-site response time frames for on-call staff.”

- “Be located more than a 35-mile drive from any hospital or other Critical Access Hospitals or located more than a 15-mile drive from any hospital or other Critical Access Hospitals in an area with mountainous terrain or only secondary roads.”

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