Saint Alphonsus and St. Luke’s make a mark in Canyon County

Before 2010, the Boise hospital duo of Saint Alphonsus Health System and St. Luke’s Health System had no in-patient hospital beds in Canyon County. Mercy and West Valley medical centers had been the acute medical care providers since 1919 and 1950, respectively.

By the end of 2017, Saint Alphonsus will have a new version of its second largest hospital in Nampa and St. Luke’s will have its fourth largest hospital in Nampa. Both health systems are deep into construction on new hospitals alongside Interstate 84.

Saint Alphonsus and St. Luke’s combined have a dozen hospitals spanning I-84 between Baker City, Ore., and the Magic Valley. But both had limited services in Canyon County until the 2010s, finally investing in the population growth that has topped 50 percent since 2000.

“Twenty-five percent of our volume in Meridian and Boise is from western ZIP codes,” said Bruce Jensen, director of business development at St. Luke’s.

St. Luke’s and Saint Alphonsus are taking opposite approaches with these new hospitals.

St. Luke’s presently has no hospital beds in Nampa. These 87 beds at the new St. Luke’s Nampa Medical Center are all a net gain for Canyon County.

Saint Alphonsus is reducing its primary hospital bed count from 152 beds at its existing 12th Street hospital to 100 beds at what it calls its replacement hospital at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center Nampa I-84/Garrity. Twelfth Street will remain in operation as an ambulatory care center.

St. Luke’s is adding beds to serve a booming Canyon County population that now exceeds 200,000.

“It’s important to recognize the net new beds (for Canyon County) and net new employees we are adding,” said Ed Castledine, the administrator at St. Luke’s Nampa. “The Canyon County population grew 54 percent from 2000 to 2012 and not one inpatient bed was added in Canyon County. So many people live in the West Valley now that we have to provide an advanced level of care.
"Years ago, we would not have been treating some of the advanced diseases in Nampa that we are treating today," Castledine continued. "Thirty-forty years ago, we would not have predicted the merging of Boise, Meridian, Eagle, Caldwell into a metropolitan area."

Saint Alphonsus is reducing beds because it believes it can serve the growing population with increased preventive care and the continuing shift to outpatient care and briefer hospital stays, said Phil Harrop, executive director of operations at Saint Alphonsus.

*The new Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Nampa will overlook the Ridgecrest Golf Course.*

Saint Alphonsus in 2010 acquired Mercy Medical Center, which had served Nampa since 1919 with Saint Alphonsus inheriting its 1967 hospital.

"Medical technology has come a long way since 1967," Harrop said. "Do we continue to retrofit and try to fit into a building not designed for today’s technology?"

Saint Alphonsus and St. Luke’s, however, also read from the same page: Their hospital construction sites are just 3 miles apart, both alongside Interstate 84, a contrast to West Valley Medical Center and the former Mercy Medical Center far off the freeway.

"There are 100,000 more people that can get to this site (at I-84 and Garrity) than 12th Street," Harrop said.

Freeway access is not only better for a larger number of people, Harrop added, but also for emergency services vehicles and the growing number of specialty physicians rotating between Boise and Nampa.

Once the new St. Luke’s and Saint Alphonsus open, combined with the existing medical facilities, Canyon County residents will not have to leave the county for nearly all medical services other than neurosurgery, open heart surgery and Level 3 neonatal care, said Karl Keeler, president of Saint Alphonsus Nampa/Ontario.

The Nampa Chamber of Commerce is taking note of the Boise hospitals’ commitment to Canyon County.

"Both hospitals will have doctors rotating from Boise,” said Debbie Kling, chief executive of the Nampa Chamber of Commerce. "We’re going to increase tremendously with population growth in the area. We’re going to need those beds. It is a great thing to have these two hospitals investing where growth is anticipated.”

**St. Luke’s Nampa will have extensive birth facilities**


St. Luke’s built its 117,000-square-foot Nampa Medical Plaza without envisioning that just four years later it would be expanded into a full hospital. The $96 million, 206,000-square-foot expansion into an acute care hospital started in August and is expected to open Oct. 1, 2017.

The three-story steel frame is nearly complete with the structure almost fully enclosed. Architectural Nexus was the national architect and Houston Bugatsch in Nampa the local architect. The project has no general contractor, Jensen said.

"We are standardizing our room designs,” Castletine said. "The proximity of imaging to the emergency room and operating room is improved. We are going to add a pretty significant labor-delivery unit.”
St. Luke’s in Nampa will have 14 regular delivery rooms and eight neo-natal intensive care units plus seven family suites with labor-deliver/neonatal intensive care in the same room. The hospital will also have four operating rooms, two procedural rooms and two delivery c-section rooms, Castledine said.

**Special care for a hospital building**

Saint Alphonsus started construction in June on a 74-bed expansion to its 26-bed existing Nampa Medical Plaza at Garrity and I-84. The $80-million, five-story, 240,000 square-foot re-christened Saint Alphonsus Medical Center Nampa – I-84 & Garrity is expected to be completed in March 2017 with 100 beds, said Phil Harrop, executive director of operations.

*St. Luke’s expects to open an 87-bed hospital in Nampa in 2017.*

The steel-and-concrete superstructure topped out at five stories in January with general contractor Layton Construction now busy with installing mechanical systems, heating and air conditioning and utilities, said Jeremy Hobbs, the Layton project manager. Ductwork, whether installed overhead or awaiting installation on the floor, has blue plastic covering on both ends that would not be used in standard office construction.

“HVAC is a big deal because it’s a hospital,” Hobbs said about the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. Right now we worry that no bacteria gets in the system. We test everything and wipe it down. We keep (ductwork opening) covered until they are installed and then cover it every day.

“We keep the oxygen lines capped and flush it at the end to make sure we’re clean. Before sheetrock is installed, we vacuum the tracks so there is no bacteria growth later,” Hobbs added. “The ductwork is a factor of three or four, I bet, (over a standard office building). You’re worried about humidity, temperature and air exchange.”

ZGF Architects of Portland designed the hospital. The Saint Alphonsus construction is a work in progress. Harrop said the plan is to finish one operating room, one emergency room, one patient room and then fine-tune the design before building the other operating, emergency and patient rooms.

“We’re going to have physicians and staff come out and interact with the space,” Harrop said. “They might say ‘It would be better if a switch is somewhere else.’”

Exteriors will be installed in coming months. Utility work is going on now, and crews are working on the elevator shafts.

“The first part of June we will see glass on the building,” Hobbs said.